

**Studio
Productions**



CORIOLANUS by Shakespeare

MONTREAL REPERTORY THEATRE
1550 GUY STREET DECEMBER 15-16-17, 1949

SHAKESPEARE'S CORIOLANUS*directed by Evelyn Smith*

* * *

CAST**Romans**

CAIUS MARTIUS	Afterwards Coriolanus	RICHARD GILBERT
TITUS LARTIUS }	Generals against the	ROBERT ROBINSON
COMINIUS }	Volscians	JOHN RUSSELL-THOMPSON
MENENIUS AGRIPPA	Friend to Coriolanus	KENNETH CULLEY
SICINIUS VELUTUS }	Tribunes of the people	DAVID MacCALLAN
JUNIUS BRUTUS }	Chief of the Roman Senate	CHET BRAATEN
SENATOR	Afterwards an Aedile	JOHN GIBBON
First Roman CITIZEN	ALBERT MANN
Second Roman CITIZEN	HILDA MULVANY GRAY
Third Roman CITIZEN	RUTH RISEBROW
SENATE OFFICERS	THOMAS WALKER, JOHN WISEMAN
VOLUMNIA	Mother to Coriolanus	RENE ALMOND
VIRGILIA	Wife to Coriolanus	MARY HINTON
VALERIA	Friend to Virgilia	SHEILA TREMBLAY

Volscians

TULLUS AUFIDIUS	General of the Volscians	RICHARD EASTON
SENATOR	Chief of the Volscian Senate	CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER
CONFIDANT to AUFIDIUS	Afterwards Chief Conspirator	JACK ZOLOV
SERVANT to AUFIDIUS	Afterwards Conspirator	RORKE ROBERTSON

**Other Roman and Volscian Citizens, Soldiers
and Attendants**

ROBERT HOLDEN, BERNARD LAFOND, JOHN B. TONCHIN, JOAN BLACKMAN,
GERALDINE BOOMER, MARY FINLEY, ESTHER OSTOR

* * *

SCENE:— ROME and the neighbourhood; CORIOLES and the neighbourhood; ANTIUM

Time:— CIRCA 500 B.C.

Scenes

- ACT I Scene 1 — A Roman Street. Scene 2 — Senate house in Corioles. Scene 3 — Martius' house.
Scenes 4-10 — Corioles and the neighbourhood.
- ACT II Scene 1 — Rome — a street. Scene 2 — The Capital. Scene 3 — The Forum. Scene 4 —
A Street. Scene 5 — Coriolanus' House. Scene 6 — The Forum. Scene 7 — Near the
City Gate.
- ACT III Scene 1 — Antium — Before and at Aufidius' House. Scene 2 — Rome — A Street. Scene 3 —
The Volscian Camp. Scene 4 — Rome — A Street. Scene 5 — The Volscian Camp before
Rome. Scene 6 — Rome — A Street. Scene 7 — Corioles:— A Public Place.

The drawing of the inner curtain across the stage indicates a change of scene.

Prompter: BETTY HOFMAN

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STUDIO COMMITTEE

DOUGLASS BURNS CLARKE, *Chairman*
DOREEN LEWIS
SYLVIO NARIZZANO
LEE PRIME
RITA WHEATLEY

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager: TIM STAPLETON
Assistant to Stage Manager: JACK POIRIER
Properties: JEAN STAPLETON
Assistants: CHARLOTTE WELLOCK
GWYN WILLIAMS
Lighting: ROY ESHELBY
NORMAN HOLTZMAN

THE PRODUCTION

"This double worship,—
Where one part does disdain with cause,
the other
Insult without all reason; where gentry, title,
wisdom,
Cannot conclude but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance,—it must omit
Real necessities, and give way the while
To unstable slightness: purpose so barr'd, it
follows,
Nothing is done to purpose."

