

Queen Jesus Plays, September 2015

**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS, QUEEN OF HEAVEN  
MARKETING & PRESS PACK, 2015**



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## **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS QUEEN OF HEAVEN**

**Join Queen Jesus for a revolutionary queer ritual in which bread is shared, wine is drunk and familiar stories are reimagined by a transgender Jesus.**

**Written and performed by legendary trans playwright, performer and poet Jo Clifford and directed by Susan Worsfold, this unique and extraordinary show combines theatre with storytelling, spoken word and ritual in a way that, according to one audience member, 'leaves everyone feeling blessed'.**

**Selected for the prestigious Made in Scotland showcase at the Edinburgh Fringe 2015 and winner of the Scottish Arts Club Award, commending the best Scottish theatre at the Fringe.**

**The Guardian's 'shows not to miss' Edinburgh Fringe 2015 & 2014.**

**'Reaffirms everyone's right to live free of discrimination and prejudice' (Lyn Gardner, Guardian).**

**'A show that demands to be seen' \*\*\*\*\* Broadway Baby**

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## **PRESS RELEASE, SEPTEMBER 2015**

### **Queen Jesus embarks on an international pilgrimage**

**At an unprecedented time for trans\* visibility in the mainstream media and following a remarkable response at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Jo Clifford's Queen Jesus embarks on an international pilgrimage, beginning in Belfast in November as part of the Outburst Festival.**

Written and performed by award winning playwright, performer, poet and translator Jo Clifford and directed by Susan Worsfold, *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS QUEEN OF HEAVEN* is a unique theatrical event combining theatre with story telling, spoken word and ritual to create something that, according to an audience member, "leaves everyone feeling blessed".

In August 2015 *QUEEN JESUS* was part of the prestigious Made in Scotland showcase at the Edinburgh Fringe, performed in the Anatomy Lecture Theatre at Summerhall, Edinburgh's old Veterinary College.

Critical and audience response was phenomenal and the team was awarded the Scottish Arts Club Award for the best Scottish theatre at the Fringe.

"Team Jesus" is now embarking on a national and international pilgrimage of creative, spiritual and LGBT sites and spaces, forging partnerships with theatres, church groups and communities on the way.

Jo Clifford, Edinburgh based award-winning playwright, translator, poet wrote *Queen of Heaven* to explore the inclusivity found in the bible's new testament gospel stories by retelling them with a cast of more recognisable characters.

2009's five-night run of *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS QUEEN OF HEAVEN* was met with 1,000 protesters from Christian groups outside the Tron Theatre and 750,000 bloggers protesting worldwide. The archbishop of Glasgow subsequently called Clifford's vision of a transgendered Jesus 'an affront to the Christian faith'. He never saw it.

**JO CLIFFORD QUOTE**

Jo Clifford added about the show: "I didn't imagine it would be so controversial. Christianity is often used as a weapon against LGBT people to deny us our rights. I wanted to see how this could be justified by the source texts; and in "Jesus Queen of Heaven" make the simple point that Jesus never attacked us and assert our human rights to justice and respect.

We want to embark on this pilgrimage because all this still needs to be said. Prejudice, oppression and injustice are suffered by just about every trans person everywhere in the world and the global struggle against oppression of LGBT people is profoundly connected to the wider struggle for women's rights throughout the world.

Whenever I ask myself why I am doing it, I think of all that controversy and hatred alongside the letters of support and thanks and I know why. I am doing it because we must."

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## PRESS, REVIEWS AND QUOTES

### Edinburgh Fringe 2015

- Guardian's Top Tickets  
<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2015/aug/24/edinburgh-festival-2015-top-tickets>
- **The List "Festival Top 20"**
- **Feminist Fest "Festival Top 20"**

### Lyn Gardner, Guardian, Aug 2015

"moving and infinitely graceful...deserves more than a star rating"

<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2015/aug/10/reviewing-the-reviews-edinburgh-fringe-theatre-star-ratings>

### \*\*\*\*\* ScotsGay, August 2015

"I can't praise this show too highly – don't miss it!"

"This is a show that should be seen by everyone who has ever been damaged by the Christian churches..."

<http://sgfringe.com/2015/08/08/the-gospel-according-to-jesus-queen-of-heaven/>

### \*\*\*\* The List, August 2015

"profound, moving, witty and filthy, a wake-up call to tolerance, love and acceptance with an intoxicating secular potency"

<https://edinburghfestival.list.co.uk/article/73658-the-gospel-according-to-jesus-queen-of-heaven/>

### Edinburgh Fringe 2014:

*"Queen Jesus reminds us of the purity of sex and pleasure, the importance of empathy. We hold hands, and remember what it means not to be alone"* –  
Exeunt magazine

*"Entering Clifford's "queendom of heaven" is a thought-provoking, moving and uplifting experience. This is a show that that demands to be seen."* ★★★★★ – Broadway Baby

*"a vital reminder of religion's real heart, rather than the rules and rites that so often*

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*obscure it."*

Trueman, Festmag

★★★★★ – Matt

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### **JO CLIFFORD BIOGRAPHY**

Jo Clifford is an award-winning playwright, translator, poet and performer, who has also worked as a journalist and academic. With plays like *Losing Venice*, *Ines de Castro* and *Light in the Village*, she helped establish the international reputation of the Traverse Theatre Company in the 1980s.

She is the author of over 70 works in every dramatic medium. Her work has been translated into many languages and has been performed all over the world and her adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* made her the first openly transsexual woman playwright to have her work performed in London's West End.

As a playwright, Jo has over thirty years' experience of having her work presented at the Fringe and in the International Festival. However this is her debut as a performer.

She lives in Edinburgh and is a former Professor of Theatre at Queen Margaret University. She is father of two amazing grown up daughters and such a proud Grandma!

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**CONTACT DETAILS**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS QUEEN OF HEAVEN

Written and performed by Jo Clifford.

Directed by Susan Worsfold.

Produced by Annabel Cooper.

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