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Dear Friend,

In a moment of inner turmoil, the title character of Friedrich Schiller’s Wallenstein confides, “History always judges traitors harshly,” to which his comrade Kolibas replies, “No. History only wants to know who won?” Wallenstein, translated and freely adapted by former Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, and William Shakespeare’s Coriolanus demonstrate how every conflict between nations resonates in the struggles of a few individuals over what is right.

I am pleased to be collaborating with David Muse, who directed plays in our Roman and Leadership Repertories before he became the Artistic Director of The Studio Theatre. I am also very grateful to Clarice Smith and the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation for their generous support, which has allowed us to bring repertory back to our seasons. This pairing of plays centers on two men of military renown who carry the weight of nations on their shoulders. We hope our productions will help inform discussions about power and leadership and the fine line between heroes and traitors.

In this special expanded issue of Asides, you will find Kenneth Adelman’s thoughts on Coriolanus and contemporary Washington, a note by Robert Pinsky on adapting Wallenstein as well as articles from prominent academics on Schiller’s intellectual context and Coriolanus’ unique place in the canon. Please continue to visit Asides Online (Asides.ShakespeareTheatre.org) for more information about the play and production. I look forward to seeing you in the theatre.

Warm regards,

Michael Kahn
Artistic Director
Shakespeare Theatre Company

Coriolanus and Wallenstein are performed in repertory as part of the Clarice Smith Repertory Series. The Clarice Smith Repertory Series is sponsored by the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation.

Wallenstein was commissioned through the generous support of The Beech Street Foundation and production support is provided by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.
Coriolanus doesn’t get the credit it deserves. I understand why. It’s ugly. Its language lacks lyricism. Its arguments can be hard to follow. It is very long. It’s difficult to stage—full of characters, full of crowds. It’s a tough read, a play that doesn’t yield up its wonders in the armchair.

But I contend that it’s a neglected gem, a play that is special in large measure because it is such a Shakespearean peculiarity. This is a strange thing to say about a play set in 600 B.C., one of the most ancient settings for any play by Shakespeare, but Coriolanus is strikingly modern.

Some of the things that make the play so unique:

1. It is arguably Shakespeare’s most political play. Shakespeare was a political thinker, so that’s saying a lot. No other of his plays contains close to as much discussion of government, power and class. The play’s primary mode is debate and its primary subject is political power. Characters with a whole range of different political convictions discuss, argue, form and dissolve alliances, and maneuver for power.

2. It is Shakespeare’s most public play. It contains a riot, a large battle, a grand battlefield ceremony, three public celebrations, a street brawl, a public trial and banishment and an execution in the public square. By contrast, there are only two brief snippets of monologue. It’s as if nobody is alone long enough to talk to the audience in this play.

3. Shakespeare never wrote crowds like this. These are not the faceless mobs of Julius Caesar. They are individualized and full of character. They have different opinions about their polis and discourse intelligently about it. In the very first scene of the play, in the midst of a rioting mob, the most radical of the citizens begins to speak in verse. (“Fore me, this fellow speaks!”) This is not a play in which the prose-speaking simpletons chant lines together. They are individuals, and only under extreme circumstances do they behave like a mob. This is not a play about kings and queens or generals and senators but about an entire polis.

4. The play is unique sounding. This is Shakespeare writing the poetry of politics. It is the language of debate, of political attack, of scheming and manipulation. It is rough, harsh, rhetorical, irregular, non-lyrical verse. It’s a bold departure for Shakespeare: a powerful,
complex, unromantic poem written at the height of his linguistic powers.

5. At the play’s center is Shakespeare’s least sympathetic tragic protagonist. He is proud, elitist, anti-democratic and impolite. His injured pride leads him to recruit an enemy army to attack his homeland.

So what makes the play so interesting to me?

It concerns very modern political issues. It’s a play about class and class conflict. The central conflict is not so much within Coriolanus as external to him. It’s the people vs. Coriolanus. The plebeians vs. the patricians. Democracy vs. elitism. These conflicts are central to our political universe, especially in a large representative democracy in which generally aristocratic politician-celebrities govern. We are a society who knows this tug of war: we seek equality but worship celebrity; we venerate the ensemble but really like the star.

And true to form, Shakespeare doesn’t take sides. The people are smart, articulate, engaged, fighting for a voice. They are also cowardly, fickle and reckless. Coriolanus is arrogant, disdainful, elitist. He is also an astute observer, a truth teller, a man devoted to principle.

Some famous productions of the play have taken sides. Brecht liked it for its empowered Roman populace and leftist politics. But 20 years before Brecht, the Nazis liked it too, offering it to their youth as an example of valor and heroism.

This production won’t take sides. It’s not what Shakespeare is up to.
Let me also say that the psychology of the play is fascinating. It’s easy to dismiss Coriolanus as an arrogant ass. A snob. But there is much to admire here: as I said, Coriolanus is a man of principle. He sees through pretense. He speaks the truth. He is unwilling to put on an act, to play a part, to pander, to pretend, to lie. He is in fact a man too principled to get by in the world. Like Menenius says, “his nature is too noble for the world.” The world snuffs him out.

And of course the play contains one of the most extraordinary and fascinating portraits of a mother/son relationship Shakespeare ever wrote. Patrick Page will tell you that Coriolanus is a textbook Phallic Narcissist. That’s a Freudian diagnosis. Or Puer Aeternus. That’s Jungian. Come see the performance to see what he’s talking about.

And in case I’ve scared you by talking about the play’s length and its heady politics, let me also say that Coriolanus is the closest Shakespeare came to writing a political-thriller action movie. And I’m determined to have everyone out of the theatre by 11:00 p.m.

So how are we doing this sprawling, long, epic, crowded play?

I’ve split the world in two. Half of the cast are patricians and half are plebeians. Nobody doubles across class lines. There’s a thematic payoff to this—it emphasizes the class conflict that is central to the play. And there’s a practical payoff—it allows an ensemble of plebeians to play dozens and dozens of roles in a way that feels deliberate.

The idea is that we don’t try to mask all of the ensemble’s changes but that we embrace them. That we don’t attempt full costume changes. That we allow the audience to see some changes happen on stage. And we take this overt theatricality a step further in that we watch the plebeians “labor” to run the production. They move furniture. They operate lights. They make music and noise. This ensemble of plebs are the workers who labor to support the patricians and make the production possible.

