

HOME

We Players' second riff on 'Julius Caesar' this season has a female lead

By Lily Janiak

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Libby Oberlin (center) and the cast of We Players' "Caesar Maximus" in Golden Gate Park.

Lauren Matley / We Players

Having already performed one riff on "Julius Caesar" earlier this year — the all-female "Roman Women," staged at the Palace of Fine Arts — site-specific theater company We Players now offers another refraction on Shakespeare's tragedy.

“Caesar Maximus,” adapted by Nick Medina in collaboration with Ava Roy, takes audiences to Golden Gate Park’s Music Concourse (the scenic lawn between the California Academy of Sciences and the de Young Museum) for a Gilded Age-set show that uses both opera and circus arts.

This theater season has already been marked by politically tinged cross-gender casting, most notably with Ray of Light’s all-female “Jesus Christ Superstar,” and We Players furthers the trend by casting Libby Oberlin as Caesar.

“Caesar as a woman lends this incredible depth and relevance to the quality of the Senate’s distrust,” says Roy, who also directs, in a statement. “Why are they so threatened by her power?”

— *Lily Janiak*

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Lily Janiak joined the San Francisco Chronicle as theater critic in May 2016. Previously, her writing appeared in Theatre Bay Area, American Theatre, SF Weekly, the Village Voice and HowlRound. She holds a BA in theater studies from Yale and an MA in drama from San Francisco State.

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