

## Free Speech Announcement!

Eisenhower Recreation Center, Bradley Theatre  
The Villages, FL **October 26, 5:00pm**

Laurel Manor Recreation Center, Lincoln Theatre  
The Villages, FL **October 27, 2:00pm**

# Dark Night of the Soul

By James Armstrong

**Winner of the 2017 National Free Speech Contest**

**2017 Free Speech Play Contest Festival**

**NITTANY THEATRE**  
★ AT THE BARN ★

Sponsored by The Charles Koch Foundation

The winner of the 2017 National Free Speech Play Contest, Sponsored by The Charles Koch Foundation and Nittany Theatre at the Barn is coming to The Villages!

Thursday, October 26, 5:00pm at the Bradley Theatre, Eisenhower Recreation Center  
Friday, October 27, 2:00pm at the Lincoln Theatre, Laurel Manor Recreation Center

Professional actors Dave and Laura Saxe, from Nittany Theatre at the Barn, Pennsylvania (and new Villages residents in Osceola Hills) will be joined by TV's most acclaimed actor and Broadway veteran, Alex Santoriello (star of *Man of La Mancha* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*) to read James Armstrong's "Dark Night of the Soul" ... the riveting story of the trial of Joan of Arc (running time, approximately 2 hours)

**FREE ADMISSION!**

As TV newcomers, we welcome TV's support of FREE SPEECH and would LOVE add "co-sponsors" to assist in "putting the word out" AND perhaps even donating some light refreshments to add some fun and excitement to the event?

About Us: Dave and Laura Saxe are Actors Equity performers who operate Nittany Theatre at the Barn, a regional summer stock theatre in Boalsburg/State College, PA... in beautiful "Happy Valley"

### **A Word About the Context for the National Free Speech Play Contest:**

Americans argue about a lot of things. Among the latest exchange of difference is the national dispute over 1860s historical statues, where calls to "take it down!" are answered by "leave them where they are!" Applying America's sacred free speech principles, Americans are free to speak out and speak up as they please, but the statue dispute introduces a new wrinkle into America's 226-year-old First Amendment: hate speech is not free speech. If these statues

represent hate speech and hate speech cannot be allowed or tolerated even in the form of “silent” stone statues, what does this mean for the Constitution’s First Amendment guarantee?

If we are to abandon the cornerstone of America’s essential freedoms under the “new principle” that hate speech cannot be tolerated, depending upon how the political/cultural winds blow, determining which speech is free and which is hate, is there any hope for any speech? In moving forward with new perspectives, it seems we have returned to a familiar spot, the contested ground that created the First Amendment in the beginning of the nation with this inescapable ideal: if freedom was to ring, it must ring for all... The Constitution’s First Amendment established our essential freedoms, with free speech as a centerpiece.

For theatre, free speech is the rock upon which every theatre stands. If we are not free to create this art, there is no art. While theatre speech is not quite like free speech in the open space of the public square, for theatre, for us, free speech takes place in a barn, where patrons choose to attend, buy a ticket. Theatre here may be a “captive audience,” but it is an audience who volunteers to participate; no one is forced to listen to the dialogue or hear the songs. But what if theatre, like certain statues, is declared hate speech, that a particular play or musical is targeted for action? What then? If we have leveled our Constitutional guarantees that once upheld free speech that have long protected America’s vibrant theatre, what theatre is safe from being branded a temple of hate speech?

Like free speech and statues, if theatre does not have and hold its free speech principles as sacred for all, there would have been no blockbuster musicals like our modern *Hamilton*, no challenging plays like the ground breaking *The Crucible* of the 1950s. Deciding to take a stand for free speech, we invited The Charles Koch Foundation to join us, to help us take a stand in theatre, for theatre; to push against the rushing waters of those who may use the torch of hate-speech to silence free speech. It is challenging, but if we do not stand for your right to speak out and speak up, we’ll all soon discover that no one has the right to speak up or out on anything, anywhere.

The historical record is clear; freedom is the one of the sweetest treasures on earth. If you mean to keep yours, you’ll need to take a stand. This play contest is our small step, taken here, in our little Barn. Where will you take your stand?

[www.nittanytheatre.org](http://www.nittanytheatre.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/nittanytheatre/>



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