Now this won’t be what I call a period-analogy production. We’re going for something modern in feeling but still epic. It’s a “swords and suits” production. I want it to be close enough to us that these politicians feel eerily familiar, but also to be nestled in a world where martial valor and hand-to-hand combat have some meaning.

And the space. I asked Blythe R.D. Quinlan to design a set that controls scale. That can frame a single human being and not swallow him up. That can make this big stage feel crowded. That can shift quickly. That feels solid. And that feels old and new at the same time. We were both drawn to concrete, which features in a lot of modern architecture (particularly the “Brutalist” style, appropriately for this play) but was invented by the Romans. We want to stage it fairly simply, so we’re being fairly restrained about shifts and changes. No big furniture, no laborious changes, no grand living rooms rising from the floor. Strong, bold, theatrical and simple.
Power Lunches and Marble Columns
Reflections on Shakespeare’s Rome—and today’s Washington
by Kenneth Adelman

There’s no better place than Washington, D.C., to appreciate one of Shakespeare’s Roman plays, such as the masterful Coriolanus.

To get to the Shakespeare Theatre Company to watch a production of the play, you may drive near the Lincoln Memorial, past the Commerce and Labor Departments, or by the Federal Trade Commission and the National Gallery of Art. You may pass by the U.S. Capitol Building across from the Supreme Court, Library of Congress and Folger Library—all examples of classical Roman architecture.

The halls of Washington are filled—many might say, overfilled—with lawyers, who operate on the basis of classical Roman law. The buzz around Washington is of political power, the exercise of which most fascinated the ancient Romans.

And, as in Rome, the distinctive Washington pastime is the “power lunch.” A lobbyist, or a demander of one sort or another, takes someone in power to lunch, loosens him or her up with a nice drink and some fine food, and then gets around to “the ask.”

Our city’s hallmark ritual was first noted, appreciated and described in Coriolanus, when the avuncular senator Menenius ponders how best to reach the rebellious general Coriolanus:

He was not taken well—he had not dined.
The veins unfilled, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive. But when we have stuffed
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts. Therefore, I’ll watch him
’Til he dieted to my request
And then I’ll set upon him. (act 5, scene 1)
Besides the architecture and customs of Washington, some great Washington personalities resemble those in *Coriolanus*.

An impressive number of U.S. Presidents were elected after a successful career in the military as Generals. Some successfully made the transition—like George Washington, Andrew Jackson and Dwight Eisenhower. More, like *Coriolanus*, could not make the transition successfully—perhaps most famously in the case of Ulysses S. Grant, who lacked judgment in his political associates and thus appointed some real scoundrels. According to the Washington talk, David Petraeus was on track to make a similar transition until recently, but he showed that he lacked judgment in his personal deportment.

In his disdain for parts of the political game, *Coriolanus* resembles our current president. Washington pundits dwell upon President Obama’s refusal to “play the game” of endless schmoozing, glad-handing other politicians, calling supposed power-brokers for supposed advice and inviting politicos over to watch the Super Bowl or take in a flick. He disdains such practices as a waste of time and energy, if not downright silly. This is understandable, as many of them are.

Nearly as silly, in fact, as the customs in *Coriolanus*’ time for aspiring politicians. Soldiers returning from battle who wished to move into the political realm, then by becoming consuls to the senate, were supposed to show their scars in the marketplace. *Coriolanus* considered this the silliest custom imaginable, an insult to his just deserts:

```
Better it is to die, better to starve,  
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.  
Why in this wolvish toge should I stand here  
To beg of Hob and Dick that does appear  
Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to't. (act 2, scene 3)
```

Perhaps it sounds that way to us as well, but there’s a price to be paid for abjuring the prevailing initiation rites, as his mother Volumnia explains to her son. After some argument, *Coriolanus* yields, as he always does to his mother, and is willing to give it a try. But after grudgingly beginning to follow the custom, he stops abruptly and rants about its stupidity. His political foes jump on that mistake, and make the most of it. *Coriolanus* pays dearly for it.

Someone who disdains the customs of local politics—however it may be for good reasons—must realize that there’s a price to be paid for abjuring or disdaining such practices, or might even be wise to go into another profession. *Coriolanus* could have stayed in the military and remained a hero. His life would have turned out much better.

Washington, like Rome, has had some great leaders who were mega-mother lovers, like *Coriolanus* with his beloved mother, Volumnia.
Douglas MacArthur’s mother rented an apartment at West Point the whole time her son was a Cadet, since they couldn’t stand to be apart.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s mother was the 20th-century version of Volumnia, and he of Coriolanus in his devotion to her. Sara Roosevelt loved her only child. Indeed, he was the love of her life, and she probably of his.

FDR and Eleanor were met by Sara at dockside when they returned from the vast and leisurely European tour of their honeymoon. There and then, she informed them that, as her wedding present, she had bought them a townhouse on the Upper East Side, fully furnished it, and—best of all—bought the adjoining townhouse with two floors having entrances between them.

Their evening dinners en famille would find FDR sitting at one end of the grand table and Sara at the other. Eleanor, the sundry nannies, and the children would be sitting between them.

Sara handled all the family finances. She managed Eleanor and Franklin’s checking and savings accounts, and paid all their bills—even after FDR became President—until the day she died.

Perhaps most importantly, Coriolanus reminds us of the arc of politics in Washington, as in ancient Rome. As Lyndon Johnson put it—in his own distinctly un-Shakespearean way—“What’s chicken salad one day is chicken shit the next.”

LBJ lived that tale, being among the most revered of Presidents when first taking office, and for the ensuing two years when he passed a flurry of civil rights, social and political legislation which marked the Great Society. He became among the most reviled of Presidents when he left office, engulfed in the Vietnam War.

Lyndon Johnson was not alone. Many other have ridden into Washington with solid reputations and high expectations—people like Herbert Hoover, Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter—only to undergo dramatic if not tragic falls.

Such is the story of our times in Washington, and such is also the story of classical times in Rome, as we are reminded when we see a production of Coriolanus, after driving by all those beautiful buildings modeled after those of Rome.

