

The Lyceum Theatre : The Crucible

✘ The Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh presents

The Crucible by Arthur Miller

Directed by John Dove

From 18 February – 19 March 2016

“I danced for the Devil; I saw him, I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil!”

Set in 17th Century New England, the isolated settlement of Salem, Massachusetts (a contraction of Jerusalem – or just a corruption?) witnesses a terrifying manifestation of mass-hysteria afflicting a group of adolescent girls. Their awakening sexuality and sense of rebellious adventure inevitably clashes with the monolithic Puritanical authority of the village elders.

Consumed with guilt for participating in a clandestine night time dare, the girls’ fear of exposure and retribution unleashes a cabal of accusations and counter condemnations. The only explanation can be that The Devil himself is among them and has possessed those accused of being his familiars. In to this (factually based) cauldron of religious fundamentalism, power, jealousy, lust and paranoia Miller adds his unique ingredients of empathic realism, dramatic tension and ruthless clarity.

As a contemporaneous parable of the ensuing ‘Reds Under The Bed’ House Of Un-American Activities obsession with rooting out card-carrying members of the Communist Party it was spectacularly apposite. So much so that Miller was subpoenaed

to appear before them. Miller's courage in confronting the (Senator) McCarthy witch-hunt trials gained him international status and ensured the play's rightful place in the pantheon of Twentieth-Century drama. Like Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984*, *The Crucible* remains ever applicable to contemporary events where the corruption of language sets a precedent for power to corrupt giving licence to the politics of fear.

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." (Edmund Burke)

Following huge acclaim for *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Price* and *A View from the Bridge*, Lyceum Associate Artist John Dove returns to direct *The Crucible*, completing The Lyceum's acclaimed journey through the best loved works of Arthur Miller.

Director John Dove says: "The Edinburgh audience seems to have a peerless rapport with Arthur Miller, and to many this is his greatest play. The Salem witch trials are its inspiration, the McCarthy trials of the 40's were its genesis.

"The USA was in ferment after the second world war with terror of Communism and the USSR. And the fear was similar to many fears in our society today where uneasiness prompts whispered lies and cover-ups, from the world of Edward Snowden's revelations to the fears which have prompted police investigations under Operation Yew Tree. And that a finger pointed can mean guilt with only a shread of evidence. Miller writes with huge inventiveness and flair, and points to a shifting world of uncertainty which is very much present with us today."

This production is sponsored by Gleneagles with additional support from The Unity Theatre Trust.

PERFORMANCES

18 February – 19 March 2016

Evenings (7.30pm) Matinees (2pm)

TICKETS – £13- £29.50

For tickets phone 0131 248 4848 or book online at www.lyceum.org.uk

ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES

Touch Tours for visually impaired – Thursday 3rd March at 6.15pm – Saturday 5th March at 12.45pm

Audio-described Performances – Thursday 3rd March 7.30pm – Saturday 5th March at 2pm

BSL Interpreted Performance – Wednesday 9th March at 7.30pm

Captioned Performance – Saturday 12 March at 2pm



“It would probably never have occurred to me to write a play about the Salem witch trials of 1692 had I not seen some astonishing correspondences with that calamity in the America of the late 40s and early 50s. My basic need was to respond to a phenomenon which, with only small exaggeration, one could say paralysed a whole generation and in a short time dried up the habits of trust and toleration in public discourse.”

From Arthur Miller, “[Are You Now Or Were You Ever?](#)”
from The Guardian online Saturday, June 17, 2000

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/arthur-miller-refuses-to-name-communists>