DELAWARE THEATRE COMPANY

INSIGHTS

DTC's Teacher Resource

SAINT JOAN

by George Bernard Shaw
adapted by Chelsea Marcantel
directed by Bud Martin

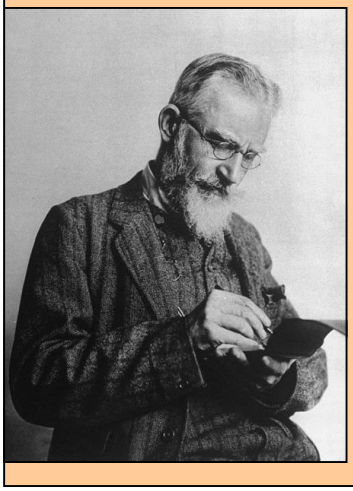
Delaware Theatre Company
February 6 - 24, 2019

A Few Words from the Playwright

"At eighteen Joan's pretensions were beyond those of the proudest Pope or the haughtiest emperor. She claimed to be the ambassador and plenipotentiary of God, and to be, in effect, a member of the Church Triumphant whilst still in the flesh on earth. She patronized her own king, and summoned the English king to repentance and obedience to her commands. She lectured, talked down, and overruled statesmen and prelates….

"If Joan had been malicious, selfish, cowardly, or stupid, she would have been one of the most odious persons known to history instead of one of the most attractive. If she had been old enough to know the effect she was producing on the men whom she humiliated by being right when they were wrong, and had learned to flatter and manage them, she might have lived as long as Queen Elizabeth. But she was too young and rustical and inexperienced to have any such arts….

"And she was not a melodramatic heroine: that is, a physically beautiful lovelorn parasite on an equally beautiful hero, but a genius and a saint, about as completely the opposite of a melodramatic heroine as it is possible for a human being to be….



"There are no villains in the piece…. It is what men do at their best, with good intentions, and what normal men and women find that they must and will do in spite of their intentions, that really concern us."

—George Bernard Shaw,
from his Preface to *Saint Joan*

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40th Season
2018-2019

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Bud Martin

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Characters and Summary

A Note to Readers: To assist educators in preparing their students for seeing our shows, the Department of Education and Community Engagement at DTC prepares and shares detailed summaries of the plots of our productions. These summaries disclose important plot points, including the climax and resolution of each play. Furthermore, our study guides are constructed under the premise that the educator has read our summary, and additional articles herein may reference these same plot points. This notice is intended to provide a "spoiler alert." In addition, this production is the world premiere of Chelsea Marcantel's adaptation of Shaw's Saint Joan, and the summary and descriptions herein reflect the information in the draft dated 12/5/18. Revisions that occurred throughout the rehearsal process prior to the show's opening may not be reflected in this study guide.

Characters

There are over a dozen characters in the play, with three actors playing one role each, and five actors playing multiple roles that shift scene to scene. The following characters are some of the most important in the play in terms of their role in Joan's decisions and actions.

Joan is a serious, passionate seventeen-year-old peasant girl who has been propelled by divine inspiration to lead French soldiers in rebelling against the occupying British troops.

Clare O'Malley plays the title character in the DTC production of Saint Joan.

Saint Catherine is the spirit of a young Egyptian woman whose intelligence and faith led her to be martyred.

Saint Margaret is the spirit of a young Mediterranean woman whose strength and faith are enveloped in a quiet power.

Lady Warwick is a sharp, calculating noblewoman whose interests lie in maintaining control of the land and the people she and her husband govern. She is self-serving and coldhearted, but sees her role as keeping order in a war-torn world that would devolve into chaos without her efforts and commands.

Charles the Dauphin is the childish and sometimes vain heir to the French throne whose wavering integrity and courage make even those charged with protecting him treat him with disdain.

Dunois, the Bastard of Orleans, is a military leader for the French who believes in the cause of war and welcomes Joan's assistance until it begins to cost him too much.

LeMaitre the Inquisitor is an intelligent, careful man who believes God has placed the Church as the highest moral authority on earth, seeks the reconciliation of sinners with the Church, and views those who oppose the Church as opposing God.

Bishop Cauchon is a local Church leader who strives for the moral good of the people who live in his community while, at the same time, struggling with local political forces for authority.

Prosecutor D'Estivet is a canonical prosecutor who aggressively and unmercifully seeks a condemnation of Joan as a heretic.

Characters and Summary *(continued)*

Summary

The play opens in France in the year 1429 outside the castle of Vaucoulers, where the teenage peasant Joan is frustrated over her inability to get an audience with the local lord of her community, military squire Captain Robert de Baudricourt, to pass the message that she must defend France against English dominion. Her saintly guides, Saints Catherine and Margaret, acknowledge the obstacles Joan will face, but reassure her that her mission is divinely guided. They suggest she visit the soldiers herself to share her vision with them.

The scene shifts to the household of Captain Robert de Baudricourt, who fumes at his housekeeper about the lack of production from his livestock. She attributes the problem to de Baudricourt's refusal to meet with Joan. After some argument, de Baudricourt calls Joan in, who requests to be outfitted as a soldier and given permission to visit the Dauphin (Charles VII, the heir to the French throne living in exile due to English control of France). Joan tells of other soldiers prepared to join her on her mission, and de Baudricourt dismisses her. He calls in one of the soldiers Joan named, Bertrand de Poulengy, who explains the dire circumstances the country faces, with the French royalty in exile and English invaders surrounding the city of Orleans, and persuades de Baudricourt to support Joan's wishes. De Baudricourt tests Joan, who presses him that God is on their side in the protracted war, and urges him to put his faith in God's ways. De Baudricourt yields, providing Joan with what she needs, and allowing de Poulengy and others to join her as she seeks a meeting with the Dauphin.

