

Snipping famous speech unkindest cut of all

WHAT did Caesar say when he was stabbed by Brutus? TV3 viewers unfamiliar with Shakespeare now know that he did not say "Ouch!"

The film version of *Julius Caesar* shown last Saturday on TV3 had been eagerly awaited. After all, it had no less than Sir John Gielgud playing the title role of Caesar and starred Charlton Heston as Mark Anthony. Also appearing were the fa-

miliar faces of Diana Rigg, Richard Chamberlain, Robert Vaughn and Christopher Lee.

While it is true that some of these personalities are better known for their cinema appearances than their acclaim in Shakespearean roles, the producer can justifiably be said to have assembled a cinematic Shakespearean "dream team" for the film.

The highpoint of Julius

Caesar is, of course, Mark Anthony's speech at Caesar's funeral. You don't have to be a student of Shakespeare to be familiar with Anthony's famous opening, "Friends, Romans, countrymen..." But there is really more to Anthony's oration than the borrowing of ears.

In the first segment of Anthony's speech, he sows the seeds of doubt as to the true intentions of Brutus and his

band of "honourable men" in murdering Caesar. He then carries on to reinforce these doubts among the Roman citizens with a stirring speech culminating in the reading of Caesar's will. This part of the play is crucial to the understanding of the storyline in showing how Anthony's oratory skill turns the Romans against Brutus and his cohorts, leading to their ultimate defeat.

Alas, TV3 has seen it fit to cut short Anthony's famous oration. Did the speech contravene the TV programme guideline on violence, horror, sex or culture?

So viewers never did get to hear Anthony proclaim Brutus' act as "the most unkindest cut of all". This might very well have been said of TV3 too.

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