Ken Adelman, a longtime Trustee of the Shakespeare Theatre Company and now on the Board of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, was an Ambassador to the United Nations and U.S. Arms Control, Director under President Ronald Reagan.
Senatus Populusque Romanus
(The Senate and the People of Rome)

The military of the ancient Roman Republic was one of the most feared fighting forces of the ancient world. The troops were led by patricians, who obeyed a strict aristocratic code of valor and self-sacrifice, and plebeians, who were drilled into disciplined ranks. Only patricians could become commanding officers. In fact, modern military hierarchies are still based on the Roman model.

PLEBEIAN
The lower class of Rome. Descendants of immigrants and freed slaves, the plebs lack the political and social power of the patricians.

TRIBUNES
Elected representatives in the senate, the tribunes are appointed to protect the interests and rights of the plebeians from the patricians. The tribunes (heads of the tribe) do not have voting power but can call the senate into session and propose issues to be considered. The tribunes are sacrosanct. It is a capital offense to physically harm them or impede their duties.

ROMAN ARMY
The military of the ancient Roman Republic was one of the most feared fighting forces of the ancient world. The troops were led by patricians, who obeyed a strict aristocratic code of valor and self-sacrifice, and plebeians, who were drilled into disciplined ranks. Only patricians could become commanding officers. In fact, modern military hierarchies are still based on the Roman model.
**Consul**
The Commander-in-Chief of the army, and also the highest office of state, the consul exercises supreme authority in a manner similar to contemporary presidents and prime ministers. The consulship is a one-year appointment, and he reports to the Senate for guidance and direction in military affairs.

**Senate**
The primary legislative body of the Roman Republic, the Senate originated as an advisory body to the original Roman kings. Its members, senators, are drawn from leading families in Rome, all of the patrician class.

**Patrician**
The upper class of Rome. Aristocratic in nature, the patricians are descendants of the founding families, or patrie (fathers) of the Roman Kingdom. They are the primary landholders in Rome, and male patricians are the only citizens who can serve in the Senate.

**A Timeline**

- **753 B.C.** Founding of Roman Kingdom
- **509 B.C.** Tarquin deposed
- **515-493 B.C.** The Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus
- **100-44 B.C.** The Life of Julius Caesar
- **A.D. 410:** Visigoths Sack Rome

Costume renderings by Murell Horton.
Coriolanus is one of Shakespeare’s strangest and most controversial plays. Its principal figure is a warrior, exemplary in his courage and single-minded dedication, who finds it difficult to adjust to life away from the battlefield. Refusing to compromise and contemptuous of anyone who does not live up to his exacting standards, Coriolanus, not long after being nominated for the high political office of consul, is cast into exile, accused of treason and ends up leading an army to invade and destroy Rome.

Though Coriolanus, more than any other play by Shakespeare, mounts a sustained critique of Roman values, productions again and again have situated the play in “states unborn” at the time of its supposed action. The most recent film version, starring and directed by Ralph Fiennes, relocates the play to the Balkans, bristling with state-of-the-art military hardware. In 1933-1934, a production of the play at the Comédie Française occasioned riots by rival groups of socialists and fascists, each of whom saw the play as right-wing polemic. Translations published in Nazi Germany described Coriolanus as “the true hero and Führer,” opposed to “a misled people, a false democracy... weaklings.” In the 1950s, Bertolt Brecht, skeptical of heroism, rewrote the play, turning it into “the tragedy of a people that has a hero against it.”
The Fiennes film, shot in Serbia with soldiers from the elite Serbian anti-terrorist unit, the SAJ, playing Roman soldiers and advising the cast, shows that similar values still motivate conduct today. According to the Serbian actor Dragan Micanovic, who played one of the major roles in the film, “after 400 years, we still have Coriolanuses in the world... We learn so little from our mistakes” (London Daily Telegraph, January 20, 2012).

Equating maternity with warfare, Volumnia speaks of her son as having in infancy sucked “valiantness” from her breast, seeing her role as conduit for the masculine, militaristic values of Rome. In the Roman ideology where “valor is the chiefest virtue” (act 2, scene 2), heroism is proved by being wounded, and the most convincing proof is dying in battle. At one point, Volumnia rejoices that her son has been wounded, adding to the 25 wounds he has already been able to show to illustrate his prowess: “O, he is wounded, I thank the gods for’t” (act 2, scene 1). To Volumnia, nothing is more beautiful than blood, the emblem of masculinity.

At a key moment in the play, surrounded by his enemies, the proud and inflexible Coriolanus cries, “I banish you... There is a world elsewhere” (act 3, scene 3). But for a Roman like Coriolanus, brought up in the ideal of service to the commonwealth, striking blows “for Rome,” there can be no world elsewhere: he carries Rome with him wherever he goes. When his old comrades Cominius and Menenius come to beg him to spare Rome after, exiled, he leads an army of Volscians to Rome’s gates, they see him as implacable, a machine bent on destruction. In this scene, Coriolanus, solitary and unyielding, claims to be able to resist the promptings of “instinct” and “stand / As if a man were author of himself, / And knew no other kin” (act 5, scene 3). But in this scene alone, the words “Rome” and “Roman” echo no fewer than 15 times, ten of them spoken by Coriolanus himself. When, in a final appeal, his mother, wife and son come before him, the pressure becomes too much for him to bear, and he realizes that if he spares Rome, he will inevitably bring about his own destruction. Forever an outcast, he can find a home nowhere on earth.

