

—Slug:.....COMM-0857.arts.VTC_I_Joan
—Contributor.....
—Contributor email.....
—For section..... The Arts
—Format..... News - no byline
—Dateline..... Brattleboro
—Article Number:..... 43314



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Vermont Theatre Company Presents a powerful
2 reimagining of Joan of Arc’s story

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4 TEXT BODY:

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5 Vermont Theatre Company (VTC) presents *I, Joan*, by
6 playwright and actor Charlie Josephine. It is the imagining of the
7 story of Joan of Arc as a “genderqueer warrior stepping into their
8 power and identity — full of vulnerability, humor, tragedy, dance
9 battles, absurdity, and revolutionary spirit,” wrote organizers in a
10 news release.

11 The legend portrays Joan of Arc as a teenaged peasant,
12 leader in the French army, a heretic who refused to stop wearing
13 men’s clothing — as a martyr, and later, a saint. Joan’s story has
14 been told many times since the 1400s, written mostly by men,
15 with those men’s understandings of Joan’s actions and identity
16 recorded as history.

17 Josephine and Director Jess Iris invite audiences to
18 explore the possibility of Joan as Joan might have seen their own
19 identity, community, and spirituality with today’s language and
20 understanding. “Along the way, there will be music, dancing,
21 puppets, drumming, tragedy, righteous anger, love, and joy,” said
22 organizers.

23 *I, Joan* premiered at London’s historic Globe Theatre. The
24 VTC production “asks audiences to consider Joan’s experience,
25 regardless of what was written down,” says co-Assistant Director
26 Eli Coughlin-Galbraith. “Every time we retell a story, we bring it
27 into the present. *I, Joan* takes deliberate care to tell Joan’s story
28 through the lens of our current language and understanding.”

29 Given the content of the historical events, this show
30 contains themes of state and religious oppression, misogyny,
31 economic oppression, and misgendering. “As a story written and
32 presented with care to center self-identified queer, working-class,
33 trans, femme, and other identities who have experienced
34 marginalization,” says co-Assistant Director Avery Thompson, “*I,*
35 *Joan* takes a tragedy and adds a celebration, a revival, a glimmer
36 of hope that, through authenticity and with the power of the
37 people, our history can be in our own hands.”

38 VTC’s production of *I, Joan* will engage audiences
39 through multiple genres of artistic expression. Choral numbers
40 are led by Max Bady-Kaye, and pulled from familiar local folk
41 traditions. He has also composed a new melody for song lyrics
42 provided in the script. There will be drumming by Katie Steele
43 woven into the story at pivotal moments.

44 Dance and movement has been choreographed by Mimi
45 Fang. Tom Burrows serves as the martial arts advisor. The show

46 also features puppets based on early illustrations of the
47 inquisition of Joan of Arc, created by artist Shea Witzberger, and
48 props created by Jesse Tidd.

49 Dante Heartwood, with assistance from Theo
50 Heartwood, are creating costumes inspired by looks based on
51 what one sees at a contemporary Pride fest or protest or rally, as
52 well as pulling from historical designs. Stage Manager Lucy Webb
53 rounds out the production team to bring the whole vision to life.

54 “It was really important to me,” says Director Jess Iris, “to
55 bring together a massive crew of folx passionate about sharing a
56 story that centers a queer and trans leading character. Theater is
57 always political. It is often retelling familiar stories for today’s
58 audience, but bringing out themes that are relevant or important
59 right now. We have an incredible team of artists and performers
60 who have worked very hard and poured a lot of love into this
61 version of Joan’s story, because this story means so much to them
62 personally.”

63 Given the amount of talent and passion of the players
64 who auditioned, Iris says specific key roles were cast with a lead
65 and an understudy.

66 Performances will be at Epsilon Spires on Main Street
67 Friday, March 20, at 7 p.m., Sunday, March 22, at 2 p.m. Friday
68 and Saturday, March 27 and 28, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, March
69 29, at 2pm. Note that the March 22 show is a special understudy-
70 led performance.

71 Tickets are offered on a sliding scale from \$10-\$30,
72 though no person will be turned away for lack of funds. Tickets
73 can be purchased on the Vermont Theatre Company website at
74 vermonttheatrecompany.org/events or at the door the evening of
75 the show.

76 Epsilon Spires is an accessible venue. The historic
77 cathedral that houses Epsilon Spires has undergone renovations
78 to be wheelchair accessible and ADA-compliant. Accessible
79 parking is available behind the building, the accessible entrance

80 is at the side of the building, and the restrooms are fully
81 accessible and gender-neutral.

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