

RED BULL THEATER

JESSE BERGER | FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JIM BREDESON | MANAGING DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

SEJANUS

HIS FALL

BY BEN JONSON

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY NATHAN WINKELSTEIN

FEATURING

SHIRINE BABB | GRANTHAM COLEMAN | KEITH DAVID | MANOEL FELCIANO

DENIS O'HARE | MATTHEW RAUCH | LIV ROTH | LAILA ROBINS

STEPHEN SPINELLA | EMILY SWALLOW | RAPHAEL NASH THOMPSON

TAMARA TUNIE | JAMES UDOM

ZOOM COORDINATOR | BETSY AYER

OBS MANAGER | JESSICA FORNEAR

PRODUCING DIRECTOR | NATHAN WINKELSTEIN

GENERAL MANAGER | SHERRI KOTIMSKY

PRODUCTION INTERN | SARAH PRESTON

SOUND INTERN | ALEXANDER MARKOULIS

MONDAY, MAY 17, 2021 | A LIVESTREAM PRESENTATION

A RECORDING OF THE LIVESTREAM WILL BE AVAILABLE UNTIL 7:00 PM EDT ON
FRIDAY, MAY 21- THEN IT DISAPPEARS.

RED BULL THEATER WISHES TO EXPRESS ITS GRATITUDE TO THE PERFORMERS' UNIONS: ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION, AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS, AMERICAN GUILD OF VARIETY ARTISTS, AND SAG-AFTRA THROUGH THEATRE AUTHORITY, INC. FOR THEIR COOPERATION IN PERMITTING THE ARTISTS TO APPEAR IN THIS PROGRAM.

RED BULL THEATER IS SUPPORTED, IN PART, BY PUBLIC FUNDS FROM THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY COUNCIL, AND THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS, WITH THE SUPPORT OF GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE.

ADDITIONAL MAJOR FUNDING HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY THE ACHELIS AND BODMAN FOUNDATION, THE AXE-HOUGHTON FOUNDATION, THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING, ROBERT BOYETT, DAVID DESJARDINS AND NANCY BLACHMAN, THE JAMES AND JUDITH K. DIMON FOUNDATION, FUND FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK, THE HOWARD AND MARCIA OWENS CHARITABLE TRUST, HOWARD GILMAN FOUNDATION, THE MARTA HEFLIN FOUNDATION, THE KAM FOUNDATION, NOAH MILLMAN AND CAROLYN SCHIFF, EVANGELINE MORPHOS, THE NOËL COWARD FOUNDATION, THE OFF-BROADWAY ANGELS, THE PRINCESS GRACE FOUNDATION-USA, BETTY AND MICHAEL RAUCH, PETER N. RIGBY, THE SHUBERT FOUNDATION, THE MICHAEL TUCH FOUNDATION, AND STEVEN AND JOAN YOUNG.

RED BULL THEATER IS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE ALLIANCE OF RESIDENT THEATERS/NEW YORK, THE OFF-BROADWAY LEAGUE, AND THEATER COMMUNICATIONS GROUP.



**Council on
the Arts**



DONATE TODAY TO SUPPORT RED BULL THEATER AND INVEST IN THE VITALITY OF CLASSICAL THEATER FOR A CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE. FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS, RED BULL THEATER HAS TRANSFORMED THE CLASSICAL THEATER EXPERIENCE WITH SPECTACULAR, HIGH-OCTANE PRODUCTIONS OF SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES, RAUCOUS READINGS OF RARELY-PRODUCED PLAYS, AND VIVID REIMAGININGS OF ICONIC WORKS.

WE'RE DEDICATED TO REVITALIZING THE CLASSICS FOR TODAY'S AUDIENCES, AND WHILE WE TREASURE THESE CLASSICS, OUR APPROACH IS ANYTHING BUT PRECIOUS. YOUR SUPPORT IS.

WE'RE COMMITTED TO CONTINUING CONNECTION DURING THIS HISTORIC TIME.
YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP MAKE THAT POSSIBLE.

