

# MEET THE DIRECTORS



## ANTONY & CLEOPATRA

Written by William Shakespeare  
Directed by Tina Packer  
March 17-April 1, 2023  
Mesa Arts Center



**TINA PACKER** (Co-Director) Born in England, Tina was trained at RADA, performed in regional theatre, was an Associate Artist at the Royal Shakespeare Company, played in television series for the BBC and ITV, and arrived in the U.S. in 1974. She had a Ford Foundation Travel and Study to research the visceral roots of Shakespeare's plays, through which she traveled to India, Israel, Italy and the U.S. She co-founded Shakespeare & Company in 1978 and has worked for the Company ever since! She has directed all of Shakespeare's plays (some of them several times); acted in eight of them (never when directing); and taught the whole canon at over thirty colleges, including Harvard, M.I.T. and NYU. At Columbia University, she taught in the M.B.A. program for four years, resulting in the publication of *Power Plays: Shakespeare's Lessons in Leadership and Management* with

Deming Professor John Whitney for Simon and Schuster. For Scholastic, she wrote *Tales from Shakespeare*, a children's book and recipient of the Parent's Gold Medal Award. Most recently Tina's book *Women of Will* was published by Knopf and she has been performing *Women of Will* with Nigel Gore, in New York, Mexico, England, The Hague, China, and across the US. For Shakespeare & Company, acting credits include: Shirley Valentine, Molly Ivins, The Beauty Queen of Leenane, Mother of the Maid; Volumnia, Gertrude, Cleopatra, and Edith Wharton several times. She's the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees, including the Commonwealth Award.



**DEBRA ANN BYRD** (Co-Director) currently serves as the Producing Artistic Director at Southwest Shakespeare Company. She is the Founding Artistic Director of the Harlem Shakespeare Festival and an award winning classically trained actress, scholar, and producer who was recently named Writer-in-Residence at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Artist-in-Residence Fellow at the Folger Institute, A'Lelia Bundles Community Scholar Arts Fellow at Columbia University, and Artist-in-Residence at Southwest Shakespeare Company, where she recently reprised the role of Othello, winning her the 2019 Broadway World Phoenix Award for Best Lead Actress. Her classical roles for the stage include Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III*, The Chorasos in *Antigone*, Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*, Volumnia in *Coriolanus*, Winter in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Cleopatra in *Antony & Cleopatra*, Othello in *The Tragedy of Othello: The Moor of Venice*, Marc Antony in the

all-female production of *Julius Caesar*, and Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*; the latter, for which she received Best Lead Actress and Outstanding Actress in a Lead Role nominations from AUDELCO and the NY Innovative Theatre Awards. Debra Ann received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting from Marymount Manhattan College and completed advanced studies at Shakespeare & Company, The Public Theater's Shakespeare Lab, and The Broadway League's Commercial Theatre Institute.