



**SAINT
JOAN**
by Bernard Shaw

The Questors Theatre Company 



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First performance June 18, 1977

SAINT JOAN

by Bernard Shaw

Cast in order of speaking:

Captain Robert de Baudricourt . . .	BRIAN RICH
<i>Squire of Vaucouleurs</i>	
Steward	TONY CHAPMAN
Joan	ALISON POLLARD
Bertrand de Poulengey	ROGER DOUGLAS
Monseigneur de la Tremouille	BRIAN PICKLES
<i>The Lord Chamberlain of France</i>	
The Archbishop of Rheims	JOHN ROBB
Court Page	SIMON SURTEES
Gilles de Rais	CLIFFORD OVERTON
<i>otherwise known as Bluebeard</i>	
Captain la Hire	ALAN CHISHOLM
The Dauphin, later King Charles VII .	JOHN DAVEY
The Duchess de la Tremouille	FRANCES MARTIN
Dunois, Bastard of Orleans	PAUL EKINS
Dunois' Page	SIMON SURTEES
Richard de Beauchamp, <i>Earl of Warwick</i>	FRANK di RIENZO
Chaplain de Stogumber	JOHN WILBOURN
Warwick's Page.	SIMON SURTEES
Peter Cauchon, <i>Bishop of Beauvais</i> . .	DAVID CREWES
The Inquisitor	JOHN MARTIN
Canon d'Estivet	BRIAN PICKLES
Canon de Courcelles	GATELY FREEMAN
Brother Martin Ladvenu	SIMON WHEATLEY
The Executioner	CLIFFORD OVERTON
The English Soldier	GLYNN CAREN
The Gentleman	ROGER DOUGLAS
The Courts:	
GILLIAN DAVIS, BILL WALL, PETER MACNAMARA, PENNY MACNAMARA, RONY RIGG, GORDON SAUNDERS, RUTH WILLIAMS.	

<i>Scene One</i>	1429. A room in the castle of Vaucouleurs.
<i>Scene Two.</i>	1429. The ante room and throne room of the castle of Chinon.
<i>Scene Three</i>	1429. The bank of the River Loire at Orleans.
<i>Scene Four</i>	1429. A tent in the English camp.
<i>Scene Five</i>	1429. The Cathedral of Rheims.

INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

<i>Scene Six</i>	1431. The castle of Rouen.
<i>Epilogue</i>	1456. A bedroom in one of Charles VII's chateaux.

Director: SPENCER BUTLER

Designer: PAUL DART

Lighting: ANDREW DIXON

Just as the real Joan of Arc was informed by her voices that she would raise the siege at Orleans, crown the Dauphin in Rheims cathedral, drive the English from the soil of France — and last only one year from the beginning of it all — so Bernard Shaw has created a play that has an undeniable inevitability about it.

Just as with hindsight one could have plotted, almost effortlessly, Joan's rise, triumphs, disillusionment with the French court, (and the French court's disillusionment with Joan), capture, trial and final execution — so Bernard Shaw has fashioned a play that plots only these events. An intellectual's play in which no whiff of cannon is sensed, no soldier in battle is heard and no drop of blood is seen to be shed. Bernard Shaw has taken the bare facts, the best known highlights of Joan's story and used them to unravel his own thoughts on the Church, the State, and England — particularly England and her position in the world following the First World War. (*St. Joan* was written the year after Joan of Arc was canonised in 1920).

Shaw, in his plays, is no man of action. In *St. Joan* he shows interest only in those scenes where he can select the certain and specific characters from history that will best illustrate what he has to say, and places them in situations where they will best be able to talk. By carefully placing what words he wishes into the mouths of his various characters, Shaw makes very little attempt at humanising characterisation, believing what the character says to be of more importance than the way in which it is said. This leads almost to a stylisation that in Shaw's careful handling does not appear unnatural. And coupled with his incredibly simple approach to the number, length and construction of scenes results in a play that in its inevitability strikes me as theatrical.

