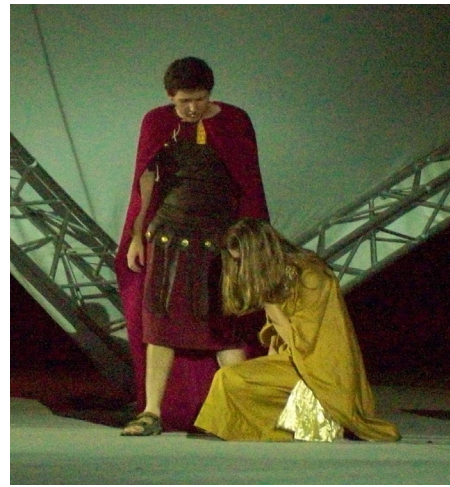


>> Caesar forces Cleopatra's headstrong nurse, Ftataeeta, to be submissive to her mistress. Ftataeeta, played by Brittany Barrett, was used to ordering Cleopatra around.

> Under the guidance and influence of Caesar, Cleopatra asserts her power over her half-brother Ptolemy and his court. Cleopatra's new confidence surprised the royal court.



the Nile on matoaka

Mystic Theater brings Ancient Egypt to outdoor amphitheater

tween auditions and the performance, Kessler had "vague doubts over whether [the] show could really be pulled together." The hesitancy and concern of the cast was alleviated by the positivity and encouragement of Director DiAntonio and Assistant Director, junior Jimmy Lewis.

The cast and crew rehearsed frequently during the week and on weekends for two to two-and-a-half hours per night, with the number and length of the rehearsals increasing during the final week before the performance. It was also during the final week of rehearsals that the cast and crew moved from their normal rehearsal location in Washington Hall out to the Matoaka Amphitheater. Once the cast and crew became accustomed to their venue, it was time to put on the show.

According to sophomore Brittany Barrett, who played Ftataeeta (the pronunciation of which became a running joke both off-stage with the cast members and on-stage within the dialogue of the play), the cast members did their best to ward off the cold by "using leftover costume pieces and huddling together backstage." The chill was felt by the audience too as people curled up in their seats and pulled jackets tighter.

Showing *Caesar and Cleopatra* at Matoaka Amphitheater was a challenge amplified by the outdoor nighttime performance especially with the usual cold and wet late fall weather of Williamsburg. Yet, despite location, the cast and the crew were able to perform, and the hearty ones who came out braved the cold for an entertaining show.

> Astrid Broady

Written by George Bernard Shaw in 1898, Mystic Theater's production of *Caesar and Cleopatra* took a different approach to the relationship between the title characters; presented in history as being a romantic or sexual relationship, Mystic Theater showed Caesar and Cleopatra's relationship as being one based on friendship and politics. This approach was facilitated by Shaw's writing in which Caesar seeks to gain a Roman foothold in Egypt by befriending Cleopatra and helping her to take her place as a powerful leader. However, in spite of the engrossing politics, the true star of the show turned out to be the weather since outdoor Matoaka Amphitheater was the location of the play.

The Mystic Theater production was directed by junior Andrew DiAntonio and performed September 30th through October 2nd at Lake Matoaka Amphitheater. The outdoor location was an unusual choice for the play. "Performing outside, completely at the mercy of the elements, made it seem like a much more authentic experience," junior Joe Kessler, who played Caesar, said. This production was also the first student play to show following the recent renovation of Matoaka Amphitheater in April 2007.

Unlike the dry and hot climate of Egypt, Lake Matoaka's chilly wet environment made the outdoor location even more challenging. The elements may have discouraged some potential members of the audience; the first two nights it was cold and windy in addition to the threat of rain. The final night it did not rain, but it was still "a cold night in Egypt," according to sophomore Alex Volpert, who played Cleopatra.

With only three weeks to rehearse be-

> Cleopatra and Caesar spar over the murder of her nurse, Ftataeeta. Despite this, they end up mending their friendship and helping each other to gain power in Egypt.

cast

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Joseph Kessler | <i>Caesar</i> |
| Alexandra Volpert | <i>Cleopatra</i> |
| Brittany Barrett | <i>Ftataeeta</i> |
| Samuel Schreck | <i>Apollodorus</i> |
| Kate Miller | <i>Pothinus</i> |
| Christopher Alexander Herrera | <i>Rufio</i> |
| Graydon Vann | <i>Ptolemy</i> |
| Shifra de Benedictis | <i>Charmian</i> |
| -Kessner | <i>Achillas/Centurion</i> |
| Logan Wamsley | <i>Iras</i> |
| Alison Gondek | <i>Theodotus</i> |
| Chris Barnewolt | <i>Bel Affris</i> |
| Effe Rosenzweig | <i>Victoria</i> |
| Luci Stamp | <i>Belzanor</i> |
| Will Brannon | <i>Lucius</i> |
| Alex Kyrios | <i>The Persian Ambassador</i> |
| Hailey Lankowski | <i>Guard</i> |
| Stephanie Llyod | <i>Major-Domo</i> |
| Rebekah Rochte | <i>Musician</i> |
| Leska Pravdic | <i>Courtier I</i> |
| Miriam Cross-Cole | <i>Courtier II</i> |
| Isabelle Cohen | <i>Courtier III</i> |
| Taylor Bolton | <i>Porter I</i> |
| Meagan Taylor | |