Throughout the play, Coriolanus treats the plebeians with undisguised contempt. According to him, they are fickle, unreliable, instinctively opposed to the “worthy” and virtuous: “You cry against the noble senate, who / Under the gods, keep you in awe” (act 1, scene 1). Any concession to the “rabble” is unjustified, “dangerous lenity,” a recipe for disaster. In language that is frequently violent, lacking discretion, he treats his domestic opponents like foreign enemies encountered on the battlefield and his allies as weak and irresolute. The deeply conservative sentiments expressed in many such passages in Coriolanus have met with different responses by later critics. Some (probably including T. S. Eliot, who praised Coriolanus as a far greater play than Hamlet and wrote an unfinished poem titled Coriolan) saw Shakespeare as an advocate of traditional conservative values. Others, like the 19th-century essayist William Hazlitt or Brecht, a century later, were repelled by what they saw as the play’s reactionary ideology.
But Shakespeare’s Coriolanus is neither a model of conduct nor a horrible example: he is a tragic hero, brought down by his own inherent faults of character, qualities admirable in some circumstances, disastrous in others. Cicero in his treatise *De Officiis*, enormously influential during the Renaissance, makes exactly this point, though not specifically about Shakespeare’s character. Greatness of spirit, appropriate “in times of danger and toil,” when not allied with a concern for justice and the common good, becomes barbarism, the willfulness characteristic of tyrants:

> But if the exaltation of spirit in times of danger and toil is devoid of justice and fights for selfish ends instead of for the common good, it is a vice; for it not only has no element of virtue, but its nature is barbarous and repellent... From this exaltation and greatness of spirit spring all too readily self-will and excessive lust for power. (*De Officiis*, I. xix)

If Coriolanus cannot be accused (like Julius Caesar, the figure Cicero has in mind in this passage) of “lust for power,” the “self-will” he displays throughout the play is dangerous both to him and to the health of the Roman state, and leads to his downfall. Schiller’s Wallenstein, another proud warrior “high above the common herd,” fits Cicero’s description even more closely.

The circumstances of Schiller’s play differ considerably, but Wallenstein shares with Coriolanus a “commanding spirit,” impatient of restraint, inspiring those around him with both admiration and dread and like Coriolanus, he dies alone. Coriolanus, in the closing moments of Shakespeare’s play, seems to court death, stirring up memories of the Volscian sons and fathers he has killed, as he defiantly asserts his view of himself as a solitary heroic individual, without ties.

> Coriolanus. Cut me to pieces, Volsces. Men and lads, Stain all your edges on me... If you have writ your annals true, `tis there That like an eagle in a dovecote, I Fluttered your Volscians in Corioles. Alone I did it, boy! (act 5, scene 6)
The one man Coriolanus considers a kindred spirit is his bitter enemy, the Volscian general Aufidius. Throughout the play, the embraces of lovers are equated with hand-to-hand combat, with the marital embrace coming off second-best. Coriolanus’ greeting to his fellow Roman soldier Cominius on the battlefield, early in the play, presents the companionship of men as morally superior and more satisfying emotionally than the softer attractions of the marriage bed. Aufidius’ outburst, on recognizing the disguised Coriolanus in the Volscian camp, is overt in its expression of homoerotic desire, equating love and war in potentially disruptive terms. Love and hate, the ties of friendship, passionate rivalry, competitive emulation, and sexual union, are confounded.

Aufidius. Let me twine
Mine arms against that body where against
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,
And scarred the moon with splinters.
[He embraces Coriolanus.]
Here I clip
The anvil of my sword, and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy valor. (act 4, scene 5)

The key words here are “contest” and “contend,” terms that suggest both imitation and enmity. What they are contending for, in the ideology common to Romans and Volscians, is honor, the hope of being the subject of praise during one’s lifetime and leading a “noble memory” after death, but the expression of love here implies its opposite. In welcoming the Roman general as a comrade in arms, Aufidius tells him of a recurrent dream he has had, charged with sexual energy, which is virtually a dream of copulation. It is no surprise when, later in the play, this homoerotic desire turns into uncontrolled hatred. Aufidius, openly violating the accepted canons of honorable behavior, vows that he would stop at nothing to destroy his enemy, taking any opportunity he can find.

The world of Coriolanus is one where love and fierce, uncontrollable hatred, honor and dishonor, love of country and rejection of any ties of loyalty, can never be disentangled. It is, as the Ralph Fiennes film shows, a world disturbingly like our own, in a state of seemingly continuous warfare, with no quarter, conditions that test the values by which we purport to live. The martial hero, despising the rituals of civilization, becomes a ravenous beast in a savage universe where, in a moment, predator can turn into prey.

CORIOLANUS AND WALLENSTEIN CAST

JEFFREY BAUMGARTNER* ENSEMBLE/TIEFENBACH/ASTROLOGER
LISE BRUENEAU* ROMAN SENATOR/VALERIA
Diane D’AQUILA* VOLUMNIA/COUNTESS
NICK DILLENBURG* LARTIUS/VOLSCIAN LORD/MAX

avery glymph* ENSEMBLE/SWEDISH CAPTAIN
Philip goodwin* BRUTUS/QUESTENBERG/GORDON
CHRIS HIETIKKO* ENSEMBLE/BALEY
REGINALD ANDRE JACKSON* AUFIDIUS/ROMAN SENATOR/MACDONALD/ENSEMBLE

AARYN KOPP* VIRGILIA/THEKLA
PATRICK PAGE* CORIOLANUS
GLEN PANNELL* ENSEMBLE/LUNDQUIST/DEVEREUX
STEVE PICKERING* COMINIUS/VOLSCIAN LORD/WALLENSTEIN

BRIAN RUSSELL* ENSEMBLE/HARVATY
MICHAEL SANTO* SENATOR/VOLSCIAN LORD/CZERNY
ROBERT SICULAR* MENENIUS/OCTAVIO
DERRICK LEE WEEDE* SICINIUS/KOLIBAS

ENSEMBLE
JOHN BAMBERY* COLIN CARMODY ANDREW CRISS PHILIP DICKERSON
JACQUI JARROLD* MICHAEL LEICHT JOE MALLON* MAX REINHARDSN*
JJANA VALENTINER JAYSEN WRIGHT HUNTER ZANE
ARTISTIC TEAM

Michael Kahn
Director
(Wallenstein)

David Muse
Director
(Coriolanus)

Robert Pinsky
Translator/Adapter
(Wallenstein)

Blythe R.D. Quinlan
Set Designer

Murell Horton
Costume Designer

Mark McCullough
Lighting Designer

Mark Bennett
Composer/
Sound Designer
(Coriolanus)

Fitz Patton
Composer/
Sound Designer
(Wallenstein)

Tom Watson
Wig Designer
(Wallenstein)

Binder Casting
Jay Binder, CSA/
Jack Bowdan, CSA
New York Casting

Daniel Neville-Rehbehn
Resident Casting
Director

Rick Sordelet
Fight Director

Ellen O’Brien
Voice and Text
Coach

Drew Lichtenberg
Literary Associate

Jenny Lord
Assistant Director
(Coriolanus)
Vocal Music Coach
(Wallenstein)

Gus Heagerty
Assistant Director
(Wallenstein)

Bret Torbeck*
Production
Stage Manager
(Coriolanus)

Joseph Smelser*
Production
Stage Manager
(Wallenstein)
Stage Manager
(Coriolanus)

Hannah R. O’Neil*
Assistant Stage
Manager

Elizabeth Clewley*
Assistant
Stage Manager
(Wallenstein)

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Processional Actors and Stage Managers.