Charlie DelMarcelle plays Baudricourt, Bluebeard, Cauchon, and others in the production.

The action moves to the makeshift court of the Dauphin (Charles) in the town of Touraine in France. Charles, who has received a letter that Joan and a group of soldiers are on their way, shares the news with his advisor (and somewhat guardian) the Archbishop of Reims and a scoffing military leader, Bluebeard. The Archbishop and Bluebeard treat Charles as though he is a whining child instead of the heir to the French throne, and Charles vacillates between being petulant and trying to stand up for himself. The Archbishop does not want Joan to be admitted, whereas Charles and Bluebeard suggest testing Joan to see if she truly has saintly inspiration to know who the real Dauphin is. The Archbishop agrees, hoping that if Joan's presence inspires faith in others, it will invite miraculous delivery from the conditions at hand. Joan arrives and immediately recognizes Bluebeard as a fake and Charles as being the true Dauphin. Joan and Charles speak privately, and Joan urges Charles to be willing to put his faith in God, to fight for his kingdom, and to submit to the role God intends for him. Charles eventually agrees, and he and Joan prepare to lead soldiers into battle at Orleans.

Joan next arrives at a small country chapel, where she instructs the abbess in residence to allow her to dig behind the altar to find the special sword she shall use in battle. The abbess is incredulous at Joan's assertions and leaves, seeking the bishop's advice about Joan's strange request and behavior. Joan finds the sword and is eager to use it to fight the English; however, Saints Catherine and Margaret appear and inform her that she is not to shed anyone's blood in battle. Joan angrily resists, citing the massacred innocents left behind by English soldiers as they laid waste to the French villages and countryside. Eventually Joan acquiesces to the saints' command. The abbess returns, sees Joan with the sword, and believes in her mission.

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Characters and Summary *(continued)*

Summary *(continued)*

Sean Michael Bradley plays Dunois, Poulengy, Ladvenu, and others.

Joan arrives across the river from Orleans, where the commander of the French army, Jean de Dunois, stews about an unfavorable wind that keeps his boats from sailing up the river and overtaking the English fortifications guarding the city. Dunois, nicknamed the Bastard of Orleans, is, at first, amused at Joan's seeming naivete, as she shows great confidence but no skills in swordsmanship. He teaches her some defense moves, and she calls upon her saintly guides to pray for a change in wind. Dunois' lieutenant announces that the wind has suddenly changed in their favor, and the commander signals for his men to begin their siege on Orleans. Joan excitedly sets forth to lead the charge.

Time has passed, and the scene shifts to a castle belonging to the English, where a chaplain, Stogumber, complains to Lady Warwick, the noblewoman overseeing her feudal lands, about the many recent victories of the French soldiers, including the first big win at Orleans. They consider Joan a witch for her unusual influence over the men and her role in propelling the French soldiers to fight so handily. Lady Warwick reminds Stogumber that if the people begin to identify themselves as being aligned with their country instead of with their feudal community, the feudal rulers—along with the local church—lose power and influence over the people. Seeing Joan as a rival to her own influence, Lady Warwick wants Joan dead and suggests orchestrating her capture. Bishop Cauchon arrives, and Lady Warwick presents her case to him that Joan should be burnt at the stake for such a grave sin as sorcery. Cauchon explains that the French court, soon to be led by Charles VII, is also Catholic and would not see Joan's success in the war as witchcraft. Cauchon further suggests Joan's sin is not sorcery, but heresy, and he wants her to confess her sin and become reconciled. He bristles at Joan's assertion that God's messages come directly to Joan rather than coming through the Church. Lady Warwick notes that should Joan refuse to acknowledge her sinfulness and thus be excommunicated, Lord and Lady Warwick would then be allowed to use the extent of civil law to condemn Joan to death.

The action moves to the Cathedral at Reims, where Joan crowns the Dauphin (Charles) the rightful King of France. Following the ceremony, Joan and Dunois spar playfully in the courtyard outside the church. Charles, Bluebeard, and the Archbishop enter, and Joan seeks leave to lead the French troops to Paris to battle the English who still hold the city. Charles, though now king, fears further battles and asserts his desire for a treaty with the English, reminding Joan of his new authority. Dunois hesitates to further the fighting as he regards the potential loss of men and the possibility of Joan's capture and death. The Archbishop suggests Joan heed the counsel of these men, but Joan reminds them of the voices of Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret and their counsel of the will of God. The Archbishop sees Joan's refusal to listen to him as the sin of pride and warns her that she is alone if she does not take their advice to stop fighting. Joan finds solace in her knowledge that God is with her even when she is alone.

It is more than a month later, and the lights rise on Joan, who has been captured in battle and is imprisoned. She frets about her loss of freedom and the sense of abandonment of King Charles and the French soldiers and citizens with and for whom she fought. Saints Margaret and Catherine appear to

(continued)

Characters and Summary *(continued)*

Summary *(continued)*

her and attempt to bolster her spirits; Joan vacillates between seeking their spiritual and physical support and accusing them of being no real help. They charge her with remaining faithful and obedient, reminding her of their martyrdom. Joan, considering the violence the English have heaped upon innocent lives in France, jumps from the tower window to escape and return to the battle.