REDBULLTHEATER.COM/makeagift

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Tiberius Caesar, *The Emperor of Rome*

..... LAILA ROBINS

Agrippina, *Widowed Wife of Tiberius's adopted son; Germanicus*

..... SHIRINE BABB

Caligula, *Son of Germanicus and Agrippina*

Cordus, *a poet*

..... JAMES UDOM

Drusus, *Tiberius's son by blood*

Macro, *an Engine*

..... MATTHEW RAUCH

Livia, *Wife to Drusus*

Laco, *a Praetorian Captain*

..... EMILY SWALLOW

Silius, *a Senator of Rome*

Regulus, *a Consul of Rome*

..... KEITH DAVID

Sabinus, *a Senator of Rome*

..... TAMARA TUNIE

Arruntius, *a Senator of Rome*

..... GRANTHAM COLEMAN

Sejanus, *a Climber*

..... DENIS O'HARE

Satrius, *a Senator of Rome, loyal to Sejanus*

..... LIV ROTH

Natta, *a Senator of Rome, loyal to Sejanus*

..... MANOEL FELCIANO

Eudemus, *'humble physician to Livia'*

..... STEPHEN SPINELLA

Varro, *a Consul of Rome, Loyal to whomever is strongest*

..... RAPHAEL NASH THOMPSON

—THERE WILL BE ONE 10-MINUTE INTERMISSION—



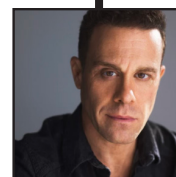
TIBERIUS CAESAR
Emporer of Rome



MACRO
an engine



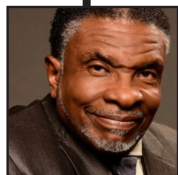
SEJANUS
a Climber



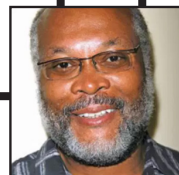
DRUSUS
Tiberius's son by blood



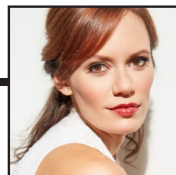
GERMANICUS
The deceased son of Tiberius



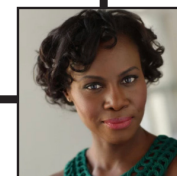
REGULUS
a Consul of Rome



VARRO
a Consul of Rome, Loyal to whomever is strongest



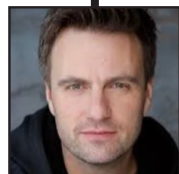
LIVIA
Wife to Drusus



AGRIPPINA
Widowed Wife of Germanicus



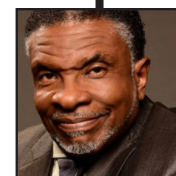
LACO
a Praetorian Captain



NATA
a Senator of Rome, loyal to Sejanus



EUDEMUS
Physician to Livia



SILIUS
a Senator of Rome

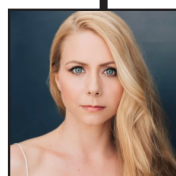


CALIGULA
Son of Germanicus and Agrippina

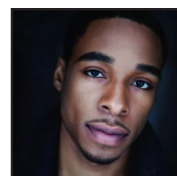
SEJANUS

HIS FALL

CHARACTER MAP



SATRIUS
a Senator of Rome, loyal to Sejanus



ARRUNTIUS
a Senator of Rome



SABINUS
a Senator of Rome



CORDUS
a Poet



POST-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION

THIS Thursday, MAY 20, 2021

7:30 PM EDT | LIVESTREAM

Join an interactive discussion with
adaptor/director NATHAN WINKELSTEIN,
scholar HENRY S. TURNER,
and some of the artists involved.

REGISTER at [REDBULLTHEATER.COM](https://www.redbulltheater.com)

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

BEN JONSON (1572–1637) was one of the greatest poets and playwrights of the English Renaissance. Born in London and apprenticed to a bricklayer, Jonson by his twenties was making his living as a writer. He wrote numerous plays for the theatre; most of them were satirical comedies, such as *Volpone* (1606), *Epicoene* (1609), *The Alchemist* (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1616). Set in bustling urban spaces, these dramas skewered the vices and follies of social climbers and those who lacked manners, learning or self-knowledge. Jonson also authored several tragedies set in ancient Rome as well as poems and masques—royal entertainments that honored the monarch, James I, before whom they were performed. Jonson never went to university, but he was exceedingly proud of his learning. In 1616 he published a large and beautiful folio edition of his plays, poems and masques modeled on the great Renaissance editions of classical writers. A contemporary of William Shakespeare, Jonson wrote a dedicatory poem for the much more modest 1623 folio edition of Shakespeare's works produced seven years after his death by members of his acting company. In this poem, Jonson noted that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek," but he generously praised his fellow playwright as "the soul of the age/ The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!" In his later years, a fire destroyed Jonson's library and many of his own manuscripts, and he was weakened by illness. He died a poor man and was buried in Westminster Abbey under a gravestone that simply says: "O rare Ben Jonson."