*Acting Fellow of the Shakespeare Theatre Company.

Artists subject to change.

Wallenstein

Costume renderings by Murell Horton. Set model by Blythe R.D. Quinlan.
Coriolanus/Wallenstein

Play in Process

Patrick Page (Coriolanus) and Coriolanus director David Muse. Photo by S. Christian Low.

The cast of Wallenstein. Photo by Elayna Speight.

Wallenstein director Michael Kahn and the cast. Photo by Elayna Speight.

Diane D’Aquila (Volumnia), Patrick Page (Coriolanus), Aaryn Kopp (Virgilia) and Hunter Zane (Young Martius). Photo by S. Christian Low.

Steve Pickering (Cominius) and Patrick Page (Coriolanus). Photo by S. Christian Low.

Chris Hietikko (Bailey) and Philip Goodwin (Questenberg). Photo by Elayna Speight.

Steve Pickering (Wallenstein) and Reginald Andre Jackson (Macdonald). Photo by Elayna Speight.
Quick Questions
with Patrick Page (Coriolanus) and Steve Pickering (Wallenstein)

What is the difference between a hero and a traitor?
The eye of the beholder. Which word you choose depends entirely on the eye of the beholder. Hands down, both of our characters are military “heroes.” It’s only in the civilian political arena that the definition of “traitor” impacts the Grey Zone.

What questions do you think an audience will take away from these productions?
Both plays are so astonishingly timely, I’d hope we can inspire folks to read more about the real events and historical periods in which the plays are set—to better appreciate, as we have, just how close both cultures’ sociopolitical and military crises are to our own. It seems nothing changes.

What draws you to the role of Coriolanus?
The difficulty of the role drew me to it. I think. His language is frightfully complex, his personality is daunting and the physical and vocal demands of the role are intense. I wanted to test myself against that. I am also drawn to the psychology of the character—particularly as it relates to his narcissism and his relationships with his mother and his shadow-figure, Aufidius.

What is your favorite line in Coriolanus?
“I’ll never be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand as if a man were author of himself and knew no other kin.”

What draws you to the role of Wallenstein?
Answer one is Michael Kahn, Robert Pinsky and the Shakespeare Theatre Company. Answer two is Wallenstein’s willingness—for the sake of human lives—to demolish the political system that has made him rich and powerful. And his fondness for red capes.

What is your favorite line in Wallenstein?
“Young idiots love to boast about their dying. Your death—your posturing—won’t be needed today.”

If Coriolanus had an iPod, what would be playing on it?
Phillip Glass’ score to Mishima (Yukio Mishima was a model I used for Caius Martius), along with lots of patriotic marches played by drum and bugle corps and marching bands.

And Wallenstein’s iPod?
I bet Wallenstein listens to books on tape.

Read Patrick’s and Steve’s full answers at Asides.ShakespeareTheatre.org
In college, I studied drama with the great Francis Fergusson, author of *The Idea of a Theater*. He taught us to think about a play’s action. In class, his method was to ask two or three students—regardless of gender, or acting skill—to read a few speeches from a scene in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* or William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*... or, Bertolt Brecht’s *Mother Courage and her Children*. His course, called something like “Introduction to World Drama,” introduced me to both Aristotle and Brecht.

After the student voices, usually in an inexpressive monotone, had read a speech or two each, Fergusson would ask us, gently: What’s his action? What’s her action? encouraging us to express the action as an infinitive. The action would be the human purpose, or in the terms of Aristotle, “the movement of the soul.” In the *Ethics*, Aristotle says that the human soul is itself only when in action: tending toward some goal, or away from some aversion. Passion, before it generates a purpose, is... passive, the soul like soft wax that receives an impression, not yet acting as itself.

Oedipus’ action in a scene might be “to find out what the Messenger knows,” while the Messenger’s is “to protect himself” while Jocasta’s is “to slow down Oedipus.” Those three individual actions are component vectors in the scene’s overall action, which a viewer (or director or scholar) might define as “to approach what happened at a crossroads, long ago.” And each scene, in turn, can be seen as a component vector of the play’s overall action. (“To heal Thebes” or “to see the truth” or any number of possibilities.)

Brecht’s theatre is profoundly different from that classical arena, but in Fergusson’s vision Brechtian drama, too, presents an action. The great modern anti-war and anti-fascist work, Brecht’s *Mother Courage*, proceeds by the action of disruption, undermining and defying conventional notions of heroism and nobility, along with aesthetic principles of unity and decorum, including the separation of comedy and tragedy, epic and low.

The historical setting of Brecht’s work is the same as for Friedrich Schiller’s *Wallenstein*: the Thirty Years’ War. Schiller uses the ambiguous, magnetic figure of Wallenstein, and the horrors of the war, to question his own Romantic ideas about heroes and their aspirations. Brecht explodes such ideas in bursts of unsentimental, painful laughter.

One of the first speeches in *Mother Courage* is: “You know what the trouble with peace is? No organization.” The action of that speech is to undermine pieties about peace and
organization, to propose the nasty underside of those words or ideas. The action of the Sergeant who says the words is to make a case on behalf of war. The action of the scene is a component vector of an overall action that might be “to confront the nauseating realities” or “to keep living anyway” or “to make a profit.”

Loosely speaking, if classical tragic action tends toward illumination that preserves a community, the action of Brecht’s “epic theater” tends toward survival. Somewhere between the two—or apart from them?—Schiller’s questing and questioning, Romantic spirit, is embodied by Max Palladini, a fictional creation that the dramatist puts among actual historical figures. Max at the outset believes in both Wallenstein’s heroic leadership and his father Octavio Palladini’s conservative probity. In the end, disillusioned, he finds a way to reject both.

