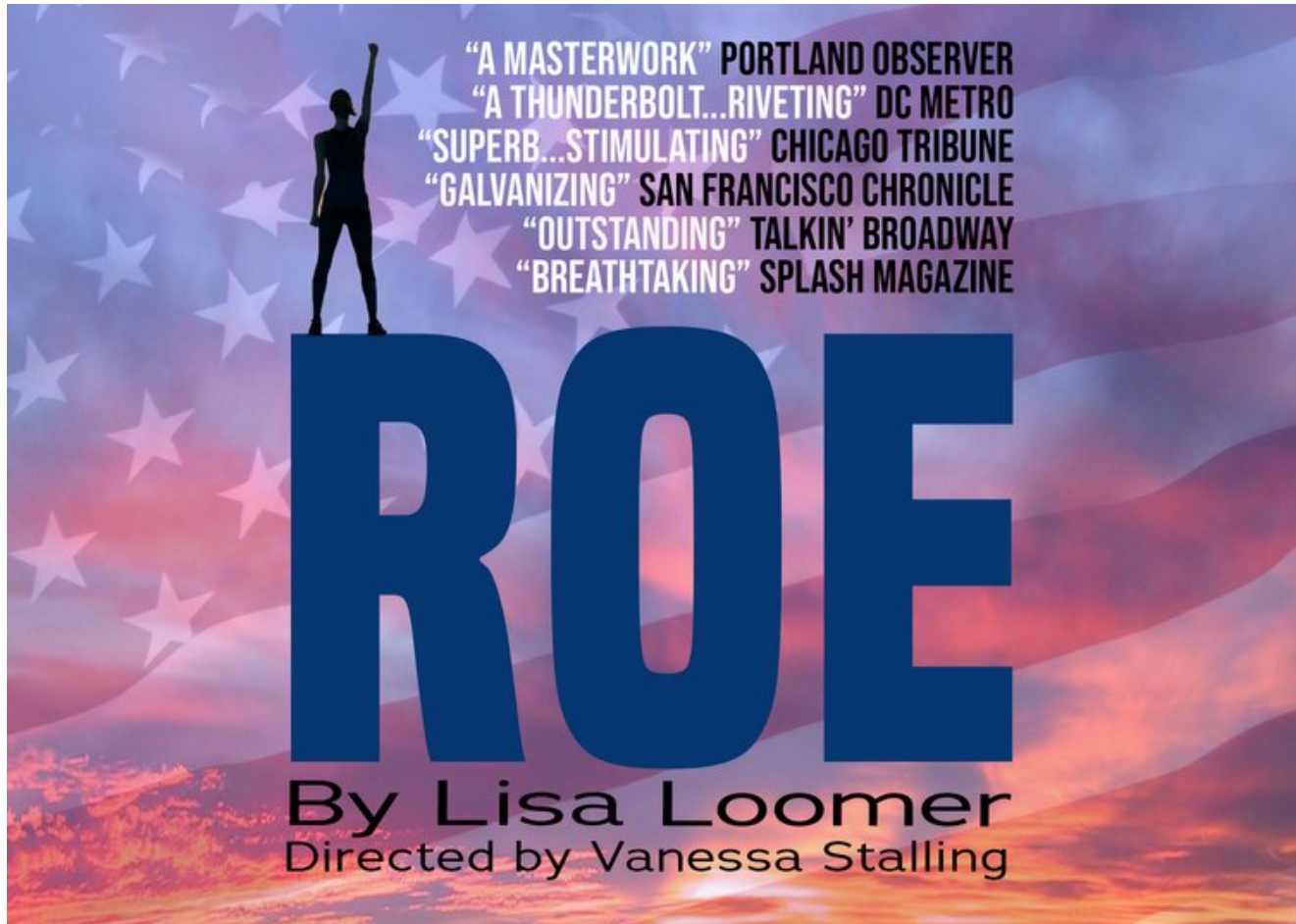


# Theater Review: Roe, Behind the Scenes and Up to the Minute

 [larchmontbuzz.com/featured-stories-larchmont-village/theater-review-roe-behind-the-scenes-and-up-to-the-minute](https://larchmontbuzz.com/featured-stories-larchmont-village/theater-review-roe-behind-the-scenes-and-up-to-the-minute)

Laura Foti Cohen

June 29, 2022



Last week's overturning of Roe v. Wade was swiftly incorporated into *Roe*, a play by Lisa Loomer now receiving a powerful staged reading on the Fountain Theatre's outdoor stage. A performance of the revised script just two days after the Supreme Court decision had the feel of a memorial service in honor of a divisive figure: while many onstage lamented the death of a long-respected right, others gleefully danced on its grave.