—JEAN HOWARD | Columbia University

ABOUT THE PLAY

Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* (1603–5) is a play written against a backdrop of conspiracy and domestic terrorism. In Tiberian Rome, rival factions negotiate a city ruled by the whims of a tyrant, who has delegated his authority to his new favorite, the violent former soldier Sejanus, and retreated to his beloved pleasure and torture chambers at his coastal villa in Capri. The play opens with ineffectual politicians whispering in a corridor about the fast-rising Sejanus and his shadowy crowd of enablers; it ends with savage images of a violent crowd storming the Capitol to tear Sejanus and his children limb from limb. In Jonson's hands, tragedy becomes a remarkably modern exercise in political horror, as the play discloses a world governed only by a relentless will-to-power and the human capacity for betrayal. Spies hide spider-like on ceilings, and private speech circulates with alarming speed in a public echo-chamber of conspiracy theories, fear, and self-promotion. Mob violence has replaced representational politics, a new generation of leaders who might restore the liberal legacies of Rome are assassinated one by one, and suicide has become the only possible act of individual resistance.

Jonson wrote *Sejanus* in the summer of 1603, but its dark vision of corruption, betrayal, and absolute power can feel startlingly relevant today. The play was performed by Shakespeare's play company, and Shakespeare himself played a role, although we don't know which one—this is his last appearance in any cast list. Jonson was subsequently charged with "popery and treason" by Lord Henry Howard, a closet Catholic who was publicly (and perhaps predictably) an active anti-Catholic agitator. When Jonson eventually published *Sejanus* in 1605, the time was even more inauspicious. He would be imprisoned the same year for *Eastward Ho* (among other details, the play mocked the accent of the new King James I of Scotland); on November 5, a faction of regional Catholic conspirators came to London to blow up the House of Lords, kill the King, and reinstate a Catholic monarchy. Inconveniently, it happened that Jonson—himself a converted Catholic—had eaten dinner a month earlier with two of the primary conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot, and after yet another round of questioning by authorities, he was dispatched to interview a priest who might have valuable information. The experience must have been both agonizing and terrifying for him, and several of his works from this period sharply condemn spies and informants, even as they display a keen understanding of the weaponized power of language, of the limits of virtue in a culture that values people as instruments or "engines" for the ends they might achieve, and about the lessons that might be drawn from history, both ancient and more recent, for understanding contemporary political affairs.



RED BULL THEATER

JESSE BERGER | FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JIM BREDESON | MANAGING DIRECTOR

Red Bull Theater brings rarely seen classic plays to dynamic new life for contemporary audiences. Our work unites a respect for tradition with a modern sensibility.

Red Bull Theater is named for the rowdy Jacobean playhouse that illegally performed plays in England during the years of Puritan rule, and was the first London theater to reopen after the Restoration. This bold spirit is central to our identity. With the Jacobean plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as our cornerstone, Red Bull Theater is New York City's home for dynamic performances of great plays that stand the test of time. The company also produces new works that are in conversation with the classics.

Red Bull Theater delights and engages the intellect and imagination of audiences. A home for artists, scholars and students, we strive to make our work accessible, diverse, and welcoming to all theatergoers. Educational as well as entertaining, our work keeps a rich and vital tradition thriving.

Red Bull Theater believes in the power of great classic stories and plays of heightened language to deepen our understanding of the human condition. We believe in the special ability of live theater to create unique, collective experiences. And we believe in the timeless capacity of classical theater to illuminate the events of our times.

Founded in 2003 with a production of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, Red Bull Theater has been acclaimed by *The New York Times* as "a dynamic producer of classic plays" and by *Time Out New York* as "the most exciting classical theater in New York."

Red Bull Theater serves adventurous theatergoers with OFF-BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS, REVELATION READINGS, and the annual SHORT NEW PLAY FESTIVAL. The company also offers outreach programs including SHAKESPEARE IN SCHOOLS, bringing professional actors and teaching artists into public school classrooms, BULL SESSIONS, free post-play discussions with top scholars, and MASTER CLASSES in classical actor training led by veteran theater professionals.

In our 17-year history, Red Bull Theater has produced 21 Off-Broadway Productions and nearly 200 Revelation Readings of rarely seen classics, serving 5,000 artists and providing quality artistic programming to an audience of 65,000. The company's unique programming has received ongoing critical acclaim, and has been recognized with Lortel, Drama Desk, Drama League, Calloway, Off Broadway Alliance, and Obie nominations and Awards.

Visit REDBULLTHEATER.COM for more information.

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