None of these ideas were in my conscious mind as I tried to make a single, contemporary play out of Friedrich Schiller’s great Wallenstein trilogy. I wanted to retain Schiller’s complex, ambivalent vision of Albrecht Wallenstein and his world. To do that, I needed to include the double nature, ideal and violent, promising and terrible, of a new, aspirational social order. In retrospect, I think that by inventing Dead Wallenstein, who addresses the audience directly—in a way, a Brechtian character, commenting on a Romantic drama—I may have been drawing on Francis Fergusson’s sense of theatre, in its generous range of possibilities.

In this free adaptation, I have tried to preserve the essential spirit of Schiller’s work, the action of all the characters—even while they contend with one another, sometimes murderously—of creating a new, better order for their world.

\[\text{Robert Pinsky’s} \text{ most recent publications are his } \text{Selected Poems and PoemJazz, a poetry- and-music CD with Grammy-winning pianist Laurence Hobgood. As Poet Laureate of the United States for an unprecedented three terms (1997–2000) he created the Favorite Poem Project, with videos at www.favoritepoem.org and the Summer Poetry Institute for K–12 Educators at Boston University’s School of Education. His many awards include the Korean Manhae Prize, the Italian Premio Capri and the Harold Washington Award from the city of Chicago. He has appeared in an episode of The Simpsons, at a poetry reading attended by Lisa, and on The Colbert Report, where he moderated a metaphor contest between Stephen Colbert and Sean Penn.}\]
By the time of the Thirty Years’ War, most of central Europe belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, an unruly conglomeration of more than 400 states and petty principalities. Conflict was perhaps inevitable, and a series of complex and shifting alliances led to the outbreak of hostilities which would draw in most of the powers on the continent. The result was 30 years of unprecedented destruction, as well as the rise (and fall) of the enigmatic Bohemian warlord Albrecht Wallenstein.
Timeline

1620 Battle of White Mountain (Prague)
   Imperial forces defeat Bohemian rebels

1625 Wallenstein raises an army for the Emperor

1626 Battle of Dessau
   Imperial forces defeat the Danes

1627–1629 Siege of Stralsund
   Wallenstein’s forces lay siege to Protestant city of Stralsund; the Swedes come to Stralsund’s defense

1630 Diet of Regensburg
   Wallenstein is dismissed by the Emperor, called back a year later

1631 Battle of Breitenfeld (north of Leipzig)
   Swedes defeat Imperial forces, set up headquarters in Mainz (Palatinate)

1632 Battle of Lutzen
   Swedes defeat Wallenstein, but their king Gustavus Adolphus is killed

1633 Pilsen
   Wallenstein sets up camp and begins negotiations with Swedes, Saxons and French

1634 Eger
   Wallenstein is assassinated; he is buried in Gitschin at the Wallenstein Family Tomb
Director’s Words: Wallenstein
by Michael Kahn

Friedrich Schiller is one of the greatest writers of the German theatre, and Wallenstein is considered by many to be Germany’s King Lear. The historical Wallenstein was the most famous general of the Thirty Years’ War. At some point, for private and for political reasons, he turned against his ruler, the Holy Roman Emperor. Schiller’s play treats the fallout. It’s a very exciting play that addresses many issues that remain topical today—including the purpose of war, the cost of war and the fine line between a hero and a traitor.

One of the most exciting things about working on a Schiller play is his relationship to Shakespeare. He loved the sweep of Shakespeare’s plays, their mixture of comedy and tragedy. Wallenstein, like all of Schiller’s plays, has Shakespearean scale. Its subject-matter is grand and its characters are world-historical figures, archetypes of human experience.

I first read Wallenstein a few years ago, after directing Don Carlos. It was such a fulfilling experience that I read all of Schiller’s plays. When I came across Wallenstein, I knew I was looking at something extraordinary. The original Wallenstein is a nine-hour play, in eleven acts. As far as I know, it has never been seen in the United States. The fact that we’re exposing our audiences to such a great play is very important to me and to the Shakespeare Theatre Company’s mission of presenting plays which will hopefully enter the repertory of American classical theatre.

However, I’ve gone to great lengths to make sure that the play functions as a piece of drama, not just a history lesson. I hope that if you don’t know anything about the war, you’ll still become engrossed in the play. As a matter of fact, the first line of this version is “Forget about the Thirty Years’ War.” What interests me is the human story, one in which a general disagrees with his country and a tragic standoff ensues. As you might know, there have been some examples of that lately in our own society. In condensing the play down into two acts and two hours, Robert Pinsky, the former Poet Laureate, has done an exceptional job in adapting the original for performance. This is a true world premiere, from one of our greatest poets.
In this historical drama, set midway through the religious conflicts that ravaged war-torn Europe in the 17th century, the 18th-century German dramatist Friedrich Schiller chronicles the final year and downfall of the celebrated Bohemian leader Albrecht Wallenstein, duke of Friedland (1583-1634), and explores the factors contributing to his demise. Having risen quickly in the Emperor’s military ranks due to his wealth, ambition, brashness and military successes, the duke of Friedland had garnered many loyal supporters, most notably the common soldiers among his troops, as evidenced in the play’s opening act. As later events in the play make clear, his success has also engendered powerful enemies, who have grown resentful of the power he has gained at their expense. Encouraged by his military success and blinded by his misguided faith in the stars, Wallenstein falls victim to a fate of his own making and is assassinated by his own trusted men.

The general historical details of Schiller’s play—first performed (1798) and published (1800) as a trilogy (Wallenstein’s Camp, The Piccolomini and Wallenstein’s Death)—follow historical fact. At the time of the Thirty Years’ War, Germany, as the nation state we know today, did not exist; instead, it consisted of a collection of kingdoms, duchies, imperial cities and the like known as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation under the purview of the Emperor located in Vienna, Austria. General Wallenstein, a convert to Catholicism, not only became the Emperor’s trusted military leader but also negotiated his sovereignty, in that he was only beholden to the will of Emperor. On paper, he seemed the ideal leader to quell the uprisings and subdue the Emperor’s enemies. However, the very same character traits that made him a likely hero, as well his unhealthy penchant for astrology, lead to his treasonous alliance with Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and his subsequent assassination.
Schiller was first drawn to the traitorous military general while researching and writing his historical treatment of the military conflict in “History of the Thirty Years’ War” (1792). Here the historical Wallenstein’s character flaws come to the fore. Schiller, as historian, concludes that the general’s tragic end was not only a result of his military ambition but more importantly due to his lack of “gentler virtues of man.” Indeed, Schiller claimed that Wallenstein “fell not because he was a rebel; instead, he rebelled because he fell.” In this sympathetic assessment of the general’s demise, we see traces of Schiller’s dramatic figure Wallenstein. Schiller’s intimate familiarity with and depiction of the historical details, served as a vehicle through which the dramatist could stage and explore the human condition as it related to questions of power and moral character: “For only great affairs will have the power / To stimulate mankind’s first principles; / Thus in a narrow sphere the mind contracts, / But man grows great along with greater goals” (Prologue 57-60).