Months later, Joan has been recaptured and is again imprisoned. Lady Warwick is gratified that the representatives of the Church, Inquisitor John Lemaitre and Canon D'Estevit who is promoting the faith by acting as a prosecutor of the case against Joan, are joining Cauchon in the upcoming trial in which Joan is accused of heresy. The men acknowledge that a physical exam has proven that Joan is a virgin, but still seek to convince Joan she is a sinner and must repent, thus saving her from physical and spiritual condemnation. Lady Warwick pushes for a more immediate punishment of death for political reasons and is remonstrated by Cauchon and the others for trying to put a political spin on a Church matter; however, they note that Joan is on the path to a death sentence for her refusal to admit she has erred in her ways.

The trial is about to begin, and Lady Warwick departs. The Inquisitor, Cauchon, and D'Estevit are readying themselves to question Joan when Brother Ladvenu enters and asks why Joan's remarks of faith in God are deemed heresy when they sound holy. The Inquisitor explains that the Church should be viewed as the earthly intermediary and interpreter of God's will, for its authority has been handed down through the ages, and its collective mission and understanding are sounder than that of an individual's. The Inquisitor warns that the devil works by undermining the Church.

Tai Verley plays Saint Catherine in DTC's production of Saint Joan.

Joan is brought in and the questioning begins. The Inquisitor and Cauchon speak kindly towards her as they inquire about her health; D'Estevit, who is the prosecutor, takes a decidedly acrimonious tone with Joan as he accuses her of being a witch and threatens torture. Cauchon, the Inquisitor, and Brother Ladvenu argue for a more merciful and civil trial rather than pursue torture as D'Estevit recommends from common practice. Questioning continues, and Joan states that she supports the Church as far as its demands agree with what God has told her to do. Her insistence that she has a personal connection to God's will which takes precedence over Church instruction leads to the group's naming her a heretic. Their second line of questioning concerns why Joan dresses like a man instead of a woman. She responds that she was instructed to do so by the saints, both for practicality of battle and for modesty in living among men. The assessors accuse her of failing to admit her wrongs and warn her of the executioner, standing nearby, who waits to take her to be burned at the stake. Joan, horrified, insists that the saintly voices promised her she would be freed, and suddenly fears she has been deceived by them all along. Cauchon and Ladvenu, relieved, accept her words as recanting her sin. Ladvenu prepares a statement of recantation for Joan to sign, and as he reads the words that call Joan's saintly voices and visions the work of the devil, Saints Catherine and Margaret appear to her and bid her to have faith in God instead of signing the paper. Torn, but fearful of the fire, Joan signs the paper.

After relieving Joan of the punishments of death and excommunication, the Inquisitor pronounces her punishment for her sins to be life imprisonment. Joan, shocked by not being freed bodily, realizes that Saints Catherine, Margaret, and Michael had been truthful all along, and tears up the signed paper, now

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Characters and Summary *(continued)*

Summary *(continued)*

accepting her imminent death as the path to eternal freedom and happiness for her soul with God. D'Estevit rushes her to the executioner to have her burnt as a witch, and St. Catherine and St. Margaret accompany her to offer spiritual comfort. Cauchon worries that the English, who were to have given Joan a secular trial, will not give her due process and will take her immediately to the stake. The Inquisitor calmly asserts that if so, the sin of an untimely execution would belong to the English rather than to themselves. The assessors leave as Lady Warwick reenters, pleased that Joan's influence is about to end. Joan dies. Brother Ladvenu reenters, heartsick over having witnessed Joan's burning. He explains that she asked him to hold a cross for her to look upon as she died, and realized in her last moments that she was not a sinner, but a young woman inspired by God.

It is twenty-five years later, and King Charles VII, formerly the Dauphin whom Joan herself crowned king, awaits news from Brother Ladvenu. Ladvenu enters and triumphs that a new Church trial has proclaimed that Joan was indeed innocent, that she was not a heretic, and that the assessors who condemned her were themselves errant in their ways. Ladvenu feels a sense of peace and justice on the deceased Joan's behalf. Charles, snug in his bed, is simply self-satisfied, celebrating that his coronation can no longer be questioned since Joan is no longer viewed a heretic. The spirits of Joan, Catherine, and Margaret appear to Charles in a dream, and Joan engages first Charles, then the spirits of Cauchon, Dunois, Lady Warwick, and others to share what happened to them in the interim. Another man appears, a Vatican priest from the future age, who tells of Joan's eventual canonization in the 1920s. Charles, Cauchon, Dunois, and Lady Warwick fade away, still in knowledge of their imperfection. Joan, Catherine, and Margaret, saints together, speak of praying for the needs and salvation of Joan's contemporaries and of generations to come.

Statue of Saint Joan, erected in 1456 in Orleans where she led troops to victory in saving the city from English occupation.