With these words, Coriolanus expresses his distrust of popular government, and defines one of the basic themes of the play. It is perhaps the prominence of this theme that explains why one of Shakespeare's best tragedies, once so popular upon the stage, has been so seldom performed in the last fifty years. It is not surprising that with popular reforms of the last century and a half, and the growth of the concept of democracy into a popular faith irritably sensitive not only to anti-democratic thought but even to essential and safe-guarding criticism, that this, one of Shakespeare's maturer and most coherent plays should have lost popular appeal.

In fact, the lost popularity of this play is, itself, indicative of the fact, seldom recog-

nized, that even on this continent, the general acceptance of democracy is still fairly recent.

Criticism of democracy is particularly dangerous today, when the way of life which it presents is threatened by various forms of totalitarianism. But it is just because democracy is threatened that it most needs criticism. If it is to survive, its nature must find a clearer definition than popular shibboleth; if it is to succeed as a way of life, it must free its faults and solve the problems they present instead of refusing to admit their existence.

Democracy has had some very great critics, not all of whom, by any means, can be considered as anti-democratic; Plato and Hamilton; Alexis de Tocqueville and James Fenimore Cooper; Ibsen and Shaw; Such men have been fascinated by the concepts of individual freedom and self rule, and at the same time have had a healthy awareness of dangers and flaws in the system.

Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" is perhaps his most politically minded play, but it must not be construed as anti-democratic, nor even, essentially, a political play. As in the other tragedies, it is the story of a man lifted above the multitude by some personal quality which carried to excess dooms him. But in a greater measure than the other tragedies, political thought is present,—the dangers of demagoguery, popular passion, the short-sightedness of ignorance, are all brought into play against the patrician Coriolanus. And, indeed, beyond these, the public insistence on conformity to popular concepts of behaviour, which paradoxically threatens the very freedom of the individual, within a democracy, to preserve the integrity of his own individuality,—

"Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be
turn'd,

Which quired with my drum, into a pipe
Small as a eunuch, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! the smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks; and schoolboys' tears
take up

The glasses of my sight! a beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips; and my arm'd
knees,

Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms! — *I will not do't;*
Lent I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness."

Yet, set against all that, this: it is because Coriolanus, the superior man is unable to

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compromise with the general will and popular desire, that he is destroyed.

In choosing this play for the opening studio production of the year, the Studio Committee has been motivated by two thoughts: first, that it is time that one of Shakespeare's greater plays should be returned to the stage; second, that the play contains ideas relevant to our contemporary problems and worthy of thoughtful consideration.

The play is under the direction of Mrs. Evelyn Smith, whose productions of Shakespeare with the Guild of Players of St. Matthias, were such notable events before the war. This production marks her first work done for the M.R.T., and she brings to it considerable experience of producing Shakespeare. She has stressed the relevance of the play's contents by producing it in modern dress.

The selection of this play and of this director is in keeping with the purposes of the M.R.T. Studio. It is perhaps fitting that, with this, the first production of the Studio for the year, the purposes of the Studio should be restated; they are threefold and may be briefly stated as,—

1 — To offer M.R.T. Audiences a programme of non-commercial plays to supplement its major productions and thus to fulfill the functions of a repertory theatre in reviving the best classics and trying out modern plays of an experimental nature.

2 — To introduce to the M.R.T., directors and scenic designers new to its stage.

3 — To foster Canadian play writing by making accessible to Canadian writers a stage for the production of new works which reach M.R.T. standards.

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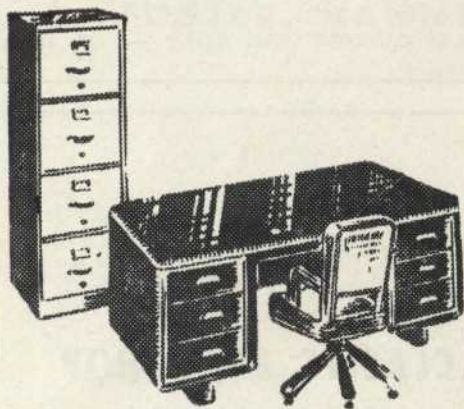
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