

# THE STAGE

C too

---

---

## Joan

An opening scene of writhing bodies drenched in bombastic classical chords and violent red lights. God, did I want to hate this. But a heartbeat later and I was hooked, so what can I say?

This is an amazing, brilliant show where every element has come together in perfect alignment.

Written and directed by Donna Kaz, the story avoids epic overkill and goes straight to the heart of the human behind the myth of France's answer to Braveheart – "I'm 16, leave me alone," the young goatherd prudently informs the saintly voices that instruct her to don men's clothes and wage war on the English invaders.

In a vibrant blend of narrative and physical, where the grammar of movement is as complex as the spoken, a flowing series of snapshots chart the warrior maiden's journey to her doom, punctuated by startlingly informative digressions, chorus-like, on dynasties, weapons of war, the Inquisition and the siege of Orleans.

Romi Dias' feisty Joan leads a six-strong cast which delivers its multi-roles with hi-energy sensitivity – pushing perfect script and direction even higher.

Oh, and the best techno-medieval soundtrack of the festival so far.

**Nick Awde**