Teachable Themes and Topics

Three Years in A Hundred: Joan's Pivotal Role in a Century-Plus Conflict

Though *Saint Joan*, by George Bernard Shaw and adapted by Chelsea Marcantel, is a dramatization for the stage and a work of the imaginations of the playwrights, many characters and events in the play are based upon actual people and circumstances and were culled from historical sources. Joan herself was a real person, as was the Dauphin, D'Estivet, and many others. Original playwright George Bernard Shaw became fascinated with her story in the early part of the 20th century, and shortly after she was canonized a saint, began writing one of his most enduring and powerful works. The play offers modern audiences not only a powerful dramatic story, but also a gripping look at some of the real events of the fifteenth century.

The protracted war of which Joan, Charles, Dunois, Bluebeard, Lady Warwick, and others speak in the play is what is commonly called the "Hundred Years' War," which modern historians date from 1337-1453. This war was actually a series of wars that are linked together by the fact that all were between France and England as the two fought for control of what is now considered the greater part of France. The two countries had been linked, politically, for over two hundred years before this war began, with various conquests of territories in each land by the other, marriages between powerful political families from each country, children of kings and queens who had roots in both countries, and religious connections through "the Church," the common name for the Christian religion that prior to the Protestant Reformation called the pope its spiritual leader on earth. (Today, "the Church" generally refers to the Roman Catholic church, its collective history, and its doctrines and dogmas.)

Throughout France and England in the Middle Ages, most common citizens were tied to their local communities by a feudal lord who pledged loyalty to the ruler of the country in exchange for the use and control of a section of land (a "fief"). That lord, in turn, allowed others ("vassals") to live and work on the land. The vassals would share their crops, their produce, and their services with the lords in exchange for military protection should there be an attack from invading forces. Some vassals might also serve as knights for the area. The vassals might have peasants living on their parcel of land who did the actual labor, and in exchange be allowed to live there and have the same protection from invaders. The lords carried enormous power, though, and might be paid well by a ruler who hired the vassals and peasants away to fight in a war while their wives and children stayed behind under the protection of the local nobility behind the castle walls where they lived.

In addition to this feudal system of truly localized government, with its exchanges and agreements among peasants, vassals, and lords, the Church held power, too. The hierarchical structure of the Church, in a way, mirrored the hierarchical classes in society, with local priests under the care of a bishop, and the bishops reporting to an archbishop, archbishops to cardinals, and cardinals who elect a pope. The Church in medieval times provided a sense of commonality and community; served to educate children of nobility (usually males) as well as young men and women entering religious life; supplied food, clothing, or shelter for the poor or orphans and widows; maintained written records, and had the power to commend or censure even the wealthiest noble on moral or theological grounds (and shape public regard for that person along the way).

It is within these systems that the Hundred Years' War was operating. In 1328, when the French king Charles IV died with no male heir, two men—Edward III, for England, and Philip VI, for France, both claimed the right to the throne by their relationships with Charles (both were cousins to Charles). Philip, seeking to establish his authority, claimed a portion of France that had been English

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Three Years in A Hundred: Joan's Pivotal Role in a Century-Plus Conflict *(continued)*

territory, catapulting the two countries into war in 1337. For the next twenty-three years, and through several more changes of leadership as Edward and Philip each died and new heirs took their places, England and France continued the war. By 1360, with both countries facing extreme losses due to wartime casualties, the ravages of the Black Plague, a freak hailstorm which decimated English troops, and the lack of French tax money to continue the campaign, a treaty was signed whereby Edward the Black Prince (vying for the throne after the death of his father, Edward III of England) gave up his claim to the French throne, and the new Dauphin (the eventual Charles V of France) in return granted England specific territories that had been in question.

A brief interlude of peace took place, but in the late 1360s, questions about the ascendency to the throne in Spain led France and England back into discord as each country supported a different man. Once again, the Black Prince and Charles V were at odds with one another, and their peoples back at war, with Charles declaring that all English-held lands within his borders were now French. Gradually, with revolt against such high taxes the French Crown placed on its people to fund the war, as well as the continued effects of disease and the lack of a strong central leader after the death of Charles V (his son Charles VI at first was too young to govern, so a regency of his uncles led instead), England gained a foothold over France and retained and grew its territories.

Another brief period of peace followed from 1389 to about 1415. Charles VI, now of age but experiencing bouts of "madness," was unfit to rule. Civil war in France broke out as various family factions fought, sometimes to death, for control. In the meantime, Henry V of England set out to reclaim France for the British. Though he had far fewer troops and was expected to be defeated soundly at the Battle of Agincourt, Henry and his men were victorious. Rather than take so many French prisoners for ransom (as was a common practice) and risk their uprising against his English troops, Henry ordered their deaths. Henry then took Normandy and eventually headed to Paris. After Henry's death from disease, the Duke of Bedford (acting as leader with Henry V's blessing as Henry VI was only an infant) and the English troops continued their march through France, leaving behind them destruction of villages as they conquered major cities.

Map of English and French holdings in France around the time of Joan's involvement in the Hundred Years' War.

It is during this dark period for France in the century-long conflict that Joan emerged. English troops were attacking the city of Orleans, and the French were trying desperately to hold them off. Joan's visions of saintly voices guided her first to the Dauphin Charles (eventually Charles VII) to seek

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Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Three Years in A Hundred: Joan's Pivotal Role in a Century-Plus Conflict *(continued)*

his cooperation on her quest to fight the English and relieve the people in Orleans. After persuading him to trust her, she led the French troops to Orleans, where they defeated the British. This battle in 1429, led by a woman, turned the tide of the war back in France's favor. Charles VII, who had been living in exile, was crowned King of France at the cathedral in Reims with Joan at his side. Joan and the French troops had several more successful campaigns before Joan was captured in Burgundy in 1430 and handed as a prisoner to the English. She was tried and convicted of heresy, and was burned to death at the stake in 1431 at the age of nineteen.

