

The MIT Community Players Present:

the **Crucible**

by **Arthur Miller**

directed by James Camp

Kresge Little Theater at MIT

Fri-Sat, Dec 7-8 at 8pm

Sun, Dec 9 at 2pm

Thu-Sat, Dec 13-15 at 8pm

<http://web.mit.edu/mitcp/>

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

James Camp

Welcome to Salem, Massachusetts, 1692 - not the American melting pot we are used to, but rather a red-hot crucible that will consume 19 "impure" souls before its fire dies.

Salem was not our nation's first witch trial, and it certainly will not be the last, but it has lent us a collection of poignant stories of which Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is perhaps the most famous.

I do not see this as a play about Puritans, or about small-town politics, or about historical occurrences of mass hysteria - whether it be witch trials or communist hearings or any other historical persecution - though these things were certainly all in Arthur Miller's mind when he wrote the play.

The Crucible is a play about human nature, about how the best intentions can pave a road to hell, and about how easy it is to look the other way.

The first thing I noticed as I watched this play take shape is how nobody in the play really means to cause this much harm...instead, the play is a steady and tragic progression of small, seemingly harmless acts prompted by superstitions, prejudices, preconceptions, politics, and human emotions.

The second thing that strikes me is that each and every character in the play has the chance to stop this horrible march into hell. Some characters hesitate, some shut their ears, and others lie outright, but each character allows the chain reaction to continue until it can no longer be stopped.

At the risk of moralizing, we need to learn this lesson. In the wake of September 11th, I have seen our country heading into another cycle of persecution. Anyone without a proper visa or with a suspicious name is at risk.

There is great danger here. If we hide from our responsibility to our fellow humans, if we let prejudice and politics blind us to the truth, we will be destined to repeat history.

I would therefore like to dedicate this play to all those in history, ancient or modern, who stood firm for unpopular causes, and in particular to the six characters we portray who died in Salem three centuries ago:

Giles Corey

Martha Corey

Sarah Good

Rebecca Nurse

John Proctor

John Willard

SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: A bedroom in Rev. Samuel Parris' house, Salem, Massachusetts, in the spring of the year 1692.

Scene 2: The common room of Proctor's house, eight days later.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Scene 1: Five weeks later. A wood.

Scene 2: The vestry of the Salem Meeting House, two weeks later.

Scene 3: A cell in Salem jail, three months later.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Betty Parris - Joia Hertz '04
Rev. Samuel Parris - Rob Mohns
Tituba - Schella Orcel
Abigail Williams - Virginia Corless '05
Susanna Walcott - Elie Mohns
Ann Putnam - Gina Cobin
Thomas Putnam - Webb Tilney
Mercy Lewis - Masha Kamenetska '05
Mary Warren - Elizabeth Greenwood '05
John Proctor - Chris Yatko
Rebecca Nurse - Elizabeth R. Stone (Affil)
Giles Corey - Jason Burke
Rev. John Hale - Todd Radford (G)
Elizabeth Proctor - Erin Cozens (S)
Francis Nurse - Pete Chambers (G)
Ezekiel Cheever - Jeffrey Matson
John Willard - Brian Bermack '95
Judge Hathorne - Webster Heffern
Martha Corey (Voice) - Elie Mohns
Deputy Gov. Danforth - Dan Liston '04
Sarah Good - Gina Cobin

HISTORICAL NOTES

Elizabeth R. Stone

Arthur Miller set a Classical tragedy in the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692. Instead of heroes and gods, we have American Puritans and their complex beliefs in God and the supernatural. There are still uncertainties about what triggered the girls' hysteria and fits, but it is generally agreed that local and colony-wide politics, and contemporary religious beliefs, amplified a few unpleasant incidents into almost two years of examinations, trials, imprisonments, hangings, and economic ruin. A few of the accusers and judicial authorities made public apologies after the furor subsided, but the witchcraft trials left a miasma of guilt and shame around their communities for centuries afterward.

The Crucible shows Miller's genius at exposing the universal truths in the worlds and lives of ordinary people. Although Miller invented the affair between John Proctor and Abigail Williams (she was actually 11 years old at the time of the trials), and he consolidated various Massachusetts judges, magistrates, and ministers into a handful of dramatic characters, he generally kept his characters and their fates close to the actual events as they transpired. In a Washington Post interview about the film version of *The Crucible*, Miller explains that his drama " ... describes the way social panic is generated. It has a dream quality to it: People without any truly rational reason lose a grip on reality and begin accusing each other and consuming each other with suspicion." Of course, Miller had a close personal involvement with another episode of social panic: he was in the midst of America's intellectual, artistic, and political communities as they were investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee during the anti-Communist Red hunt (spearheaded by the notorious junior Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy). Like the accused witches, suspected Communists were presumed guilty and forced to "name names" to ensure their credibility.