Examining the tragically flawed title character of Schiller’s *Wallenstein*, one might ask how the (in)famous 16th-century Bohemian general became the protagonist of one of the most well-known and influential German dramas? The answer can, perhaps, be found in a 1796 letter from Schiller to his contemporary Wilhelm von Humboldt in which Schiller acknowledges the general’s shortcomings: “[Wallenstein] possesses nothing noble, he does not appear grand in any single act of life; he has little dignity and the like; nevertheless, I hope to create in a realistic manner a dramatic, great character within him, who has a genuine life principle.” Indeed, Schiller’s historical subject matter proved more challenging to reconcile with his dramatic theories and aesthetic principles than he had anticipated. As Schiller’s correspondence with contemporaries such as Johann Wolfgang

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1 All translations of *Wallenstein* are from the English translation by Jeanne Willson (edited by Walter Hinderer). References to the prologue are cited by line number; references to *Wallenstein’s Camp*, *The Piccolomini* and *Wallenstein’s Death* are cited by act and scene.

2 All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.
von Goethe reveal, Schiller struggled to raise the negative historical figure of Wallenstein to poetic, dramatic heights.

What resulted from Schiller’s treatment of the accomplished yet controversial military strategist and general of the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) is considered still today to be one of the most celebrated feats of the German stage. Although the premiere of Schiller’s three-part drama in Weimar can be characterized as a success, certainly according to Schiller’s comments about the play’s reception, critics took the dramatist to task for the sheer unwieldiness of the trilogy: the length of the individual parts prevented it from being performed in one evening—a clear transgression of Aristotelian “rules” as understood by 18th- and 19th-century German dramatists; there was a perceived lack of continuity within the individual parts in terms of action and resolution of events; and the multitude of characters—more than 50—paraded on stage made it difficult for the audience to keep track. Beyond the basic difficulties of staging the lengthy trilogy, other critics focused on the problematic figure of the play’s protagonist and found fault with Schiller for his depiction of a realistic instead of idealistic hero.

The Wallenstein trilogy is, perhaps, more a reflection of and critical engagement with the political context of Schiller’s own time than that of his historical protagonist. At the time when the first act of Schiller’s trilogy (Wallenstein’s Camp) premiered on stage in 1798, the Holy Roman Empire was, albeit weakened and in decline, still the political structure within which Schiller and his contemporaries composed their literary works. For this reason, Schiller’s historical drama is often read through the lens of the political and social upheaval wrought by the French Revolution, including the Napoleonic Wars and French occupation of German territories, which ultimately lead to the abdication of the Emperor and the dissolution of the Empire in 1806. Disillusioned by the excessive violence of the French Revolution, Schiller, like many of his contemporaries, rejected the possibility of social and political lead by the masses; instead, Schiller cultivated the idea that social change could only be brought about through a form of enlightened absolutism and the moral education of the individual through aesthetic appreciation.

In numerous theoretical essays, most notably “Theater Considered as Moral Institution,” “On the Tragic Art” and “On Naive and Sentimental Poetry,” Schiller,
alongside fellow classicist Goethe, articulated this aesthetic program, in which art, and specifically the dramatic arts, was charged with the moral edification of the individual in order to bring about social change. Central to Schiller’s theories is the tension between an individual’s disposition or inclination (Neigung) and his or her duty (Pflicht). This conflict can be clearly seen in Wallenstein’s contemplation to defy his Emperor, who he believes has betrayed him and his subjects by refusing peace. By allying with the enemy, Wallenstein views himself as the man to end the war and bring about peace (Wallenstein’s Death, 3.15). As Schiller noted in his 1799 response to the theatre critic Karl August Böttinger, Wallenstein’s goal was noble, but his means were flawed. However, the question remains unanswered as to whether Wallenstein’s traitorous actions result truly from a noble inclination to establish peace for all or from a more self-serving desire to assume the throne as King of Bohemia or even that of Emperor. He does, after all, repeatedly liken his authority over his men, and Max Piccolomini in particular, to that of Emperor (3.18).

Beyond the obvious political gestures of Schiller’s play, we also find a distinct engagement with the philosophical impulses of Schiller’s life and times. In his 1784 essay “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” Immanuel Kant famously advocated for the individual’s ability to avail himself of rational thought in order to be liberated from his self-imposed immaturity. Reading Schiller against Kant, Wallenstein embodies the struggle of the individual to think for himself and to act rationally. After all, his death can be attributed, at least in part, to his trust in a pseudoscience. In addition to Wallenstein’s character flaws—ambition, over confidence, disproportionate treatment of his soldiers, to name but a few—he allows his decision making to be informed by his blind faith in the stars and, more importantly, his belief that he is capable of accurately reading these signs. In the final play of the trilogy, Wallenstein’s Death, Wallenstein’s decision to sign a peace treaty with the Swedes is based on his incorrect interpretation of his horoscope and assumption that his star is in ascension and that of his enemy in decline (1.1).

Schiller’s Wallenstein trilogy was revolutionary both in terms of form and content for its time. In its reworked and condensed version, the story of the highly decorated yet tragically flawed military leader has become more accessible and continues to resonate with today’s audiences.

Julie Kosser is Assistant Professor of German Literature and Culture at the University of Maryland, College Park.
Mother Courage: The Power of Women in War
by Laura Henry Buda

From the siege of Troy to Vietnam, war has been a man’s work. Women stayed behind while their husbands, friends and fathers trekked across oceans to fight the good fight, defeat the enemy, protect the homeland. Women had no place in the trenches—soldiers defined themselves as masculine protectors, embracing bravado and violence in defense of an idealized home. On January 24, 2013, however, the definition of a soldier changed with Defense Secretary Leon Panetta’s announcement that the U.S. military would lift the ban on female members in combat. The policy acknowledged what had already been occurring overseas, recognizing women for the valor and dedication they demonstrate every day alongside their male comrades.