Joan's death galvanized the French people who had believed in her divine mission and were grateful for her leadership. Charles' popularity grew, and he began creating a more centralized government and military, whose training—along with the arrival of gunpowder and the use of cannons—made them more superior warriors. The English, scattered throughout France, could no longer defend many of their territories, and one of the largest regions—Burgundy—switched its alliance from England to France. The final battle of the Hundred Years' War was the Battle of Castillon in 1453, won through strategy and firepower by the French.

One of the end results of the Hundred Years' War was the new sentiment of "nationalism," a sense of identity and pride in one's country. Rather than being a country of many landowners and their various vassals, knights, and peasants, France and her citizens had a more unified identity, a clear monarch, a victorious military, and a civic and cultural pride. France was separate from England not only geographically and politically, but soon religiously, too, as after the Protestant Reformation, Catholicism was a part of French identity, and Protestantism the religion of the British.

Miniature portrait of Joan, created around 1450-1500, the period when her first trial was annulled and she was deemed innocent of all charges.

The war that lasted over a century had many battles, many reversals of fortune, many victims, and many heroes. But perhaps the spark that eventually brought this conflict to its conclusion was the influence and action of Joan of Arc, who rallied troops with her courage and her faith in divine providence's carrying the French to victory. She is known as "Jehanne" in France ("Joan" is the English translation) and "the Maid of Orleans." Though it took only twenty-five years for Joan's original condemnation to be overturned by a new trial of annulment ordered by Charles VII, it took nearly 500 years for her to be canonized a saint. In the interim, though, she was an inspiring figure not only to the French, but also to others around the world who admired her faith and courage. Her real existence is not questioned, for records of war and transcripts of her trial still exist. Shaw himself used these historical documents to create and shape his play, and he even used some of the text from her real trial as dialogue in the script. Though a good portion of his writing, and that of adapter Marcantel's, comes from the creative mind of an artist, the true story of Joan of Arc, and the three years she was in the public eye in a war that lasted over a hundred years, is honored by the" two hours' traffic" on the stage.

Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Writing About the Past for the Present Generation

Both George Bernard Shaw, playwright of *Saint Joan*, and Chelsea Marcantel, who adapted the play for Delaware Theatre Company, found inspiration in the young woman whose improbable transformation from illiterate peasant girl to military leader to martyr led her to be revered in France for hundreds of years and canonized by the Catholic Church in 1920. Both writers saw the inherent dramatic power of a lone teenager willing to go to battle in a real, physical war and also stand up against the giants of feudal society and religious structures. Shaw's original play, close to three hours in length and teeming with over twenty characters, received a new, streamlined makeover as Marcantel selected key scenes, characters, and dialogue to maintain, as she also added new material to shed new light on the tragic heroine Joan. This new adaptation of *Saint Joan* retains much of the classic play while also giving it a contemporary and theatrical polish.

In his preface to the play, Shaw wrote of the challenge of presenting to a twentieth-century audience the historic framework in which Joan's story sits. "But it is the business of the stage to make its figures more intelligible to themselves than they would be in real life; for by no other means can they be made intelligible to the audience. And in this case Cauchon and Lemaître have to make intelligible not only themselves but the Church and the Inquisition, just as Warwick has to make the feudal system intelligible, the three between them having thus to make a twentieth-century audience conscious of an epoch fundamentally different from its own. " Modern audiences may have heard the term "Hundred Years' War," but European monarchies of the Middle Ages are far from common knowledge of the general population—in America and, likely, throughout Shaw's native lands. What Shakespeare's audiences of the late 1500s knew of Henry V and VI, and their campaigns in Burgundy and France, as well as their sentiments about the two countries at the time, informed the way he wrote the character of Joan in *Henry VI Part I*, where he portrays her not as an emissary on a mission from God, but as a conniving warrior justly executed for her sins. But English—and American—audiences in 1923 did not have such a handy grasp on the nobles vying for power, nor the feudal society which fell apart as the war ended. Shaw, therefore, offered dialogue to explain the background to the audience.

> **Poulengy:** What is the good of common sense? If we had any common sense we should join the Duke of Burgundy and the English king. They hold half the country, right down to the Loire. They have Paris. They have this castle: you know very well that we had to surrender it to the Duke of Bedford, and that you are only holding it on parole. The Dauphin is in Chinon, like a rat in a corner, except that he won't fight. We don't even know that he is the Dauphin: his mother says he isn't; and she ought to know.

Marcantel, in bringing this same information to an audience in 2019, distills the information even more to give necessary exposition to Americans who may not know what Burgundy or Bedford mean, but certainly know Paris.

> **Poulengy:** What is the good of common sense? If we had any at all, we would surrender. The war is in its 90th year, the extinction of France is at hand. The English invaders have completed their lines around Orléans, and the city starves. The French cavalry is defeated at every turn, our ranks thinned, our spirits crushed. A foreign king is proclaimed in Paris, and foreign armies of skilled fighters occupy our lands.