We humans seem doomed to repeat some of our most shameful deeds. The same accusations, sometimes even the same rhetoric, have appeared in American anti-Communist Red hunts, in China's cultural revolution, in Cambodia during Pol Pot's reign of terror, in the former Soviet Union, in South Africa under apartheid... the list goes on. In his 1999 essay, *The Crucible in History*, Miller remarks that "... to people wherever the play is performed, [...] there is always a certain amazement that the same terror that had happened to them had happened before to others. It is all very strange. On the other hand, the Devil is known to lure people into forgetting precisely what is vital for them to remember -- how else could his endless reappearances always come with such marvelous surprise?" One of the functions of art is to remind us of these painful truths, lest we be caught unawares yet again.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director - James Camp (G)
Producer - Ken Stern
Stage Manager - Denise Crooks
Asst. Stage Manager - Erin Cozens
Set Designer - Cyril Chong
Master Carpenter - Ken Stern
Scenic Painter - Melissa Breglio
Set Crew - Melissa Breglio
Edmwnd Golaski '99
Lighting Designer - Edmwnd Golaski '99
Lighting Crew - Jason Burke
Denise Crooks
John van der Meer '72
Todd Radford (G)
Elise Westmeyer '00
Costume Mistress - Lisa Smeester (S)
Costume Crew - Elie Mohns
Props Mistress - Joia Hertz '04
Props Crew - Elizabeth R. Stone
Sound Designer - Jim Carroll (A)
Sound Board Operator - Lisa Smeester (S)
Makeup Manager - Elizabeth R. Stone
Dramaturg - Elizabeth R. Stone
Publicity/Program - Bob Mussett
House Managers - Eric Lindblad (A)

Ben Dubrovsky
...and the cast

Erin Cozens (S)
Jeffrey Matson
Rob Mohns
Lisa Smeester (S)

Bob Mussett



The MIT Magical Theater Guild
proudly presents

Once
Upon
a
Mattress

Coming in February!

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The poster features a white background with several stylized grey starburst patterns of varying sizes. A large, grey crescent moon is positioned in the lower right corner. The text is arranged in a central, vertical column, with the title 'Once Upon a Mattress' in a large, black, serif font. The words 'Once' and 'Upon' are stacked, followed by 'a' in a smaller font, and 'Mattress' in the largest font. Above the word 'Once' is a small green frog wearing a crown. Below the title, the text 'Coming in February!' is written in a smaller, black, serif font. At the bottom of the poster, there is a line of small, black, sans-serif text providing contact information for the theater guild.

BIOS

Brian Bermack '95 (John Willard) is still not over playing Sir Joseph in *H.M.S. Pinafore* next door, even though now he's loading them with chains and taking them to the dungeon himself.

Jason Burke (Giles Corey) started acting in high school in California. He taught and performed improvisation with ComedySportz San Jose for several years before moving to Boston to become a writer. In the meantime he earned a degree in Film/Television Production from Boston University.

James Camp (G) (Director) is thrilled to be directing his first play, and would like to thank the entire cast and crew for making it an incredible experience. You may have seen James as Dr. Sanderson in *Harvey*, and may not have seen him as Stage Manager for *I Hate Hamlet* and *Mixed Doubles*. In his spare time, Mr. Camp is trying very hard to become Dr. Camp through MIT's Bioengineering program.

James Carroll (Sound Design) - Jim has confessed to tormenting cows for this production. The devil made him do it.

Pete Chambers (G) (Francis Nurse) is used to getting roles for his singing voice. Pete is certain he got this one for his dashing good looks, incredible people skills, and overwhelming availability.

Gina Cobin (Ann Putnam, Sarah Good) recently returned to the Boston area from Southern California, where she was active in community theater. She last appeared as Jane Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Virginia Corless '05 (Abigail Williams) is making her debut with the Community Players. She most recently played Molly in Dramashop's Fall One-Acts and as Emily in Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. She hopes to be the first actress in space, entertaining her fellow physicists on the way to Mars.

Erin Cozens (S) (Elizabeth Proctor) is really excited to be doing theater again and stuff. Past credits include Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Sara in *Stop Kiss* and Andrew in *Corpus!* She would like to thank the cast and crew of *The Crucible* (WORD!), Captain James, Lisa, Robin and Denise, Elana, DMY, Sara, Andrea, the fam, all the members of the Wellesley College Shakespeare Society (past, present & future), Korynn and the rest of the gay imps that have kept her sane of late.

Denise Crooks (Stage Manager) has greatly enjoyed her first show with the Community Players. She has previously worked on several shows at Syracuse University and at Wellesley College, where she directed a production of *The House of Yes*. She would like to thank the cast and crew, Erin, Robin, Elana and the other little people, and Captain James.

Edmvnd "Bonk" Golaski '99 (Lighting Designer) enjoys bringing light into people's lives. In fact, when not involved in theatre, he can often be found wandering the halls of MIT at night turning on lights for poor confused graduate students who, although able to tackle the intricacies of quantum mechanics in their heads, have not found the light switch on their own.

Elizabeth Greenwood '05 (Mary Warren) has performed in 3 high school musicals, 2 musical reviews, and has more recently appeared the chorus of MTG's production of "Anything Goes." If you've ever heard her sing, you understand why she is excited to finally do a show without singing, especially one with such a talented cast :o). She wants to thank her 4 roommates, Meequi, Chong, Dick, and Mop, as well as the rest of the deities for being awesome. And most importantly, she wants to point out that a smoke detector is definitely better than a mouse.

