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**TAFFETY PUNK'S RIOT GRRRL *JULIUS CAESAR***  
**An all-female cast rocks Shakespeare's most testosterone-laden play**

Taffety Punk Theatre Company presents *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare  
With an all-female cast featuring company member **Esther Williamson** as Brutus  
Directed by Taffety Punk founding member **Lise Bruneau**

Where: Capitol Hill Arts Workshop (545 7th Street SE, Washington, DC 20003)

When: Opening Night: Monday, October 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday through Saturday, October 23 at 7:30 p.m - plus 3 p.m. Saturday matinees

Price: All tickets \$10 at <http://tix.taffetypunk.com/> or 1-800-838-3006

Taffety Punk's Riot Grrrl Shakespeare project began two years ago as a passionate reply to a bigger D.C. theatre company: The Shakespeare Theatre Company announced that it would be producing an all-male version of Shakespeare's romantic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*.

In a theatre world that is vigorously debates its continuing lack of equal opportunities for women actors and directors and writers, Taffety Punk artistic director **Marcus Kyd** and founding member **Lise Bruneau** saw that announcement as a gauntlet thrown down. They also saw it as a chance to reconnect with the energy of the Riot Grrrl movement – which challenged the overweening maleness of rock'n'roll and was partly nurtured in the thriving DC punk scene where Kyd and the company have their roots.

Taffety Punk produced an all-female version to coincide with the STC's all-male production. The Riot Grrrl experiment had begun – and continued last year with an all-female version of one of Shakespeare's seediest and most sexually-charged plays: *Measure for Measure*.

This year, the nation's capital gets another chance to see Taffety Punk's Riot Grrrls tackle a Shakespeare play that's bursting with political intrigue, conspiracy, betrayal and honor: *Julius Caesar*. It's a play that's perfectly in tune with a city obsessed by government and scandal, and Bruneau argues that it's also a sign that the Riot Grrrl Shakespeare concept is ripening.

“The third time around,” says Bruneau, “we're maturing as a company. The first time, with *Romeo and Juliet*, we got to play a bunch of teenage boys, in love and fighting with each other. It was so cool. And it was a retort. The energy of ‘We'll show the Shakespeare Theatre Company!’ was rolled up into it.” *Measure for Measure*, she adds, showed that we had become a little more seasoned, playing with hot issues: it's a really sexual play, and it's really charged with gender politics.”

By selecting *Julius Caesar*, Bruneau continues, “we’re taking a very mature play of Shakespeare’s. It doesn’t have a lot of bells and whistles and things to hang on to. It has historical name recognition. But the sorts of personal issues that we’re looking at – the relationships that we’re looking at – are much more nuanced. We’re settling in to a place where we can tackle a sophisticated play, be sensitive to very complex material, and still rock it!”

*Julius Caesar* is one of Shakespeare’s most “male” plays. **Esther Williamson**, a Taffety Punk company member who plays Brutus, points out that its two main female characters – Brutus’ wife Portia and Caesar’s wife Calpurnia – have few speeches and are gone entirely by Act Two. Williamson says that she’s delighted to have the chance to tackle the play anyway.

“Doing Shakespeare is fun,” she says. “It’s what I’m trained to do – and what I love.” Taffety Punk’s Riot Grrrl productions, Williamson adds, “gives more of us women who love Shakespeare a chance to play.”

Bruneau also remarked on the “maleness” of the play as something useful for a cast of women to explore: “The men in the play are constantly encouraged to... be a man. And not to indulge in womanish feelings. I think that’s going to resonate very clearly in our production.”

*Julius Caesar* plays at **Capitol Hill Arts Workshop** starting Monday, October 4 for opening night and runs October 6 through 23 on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Shows are at 7:30 p.m., plus 3:00 p.m. Saturday matinees.

Taffety Punk Theatre Company is the resident company at **Capitol Hill Arts Workshop** (545 7th Street SE, Washington, DC 20003 – two blocks from Metro’s Orange/Blue Line stop at Eastern Market.

For hi-res photos, go to: <http://www.taffetypunk.com/press.html>

**Taffety Punk Theatre Company** won the John Aniello Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company at the 2008 Helen Hayes Awards. The company was also a 2010 finalist for the D.C. Mayor's Arts Award for Innovation in the Arts. Taffety Punk’s mission is to establish a dynamic ensemble of actors, dancers and musicians who ignite a public passion for theatre by making the classical and the contemporary exciting, meaningful, and affordable.