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Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Writing About the Past for the Present Generation *(continued)*

Thus, Shaw's audience of 1923, and Marcantel's audience of 2019, are better able to understand the desperate circumstances into which Joan enters, which further underscores the disparity between this inexperienced maiden and the task she has been sent to do.

And Joan's youth, inexperience, and simple humanity are what make the play more than an action story or tale of war heroics. She is simple and single-hearted. She has been challenged to have faith in a time of crisis, and furthermore, to lead others through the crisis. This challenge certainly must have frightened the real Joan, and the personal fears, faith, and sacrifice were part of Marcantel's interest in adapting the play. "She was an illiterate farmer's daughter…, and yet she rose to command the army of a great European superpower. … Joan must've had fear, and rage, and dark nights of the soul. Depicting her as a self-assured super-human doesn't do her justice. In this new adaptation, I want to give audiences a chance to see the vulnerable side of Joan, which is why I introduce her closest companions—Saint Margaret of Antioch and Saint Catherine of Alexandria. She said repeatedly that if not for them, she would've lost all hope." Shaw, too, wrote of the human side of this revered saint. "She was only a girl in her teens. If we could think of her as a managing woman of fifty we should seize her type at once; for we have plenty of managing women among us of that age who illustrate perfectly the sort of person she would have become had she lived. But she, being only a lass when all is said, lacked their knowledge of men's vanities and of the weight and proportion of social forces. She knew nothing of iron hands in velvet gloves: she just used her fists. She thought political changes much easier than they are, and, like Mahomet in his innocence of any world but the tribal world, wrote letters to kings calling on them to make millennial rearrangements.."

Both Shaw and Marcantel sought to bring this centuries-old historical period, and the story of the teenager who changed the face of Europe, to modern audiences; Shaw for audiences of the early twentieth century, and Marcantel for those of the early twenty-first century. Shaw began his work nearly five hundred years after her death, when Joan was canonized by Pope Benedict the XV. Then, as of now, Joan's reputation was one of saintly glory. But the beauty of this story is in the portrayal of this young woman for who she really was: brave and fearful; questioning and confident,; self-assured and God-centered.

Right, text from the actual condemnation trial of Jehanne (Joan) d'Arc. "Q" and "J" represent "Questioner" and "Joan," respectively.

Q: How long is it since you heard your Voices?

J: I heard them yesterday and today.

Q: At what hour yesterday did you hear them?

J: Yesterday I heard them three times,-once in the morning, once at Vespers, and again when the Ave Maria rang in the evening. I have even heard them oftener than that.

Q: Did you thank it? And did you go on your knees?

J: I did thank it. I was sitting on the bed; I joined my hands; I implored its help. The Voice said to me: 'Answer boldly.' I asked advice as to how I should answer, begging it to entreat for this the counsel of the Lord. The Voice said to me: "Answer boldly; God will help thee."

Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Joan and Gender

Throughout *Saint Joan,* our title character is questioned and ridiculed about her decision to dress as a man and live the life of a soldier. De Baudricourt, hearing Joan is outside talking to soldiers and will not leave until she gets her meeting with him, remarks, "I know the sort of girl that is always talking to the soldiers," suggesting she is, at the very least, flirtatious, and more likely, promiscuous. Later, the Baroness at Bluebeard's side laughs at Joan's hair, and Joan defends it, saying, "I wear it like this because I'm a soldier, and it gets in my way." And in her trial, the assessors repeatedly question her about her lack of femininity.

> **Inquisitor:** For the last time, will you put off that impudent attire, and dress as becomes your sex?
>
> **Joan:** I will not.
>
> **D'Estivet:** (*pouncing):* The sin of disobedience, my lord.
>
> **Joan:** When I have done that for which I am sent from God, I will put on women's clothing.

In the play, Joan insists that her mission is not of her choosing, but a directive from heaven, telling her peers, "I have a great many fears. But my orders overrule them. Far rather would I sit and sew beside my poor mother, for fighting is not of my condition. But I must fight, because my Lord will have it so." And perhaps it would seem a dramatic device by Shaw and Marcantel to depict Joan as a victim of sexism by powers of the nobility, the military, and the church. But this conflict is not merely a playwright's invention; in fact, Joan really did push the boundaries of expectations for women of her time and place, and was viewed as suspect for such.

In the medieval age, most women had few options for career, education, and other lifestyle choices. A person's path was determined primarily by birth, both in terms of social prominence and in gender expectations. Most working-class women were married by arrangement as teenagers, bore children, and worked alongside their husbands and children on farms, or managed affairs of the household, including performing domestic duties such as weaving and cooking. Some women chose (or were directed into) the consecrated religious life, meaning taking a vow of chastity and living life behind cloistered walls as a nun. Those women who were in the convent might receive a basic education from other nuns, allowing them to learn to read and write, and serve in prayer and community life. But lower-class women in small towns and rural areas did not receive much of an education (and in fairness, neither did most lower-class men). Life on farms did not afford time, opportunity, or need for scholarly ambition. Aristocratic men might receive education, and so might a woman born into a wealthy family; yet even so, men's and women's lives were shaped —and often segregated—by gender-normative traditions.

