

Jeanne Dyke

'The Second Coming of Joan of Arc'

IF YOU can hold an audience with 90 minutes of hardcore feminism wearing only unisex combat clothes, than that's already something. If you're also playing a lesbian teen saint, well, that's an achievement - even if you do it with a hard Maltese accent.

Leigh-Anne Abela was facing a full audience theatre at St James last Sunday when she started to play the life of Joan of Arc according to Joan of Arc him .. herself. She reintroduces herself saying that this time round she'll be using her original name; Jeanne Romee. People sat close round her, she looked them straight in the eyes. This was, 'the second coming of Joan of Arc'.

A masculine Jeanne has come back to give her version of 'her' story, of how she rose from nothing to become a nation's martyred hero. Jeanne lashes out at the male dominated world with some hard-hitting lines and a constant defying tone. The continuous militant overtone entertained few in the audience and at times the lines were predictable, but on the whole it was witty enough to keep people listening.

Abela delivered a creditable per-

formance and her ability to work an audience in the round throughout the long soliloquy is laudable. The 24 year old actress makes good contact with the audience particularly with the dramatic way her facial features change from one 'mask' to another.

Michael and Anne Fenech, director and stage manager respectively, did a good job with the set design and a ramp/ladder allowing the actress to climb up or down the two storey theatre. This gave added interest to the space itself but it also served as a 'prop' on several occasions from the saint's brief life including her burning at the stake. Less clear was however the purpose of the 'trench hole' out of which Jeanne resurrects at the beginning of the play but which is then hardly employed except perhaps as a reminder of the girl's victory over death or time. The smoke and the well designed lighting by Chris Gatt gave a Baroque sense of drama to the ambiance but helped push the audience into that 'elsewhere' which is the life of Jeanne.

An extra performance is scheduled for this coming Tuesday at 8.00pm, St James Cavalier