The Fountain audience was clearly mourning, as illustrated by interactions throughout and a tearful standing ovation at the end. The show serves as the religious experience so many of us need in these *Handmaid's Tale come-to-life* days.

Before and after the show, and during intermission, audience members are invited to write on a newly erected “memorial wall” outside the theater. It features raw messages of anger and shock, along with personal stories and political howls.

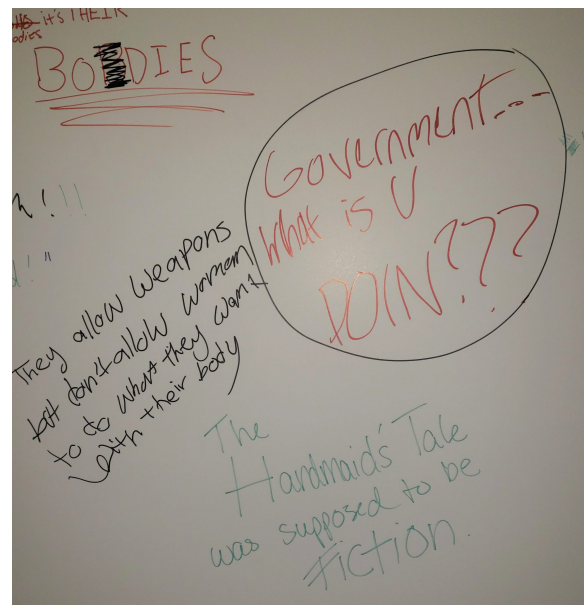
Onstage, the story is just as complex. It’s the messy, behind-the-scenes drama of the pregnant woman, Norma McCorvey (Kate Middleton), drafted to serve as “Jane Roe” in Texas in 1969, and the primary lawyer who argued the case, Sarah Weddington (Christina Hall). Other characters, including McCorvey’s long-suffering lover Connie (Xochitl Romero), Weddington’s co-counsel Linda Coffee (Susan Lynskey) and anti-abortion crusader Flip Benham (Rob Nagle) of Operation Rescue, add compelling detail.

The universally excellent acting is led by Middleton, the heart of the show. She portrays the damaged and controversial McCorvey in all of her pathos and inconsistencies: drug abuser, three-time mother who gave away all her children, lesbian, infuriating icon of both the pro- and anti-abortion movement.

Vanessa Stallings, who helmed a production at The Goodman in Chicago, directs. Even though the cast read from scripts, the forward momentum and intricate strands came through. This is a deeply felt production, not a casual read-through.

*Roe* was first performed during the 2016 election season, which painted in stark contrast **the two sides to the abortion issue**. Since then, Loomer has been updating the script to reflect fast-moving developments, culminating in last week’s decision. She is to be commended for her ability not only to adapt to change, but for making history come alive through you-couldn’t-make-it-up personal details.

I’d love to see what she could do with the January 6<sup>th</sup> story.



Audience comments on the *Roe* memorial wall outside the Fountain Theatre



Christina Hall, Kate Middleton and Susan Lynskey in *Roe*. Photo by Jenny Graham.

**Roe** plays at **the Fountain Theatre**, 5060 Fountain Ave. (at Normandie) on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 8:00pm through July 10. For tickets, which are \$20, click [here](#).



Pamela Dunlap, Xochitl Romero and Kate Middleton in *Roe*. Photo by Jenny Graham.



Aleisha Force, Rob Nagle and Kate Middleton in *Roe*. Photo by Jenny Graham.