

his work appear in THE LARK. He starts his play with a bare stage on to which comes a cast of actors intending to play out Joan's trial, but who actually cover all her life story with virtually no help from set or costumes. Strangely, for such a life, this turns out to be not so much a tragic play as an optimistic one.

Joan was only 13 when she began to have visions and hear voices which she identified as saintly. She claimed that she had been chosen by God to help lift the siege of Orleans and crown the Dauphin King of France. At that time the throne was occupied by Henry VI of England. She achieved her unlikely task, but was taken prisoner by the Burgundians in 1430 and sold to the English who lost no time in handing her over to the French ecclesiastical courts, where she was tried on twelve different counts.

Joan's insistence that she was responsible to God and not to the Church led to her condemnation to death. She was burnt at the stake in Rouen on 30 May 1431, aged 19. Twenty-five years later she was declared innocent and, in 1920, she was canonised.

MHP welcome back for this production Tony Edwards as director, and three actors who have given sterling service in the past:

Rose Wayper, Pete Brown and Robbie Chittick.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR

by Nickolai Gogol

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 21, 22 and 23 May

A hilarious satire on corruption in local government. An impecunious clerk is mistaken for a government official making an inspection. Gogol himself worked as a government official and used his experience to write the play.

Directed by Yvonne Mitchley

MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE
THE SUPPORT THAT THEY RECEIVE FROM THE HARLOW
ARTS COUNCIL AND MARK HALL AND NETTESWELL CA.



1992

THEATRE SANS FRONTIERES
MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS
present

THE LARK

by Jean Anouilh
translated by Christopher Fry

Characters in order of their appearance:

BEAUCHAMP, Earl of Warwick	...	Charles Hill
CAUCHON, Bishop of Beauvais	...	Ken Collins
JOAN	...	Nerissa Penna
HER FATHER	...	Pete Brown
HER MOTHER	...	Christina Scriven
THE PROMOTER	...	Michael Rawle-Cope
THE INQUISITOR	...	David Schacht
BROTHER LADVENU	...	Douglas Sheppard
ROBERT DE BAUDRICOURT, of Vaucouleurs	Tony Davey	
AGNES SOREL	...	Rose Wayper
THE YOUNG QUEEN	...	Holly McKibbins
CHARLES, the Dauphin	...	Neil Bird
QUEEN YOLANDE	...	Gillian Hill
ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS	...	Jon McNamara
M. DE LA TREMOUILLE	...	Robbie Chittick
PAGE TO THE DAUPHIN	...	Mark Puddefoot
CAPTAIN LA HIRE	...	Pete Brown
THE HANGMAN	...	Robbie Chittick
AN ENGLISH SOLDIER	...	Norman Scriven

Directed by Tony Edwards

The auditorium constructed by members of the company
under the direction of Ian Beckett
Properties by Jack Mitchley Costumes by Laws
Lighting and sound by Christopher Driver
Stage staff: Jennifer Southwell

There will be one interval, during which refreshments are available in the foyer and the bar. The bar has a club licence, and members of our audience, holding a valid ticket for tonight's performance, are entitled to use its facilities

NOTES ON THE PLAY AND ITS AUTHOR

THE LARK is one of the group of plays which Anouilh (1910-1987) labelled as "costume pieces". He was a great labeller - perhaps because he wished to avoid having his work categorised by critics into a straight-jacket from which he wished to escape.

Anouilh's earliest plays were produced in the 1930s, but he was virtually unknown in this country until after World War II, when RING ROUND THE MOON made the London reputation of the young Peter Brook. Soon more of his early plays started to cross the Channel - in particular ANTIGONE which starred the Oliviers (Larry and Viv), and then in 1955 THE LARK, with Dorothy Tutin in the lead.

Many of his fifty or so pieces have since been seen, but of late he had slipped into obscurity until very recently when two London productions of THE REHEARSAL and BECKETT have revived an interest in the Anouilh canon.

In choosing Joan as the subject for a play, Anouilh was treading in territory peculiarly French - as indeed he did throughout his career; a mixture of history, myth and legend. As a character, Joan of Arc had long represented the national identity and had been claimed by any number of groups to further their causes, as did, for instance, groups as diverse as the Vichy Government and the French Resistance during the Second World War. Likewise, many writers have used her life story as material: notably Shakespeare, Voltaire, Schiller, Shaw and Brecht with an oratorio by Claudel and films by Karl Dreyer and Ingmar Bergman for good measure.

Throughout the body of his work, Anouilh remained fascinated by the nature of reality together with the corruption of innocence, and the virtual impossibility of coupling purity with happiness. All these aspects of