In addition to the lack of opportunity for young women was the social expectation of a woman's being subservient to a man. Church tradition and certain supporting biblical texts (such as Eve's transgression and Paul's instruction that wives be submissive to their husbands) promoted the distinction of woman's status being below man. And in law and feudal structure, women's inferiority was the rule. The law of primogeniture, for example, provided that an eldest son would inherit titles and lands, even supplanting a daughter born before him. Other laws and social practices, likewise, promoted men's business, legal, and social status over women's. While a woman might inherit property and have the right to manage it on her own should it be given her by her father or deceased husband,

(continued)

Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Joan and Gender *(continued)*

she would give over her authority to her husband if she should marry or remarry. And it was in these two areas of occupation and status—Joan's choosing to live as a soldier, and Joan's self-assured rejection of men's authority—that in the play, and in real life, were points of contention that led to her condemnation and death. The real Joan's trial lasted many weeks, with days and days of interrogation, and multiple occasions of her being questioned—repeatedly—about her "unnatural" lack of femininity. On the second day of her trial, her manner of dress was brought up. As seen in this actual text from her trial, by the fourth day of her examination, questioning about the propriety of her behavior as it relates to her womanhood began in earnest *("Q" refers to Questioner; "J" refers to Joan):*

Q: Was it God who prescribed to you the dress of a man?

J: What concerns this dress is a small thing - less than nothing. I did not take it by the advice of any man in the world. I did not take this dress or do anything but by the command of Our Lord and of the Angels.

Q: Did it appear to you that this command to take man's dress was lawful?

J: All I have done is by Our Lord's command. If I had been told to take some other, I should have done it; because it would have been His command.

Q: Did you not take this garment by order of Robert de Baudricourt?

J: No.

Q: Do you think it was well to take a man's dress?

J: All that I have done by the order of Our Lord I think has been well done; I look for good surety and good help in it.

Q: In this particular case, this taking of man's dress, do you think you did well?

J: I have done nothing in the world but by the order of God.

Questioning along the manner of the appropriateness of clothing continued for days, including a segment in which the assessors looked for a description of the dress worn by the female saints Catherine and Margaret that Joan testified instructed her. Perhaps they were looking to compare Joan's choice with that of the saints whose words and ways Joan spoke of following. Shaw and Marcantel use this same type of questioning in their dialogue in the play:

> **Joan:** My voices tell me that for now, I must dress as a soldier.
>
> **Ladvenu:** Joan, Joan, does not that prove to you that the voices are the voices of evil spirits? Can you suggest to us one good reason why an angel of God should give you such shameless advice?

Though powerful women had been known in the medieval world, they were few and far between. One reason that we know less about medieval women than men is that most records kept—court documents as well as church records—were of the dealings between men, whether they were two peasants arranging the marriage of their children or bartering goods and services, or two nobles

(continued)

Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Joan and Gender *(continued)*

creating a treaty to divide lands. Few women took part in these transactions, so their names are literally "off the record." Certainly some wealthy women were powerful, and known to be so, due to their political status and the records surrounding their activities in the aristocracy. But less so for a woman born to a working-class family from a rural area. The fact that there was so much written about Joan during her lifetime, and in particular, a very detailed transcript of her trial which gives account of her actual words, underscores how groundbreaking her involvement in the war and her position in society were. When Joan was burnt at the stake, her ashes were scattered in the river, and religious and political authorities were hopeful that her memory would quickly die, too. However, she had left an indelible mark in the soldiers with whom she served and in the people she met in her journey of liberation in France. Public outcry grew, and it was a relatively short twenty-five years later when a new trial was convened that exonerated Joan, annulling her conviction, and placing her back in the grace of the church and French society. This woman who dared to live a life that broke gender stereotypes changed the face of Europe. She continues to inspire people today to live authentically and according to their consciences.

This drawing of Joan was made in the margin of the Orleans city record manuscripts on May 10, 1429, the day she and French troops defeated the English in and around the city.

Artist Hermann Stilke's nineteenth-century portrayal of the peasant Joan, met by saintly guides, and the warrior Joan leading French troops in battle.

Questions for Classroom Discussion

Knowledge and Comprehension

1. Why does opening character Robert de Baudricourt ridicule the idea of letting Joan in to talk to him? What does she want to do?

2. Describe the character of Charles the Dauphin.

3. Who are the "voices" that Joan sees and hears? What do they ask her to do?

4. Give two reasons that powerful authorities like Lady Warwick and Bishop Cauchon do not like what Joan is doing.

5. Why does Joan initially sign the paper saying she was wrong? What makes her change her mind and rip it up?

Application and Analysis

1. What are some examples of Joan's fear or hesitation when she is given directives by the saints? What might make her hesitate or be fearful to do what they say? What propels her to listen to them?

2. Compare and contrast the leadership qualities and styles of Joan with that of Dunois (the commander of the ships/army) and with Charles the Dauphin.

3. What causes Joan to lose the support of Dunois and Charles in the second act?

4. Compare and contrast the methods and manners of the different interrogators—Cauchon, D'Estivet, and Ladvenu—at Joan's trial. What does each want? How does each treat Joan? How does she respond to each?

Synthesis and Evaluation

1. Do you find Joan to be a character with whom you sympathize? What decisions of hers make sense to you? What decisions of hers do not make sense to you? Explain your response.

2. George Bernard Shaw, the playwright, says that "there are no villains in this play." He thought it most interesting to have dramatic conflict when opposing people each have a strong, valid reason for doing and saying what they do and say. Do you agree that there are no villains in this play? In other words, can you find validity—at least from each character's point of view—in why some people opposed Joan and wanted her to change, and why Joan refused to do so? Explain your ideas.

