University players do good job with Joan of Arc story

By Emery Lichtenwalter

Night jitters Friday and spoke much too rapidly in his opening scenes, but soon quieted down to good and steady portrayal.

B. J. Heft has the second big role in the play, that of "Charles, The Dauphin," and adds laughter to a serious play that can use it. He is very good, but must fight against a tendency to overplay. In some scenes Mr. Heft comes across more as a twitching Bette Davis rather than a weakling, ill prepared to rule, less than genius, king. Still, Mr. Heft adds so much more than he detracts from the play he is a very positive plus.

You will like and admire George Rowe as "Brother Ladvenu," the only friend to rally to her defense until the time of her tragic condemnation. You will find it easy to hate Michael Vassen and Jon Malkovich as the "Promoter" and the "Inquisitor."

The play is suitable for junior high ages up. It is only because I think it would be mentally above them that I do not suggest taking the kids younger than that. It is in no way shocking or pornographic, but so deep that youngsters could not fully grasp its meaning, and from their view longer on talk than action.

Eastern Illinois University Theatre is engaged in one of those large cast (27 actors) plays the do so well. The play, "The Lark," will be shown in the Fine Arts Theatre tonight at eight and there will be a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m. Good seats are available at $1.50 (less for kids) for the performances.

American playwright and author Lillian Hellman has adapted Jean Anouilh's play about the tragic life of Joan of Arc, and it comes off the stage with stunning impact. Even though it deals with the times around 1431, it seems timely in this troubled world of today. It sets the grey matter into thinking, does this drama.

Direction is by Gerald Sullivan, and Mr. Sullivan always brings out the poet in his actors. He seems to drill into them the value of the oral word and each word is then duly weighed ere spoken, and the actors give full value. John Keough's costumes are a step back in time, a history book well illustrated. Nancy Paule's large uncluttered set of multi-levels, adapts well to the parade of characters, and when silhouetted against Marti Fagan's changing colored backdrop, the effect is highly dramatic and totally eye-pleasing.

Needless to say a play about Joan of Arc is only as good as its Joan. Petite Anne Shapland is the luckless "Maid of Orleans," and if you can't have Julie Harris, small matter — Miss Shapland will do very well indeed. Her performance mounts higher and higher, and what a closing scene she gives us! Her beautiful voice was

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Reservations may be made by phoning 581-3110 between 1 and 5 p.m., beginning Feb. 11.

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us! Her beautiful eyes, tears glistening, will put a lump in your throat as Joan stands alone, deserted by her king, her army and her friends, facing the torture of the burning stake.

Jim Klecker plays “Warwick,” the sole Englishman involved in the sad drama, and gives good account of himself. He seemed a victim of opening