In preparing this play it occurred to me that the characters utter such basically simple arguments in such basically illustrative scenes that it must be the audience's part to make of *St. Joan* what they, in their hearts and minds, will make of it, given what I have said before and given a production in a theatre, of some theatricality. I do not mean in this that it will appear as a Victorian proscenium-acted melodrama, but that I believe, unlike productions of more realistically written plays, that no attempt should be made to make the audience believe it is all really happening; to not have to suspend one's disbelief; to know at any one time that it is not the bank of the river Loire at Orleans but a stage in Ealing where an author, an actor, a lighting man, a stage manager, a designer, a wardrobe mistress, a director and an audience are working. That just as Bernard Shaw used his intellect and his imagination to make a play, so must we—production team and audience—assemble to enjoy it.

Spencer Butler,
Director, *St. Joan*

Forthcoming Productions

In the Theatre

A Student Group Production:

THE SEA by Edward Bond
and

SOMETHING UNSPOKEN by Tennessee Williams

Bond's highly original imagination has created in *The Sea* a comedy set in an East Coast village in 1907. The drowning of a young man and the repercussions it causes in the tight, inward-looking community are the focal points of the action.

JULY 16, 17, 19, 20, 22 & 23 at 7.45 p.m.

Members FREE, Guests 75p

In the Studio

The return by popular demand, of

MAN IS MAN by Bertolt Brecht
The show that has a bit of everything!

JUNE 27 to JULY 1 at 7.45 p.m.

Members and Guests 50p

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SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS
by Tennessee Williams

October 1

ROOKERY NOOK by Ben Travers

October 29

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE
by William Shakespeare

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Many of Shaw's contemporaries have been taken in by his own emphatic assurances that he has applied himself to the stage only because he finds there the best platform for the preaching of certain moral or social truths and that he is much more of the prophet than the playwright. Undoubtedly there resides a modicum of truth in these assertions. Shaw has thought more vigorously, more alertly, and with more penetrating insight about the social problems of our day than any other living author. In play after play, in preface after preface, he has presented his analysis of the evils and terrors of the time and has indicated his own solutions. There can be no doubt but that the stage-platform has given him the opportunity of shattering numerous false idols and of awakening minds to thoughts beyond the shallowly conventional.

At the same time, even while recognizing these facts, we cannot accept the Shavian assurances at their face value. If, indeed, Shaw's reputation is to stand on his 'prophecy', its endurance is set on a shaky foundation. The discussion of war in *Arms and the Man* may have seemed incisive and full of basic truth when it appeared in 1894, but the experience of two great wars has cut away the very premises on which the author erected his ideas. When we start to analyse the thought in *Back to Methuselah* all we are left with is the often expressed regret that the ass that is man lies down and dies just when he is beginning to learn some lessons.

Frequently the accusation has been brought against Shaw that his characters are not living beings, with the conclusion that because of this his dramatic artistry is of a sort not destined to endure. The truth of the observation may be accepted, without endorsement of the conclusion. We may agree that in the whole range of Shavian drama there are no characters who assume such breathing vitality as we find in the persons of Sophocles or of Shakespeare: but that is because Shaw's approach to his characters is of a different kind. His theatre might well be described as the theatre of ideas, not in the sense that a single thought is imposed on the entire action, but rather in the sense that Shaw possesses the supreme and well-nigh unique power of making the most diverse ideas take on human semblance. His characters are the embodiments of intellectual concepts; his dramas are ceaseless dances of thoughts.

What requires to be stressed is that, precisely as Shakespeare gives himself to his 'living' characters, so Shaw gives himself to his ideas. As each idea presents itself, the playwright's gift of lucidity and sensitivity to dramatic effect make him devote all his strength and skill, for the moment, to the one object of producing conviction in the readers or the audience.

All Shaw's plays reveal this power, but none more clearly than *Androcles and the Lion* (1913), where the concepts of paganism, meek Christianity, and muscular Christianity are each put forward with such vigour, wit and charm, that while we listen to each sermon we are convinced that in it and in it alone, must reside eternal truth.

From this derives, ultimately, the interest of *Saint Joan*. These are not living characters who inhabit here: they are all incorporations of spiritual things, the embodiments of faiths and beliefs, the human semblances of rationalizations.

ALLARDYCE NICOLL: 'World Drama' (1949)