Classroom Activities

1. Shaw used the primary source document of Joan's trial to create dialogue for the pivotal scene in his play *Saint Joan*. Another famous "courtroom drama" is the play *Inherit the Wind*, also based upon actual court records of the Scopes-Monkey trial. Consider a major court decision that influenced our society or our thinking, and research the testimony. (Ask a librarian to help you find source records for historical material, or perhaps consult a law library to help you with more recent cases.) Then, using the actual participants' words as inspiration, create a scene or play that brings that moment to life on stage. What words do you choose to keep? What sections do you choose to eliminate from the play? How might a few changes in vocabulary or grammatical structure make a stronger dramatic impact? What imagined dialogue do you create to strengthen the storytelling? Stage a reading, perhaps with chairs and scripts on music stands, for your classmates, and ask them to respond to the dramatic quality of the piece as well as the impact of the play on their understanding of the actual event.

2. Joan was a teenage girl, an ordinary young woman, who experienced a transformation which propelled her to take on a major conflict in her world. For Joan, it was living in a war-torn country, seeing firsthand the destruction, and experiencing what she called "voices from God" that made her turn her own life upside-down and act. Who are other real people whose ordinary lives became extraordinary through their following a dream, pursuing a mission, or pressing for change? Brainstorm a list with your classmates, considering, especially, young people of today and yesteryear who displayed courage and conviction in the face of conflict. Create a spoken-word piece, poem, or song from words, phrases, or events that in your view capture the transformative power of an individual or group of individuals seeking positive change. Share your work with your class in a presentation.

3. Hold a classroom discussion/debate on one of these statements:

    * Children who demonstrate a particular talent or aptitude should be tracked into specialized education or training programs that focus primarily on developing that skill beginning in middle school instead of spending time in school learning about a wider variety of subjects.

    * The Internet should be better patrolled and restricted to prevent dangerous ideas or activities from being spread to troubled persons.

After choosing one of these statements, those who support that statement should line up on one side of the room, and those who oppose it line up on the other side. Alternating back and forth, a speaker from each line tells why he/she supports or opposes the statement. At any time, a person may choose to switch sides or move to the middle of the room for "undecided." However, only those on one side of the room or the other may have a turn at speaking. After the discussion/debate time ends, examine which arguments resonated with you and others. What happened to your thoughts and emotions through the course of the discussion/debate? How does this exercise help someone explore a new point of view? How might Shaw's point that "There are no villains in the piece—it is what men (and women) do at their best, with good intentions, that really concern us" be seen in the process of this exercise? In other words, what was true, valid, or thought-provoking about what an "opponent" said? Examine, too, how these statements have connection with the medieval world in which Joan lived. Finally, discuss as a class the best social/political climate for parties and people with different ideas to safely exchange their thoughts in order to make a better society.

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A fifteenth-century painting depicting Joan looking on as Charles VII is honored by the citizens of Troyes.

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Page 1—George Bernard Shaw. Author unknown. LIFE Photo Archive. Public domain. Accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George_Bernard_Shaw_notebook.jpg.

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Page 8—Map of French and English territorial holdings in France in 1435. Author: Mysid, Foxyshadis. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. Accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:100_Years_War_France_1435.svg.

Page 9—Miniature portrait of Joan, created circa 1450-1500. Public domain. Accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joan_of_Arc_miniature_graded.jpg.

Page 14—Drawing of Joan in battle. Created December 31, 1438, by Clément de Fauquembergue . Public domain. Accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=27223.

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Page 17—Citizens of Troyes hand keys to the Dauphin, with Joan looking on. Artist: Unknown; circa 1480. Public domain. Accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vigiles_misc_03.jpg.

Why Go to the Theatre?

State and National Education Standards Addressed Through
Taking Your Students to a Live Theatre Production

When your students view live theatre, they are taking part in a learning experience that engages their minds on many levels. From simple recall and comprehension of the plot of a play or musical to analysis and evaluation of the production elements of a show, students receive and interpret messages communicated through words, movement, music, and other artistic devices. Beyond "I liked it; it was good," students learn to communicate about the content and performance of an artistic piece and to reflect on their own and others' emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual points-of-view and responses. And the immediacy of live theatre--the shared moments between actors and audience members in the here-and-now--raises students' awareness of the power and scope of human connection.

The following educational standards are addressed in a visit to a performance at Delaware Theatre Company along with a pre-show DTC classroom presentation and post-show talkback session at the theatre. *(Additional standards addressed through the use of the study guide or through further classroom study are not included here.)*

Common Core English Language Arts Standards:
Reading: 9-10 and 11-12, Strands 3, 4, 6
Language: 9-10 and 11-12, Strands 3, 4, and 5

National Core Arts Standards—Theatre:
Responding: Anchor Standards 7, 8, and 9
Connecting: Anchor Standard 11

Delaware Standards for English Language Arts (DOE):
Standard 2: 2.2a, 2.4bl, 2.5b, 2.5g, 2.6a
Standard 3: 3.1b, 3.3b1, 3.3b2
Standard 4: 4.1a, 4.1b, 4.1c, 4.2f, 4.3a, 4.4b

Compiled by Johanna Schloss, Associate Director of Education & Community Engagement, Delaware Theatre Company, 2016