But in the history of war, women have often been relegated to the background. They were not asked when countries declared war, nor invited to join the fight against a common enemy. In Coriolanus and Wallenstein, two generations of women fight masculine battles from a position of weakness.

As Coriolanus battles Volscian soldiers and Roman plebeians, sustaining wounds and insults, all his wife Virgilia can do is wail: “O no, no, no!” and “O heavens!” Her anger boiling over at the treacherous tribunes Sicinius and Brutus, she finally voices her grief, to no avail: “You shall stay too. I wish I had the power / To say so to my husband.” Predictably, the tribunes ignore her, scoffing, “Are you mankind?” The words of womankind have no power over anyone.

And there is her mother-in-law, Volumnia, Shakespeare’s most fearsome matriarch. Though she was once perhaps as voiceless as Virgilia, Volumnia has transformed herself into a force of nature. Unable to actually participate in Roman public life, her power over Coriolanus is nonetheless absolute. When Coriolanus turns against Rome, Volumnia is the only one who has the power to defeat him, unmanning him with a mother’s scolding. By the end of the play, Virgilia realizes what Volumnia has known all along: as women, they wield no power, but as the mothers of sons, they have clout. Abandoning themselves and focusing on their
maternal roles, they find the one argument that Coriolanus cannot ignore. Mother and mother land, women and Rome are bound together, an entity that will either destroy or be destroyed.

Amid the battle-scarred landscape of the Thirty Years’ War in Wallenstein, Countess Czerny and Thekla must also rely on feminine prowess to win power. When the young lieutenant Max retrieves Thekla, Wallenstein’s daughter, from her convent in the quiet countryside, he glimpses peace for the first time. Max’s artless love for Thekla gives her power over him and, as a result, potential influence in military schemes. “Thekla, speak up, do something, you foolish girl!” her aunt the Countess exhorts her when Max threatens to abandon Wallenstein. “You have the power...” Instead, Thekla wields her power by willfully renouncing it, escalating her father’s doom. But her action is fruitless. Like Coriolanus, Max cannot deny the demands of masculine honor; like Virgilia, Thekla is ultimately powerless to stop him.

By contrast, Countess Czerny strives to keep step with her brother Wallenstein, attempting to play matchmaker in love while Wallenstein plays matchmaker with nations. In many ways, she is her brother’s twin in her thirst and aptitude for greatness; were she a man, she would rival him in courage and cunning. But as a woman, her gifts are wasted. When all the schemes fail, the only action left to her is a final assertion of strength.

There is only one scene in both of these plays in which a woman seems to triumph. Finally able to play the part of military hero, Volumnia returns to Rome victorious, having sacrificed her son for the good of the republic. But Shakespeare does not allow Volumnia to speak. Her silence is pregnant and uneasy—just as Virgilia’s was at the beginning of the play. She has used the might of motherhood to destroy her son, and whether or not she realizes it, she has killed the source of her pride and power. When Coriolanus loses his life, Volumnia loses her identity. She is doomed to powerlessness, unless she begins the cycle of violence again with Young Martius, once again taking up a son as a surrogate.

The women of Wallenstein and Coriolanus are strong mothers, wives and daughters, and powerful characters—but ultimately, they fight in a world that is not for them. Today we are moving toward a world where gender does not define or limit identity. Women now have the power to create their own path, even to sacrifice themselves in the manner of Max and Coriolanus. Merit and ability, not gender, can determine success. Had Volumnia become consul herself, the history of Rome might have been very different.

Laura Henry Buda is STC’s Education Coordinator and served as Artistic Fellow in the 2011-2012 Season. She holds an MFA in dramaturgy from the A.R.T./M.X.A.T. Institute at Harvard University.
CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Join the FREE exchange of ideas! STC’s Creative Conversations give our audiences the chance to connect deeply with the work on stage. Whether you are interested in historical background, creative points of view or voicing your own experiences, we have a discussion for you.

**PAGE AND STAGE**
(FORMERLY WINDOWS)
*Wallenstein*: Sunday, April 7, 5–6 p.m.
*Coriolanus*: Sunday, April 14, 5–6 p.m.
The Forum in Sidney Harman Hall
Hear insights on creating the production from the artistic team and local scholars during this lively event.

**BOOKENDS**
*Wallenstein*: Wednesday, April 24, pre-show 5:30 p.m. and post-show
*Coriolanus*: Wednesday, May 1, pre-show 5:30 p.m. and post-show
Sidney Harman Hall
Explore the production with this immersive discussion event. Pre- and post-show discussions give complete access into the world of the play.

**ASIDESLIVE: CORIOLANUS/WALLENSTEIN**
Sunday, April 28, 10 a.m–1 p.m.
The Forum in Sidney Harman Hall
AsidesLIVE symposiums look deeply into the text and production, encouraging audiences to examine the onstage work from a well-informed perspective. Featuring poet and adapter Robert Pinsky.

**CLASSICS IN CONTEXT**
*Wallenstein*: Saturday, May 4, 5–6 p.m.
*Coriolanus*: Saturday, May 25, 5–6 p.m.
The Forum in Sidney Harman Hall
Respond to the onstage production in a roundtable format with savvy theatre panelists.

**POST-PERFORMANCE CAST DISCUSSION**
*Coriolanus*: Wednesday, May 15, post-show
*Wallenstein*: Wednesday, May 29, post-show
Sidney Harman Hall
Extend your theatre experience. Talk with the acting company after viewing the production.

**TWITTER NIGHT**
*Coriolanus*: Wednesday, May 23
*Wallenstein*: Wednesday, May 30
Sidney Harman Hall
Using the hashtag #STCnight participants join the online conversation from the theatre lobby or from home. Performance tickets available for purchase.

For more information about these events, visit ShakespeareTheatre.org/Education.
# Wallenstein

**Coriolanus**

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**Wallenstein**

**PERFORMANCE CALENDARS**

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- **B** Bookends
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