Joia Hertz '04 (Betty Parris, Props Mistress) is ecstatic to finally be back on stage after a six-year hiatus. Unfortunately you didn't come early enough to see the other girls and her tango-ing (a very common dance) in the forest with Tituba. She would like to thank all her friends who have put up with her erratic comings and goings the past few months, most importantly JKW for his undying support.

Masha Kamenetska '05 (Mercy Lewis) is a freshman at MIT. Her past roles include Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Corella in *Roots in the Parched Ground*, and Andrea in *Once on this Island*.

Dan Liston '04 (Lt. Governor Danforth) is excited to return to MIT Theater for his second show; his first with MITCP. This role is a big change from his prior role as an Indian Swami in the Fall 2000 Dramashop One Acts. Although an experienced high school actor, Dan is still getting used to juggling lectures and lines. Please give generous applause, because this is his first performance in knickers.

Jeffrey Matson (Ezekiel Cheever) is 6'-0", with brown hair, blue eyes, and a sunny disposition. His hobbies include cooking, playing the guitar, listening to smooth jazz, and taking long walks on the beach. This is his first theater production in over 7 years, so please be gentle. Word.

Elie Mohns (Susannah Walcott, Martha Corey) began her indenture with MITCP as Assistant Stage Manager for *I Hate Hamlet*. This is not her first time as a Puritan, however; she was an extra in *Three Sovereigns for Sarah*, a PBS film about the Salem witchcraft trials. Secretly, she wants to be part of a royal family. Any royal family.

Robert Mohns (Rev. Samuel Parris):

Kaze o itami

Iwa utsu nami no

Onore nomi

Kudakete mono o

Omou koro kana

(by Minamoto no Shigeyuki)

Schella Orcel (Tituba) previously appeared with the Spirit Dance Troupe in the summer of 2000. She got her start in drama during her high school years competing in prose and poetry oration. Schella has enjoyed exploring the complex motives of a slave caught in the web of the Salem witch-hunt.

Todd Radford (G) (Rev. John Hale) was surprised to discover that this wasn't *Crucible: The Musical*. I mean, Puritans dancing and singing – what else do you need?

Lisa Smeester (S) (Costume Design): Although she has been active in theatre since childhood, this is her first MITCP production. She would like to thank the group for the challenging, nerve-racking opportunity to do costumes (although she knows they're really just using her for her cool power tools).

Ken Stern (Producer, Master Carpenter) has been involved with CP in many capacities over the years. Onstage, he played Duke Orsino in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, and the evil Nurse Ratchet in *Harvey*, as well as a variety of easily forgotten roles. Behind the scenes he has also done stage management and set construction. As producer of *Cloud 9*, and of the present production, he has perfected the fine art of begging. We still need run crew. Interested?

Elizabeth R. Stone (Rebecca Nurse, Dramaturg) has been sporting with the MITCP since Spring 2000, playing Elizabethan music (of course), playing various old ladies, doing lots of makeup, directing a one-act play, researching Puritans, and writing bios. She wishes to publicly appreciate Daniel's patience during her most recent period of theatrical obsession and abstraction (and fainting in coils), her friends' patience when she kept breaking into lectures on Colonial America, and the cast's and crew's collective patience about her obsession with historical accuracy.

H. Webb Tilney (Thomas Putnam) has been acting for about a year, and appeared most recently with the Theater Company of Saugus as Sammy in *Boardwalk Melody Hour Murders*, as Chris in Comedy Theater Productions' performance of *The Altos*, and with the Hovey Players as the Houston Ticket Man in *The Trip to Bountiful*.

Chris Yatko (John Proctor): Past shows include *Judgement*, *The Lady is Not for Burning*, and the *Eternal Smile*. He is the founder of an improvisational hospital clown at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago. He wishes to thank Steve and Guy for late dinners and evenings on the porch and Alice the dog for keeping his feet warm while he learned his lines.

SPECIAL THANKS

Diane Brainerd & The MIT Costume Shop
Campus Activities Complex

The MIT Theater Arts Department
The Musical Theater Guild (MTG)

Rebecca Nurse Homestead, Danvers, MA

Megan Bell Mike Bergman

Bill Fregosi Mike Katz

Dave Kemp Lance Nathan

Karen Perlow Rickland Powell

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About the MITCP - We are a group of MIT staff, students, alumni/ae, and other interested people who produce 3 shows a year at MIT. We're always looking for people to participate on stage and/or behind the scenes, all experience levels welcome. If you'd like to get involved with MITCP, receive e-mail mailings, or send us a comment or question, e-mail us at mitcp-info@mit.edu, or call 617-253-2530 and leave a message. You can also find more information at our website: <http://web.mit.edu/mitcp>

IAP Playreadings - YOU can help decide our 2002 summer show! Come by, check out some plays with us, and have fun! No experience or preparation needed...scripts will be provided at the reading. Just show up and enjoy! Jan 7, 9, 16, 22, 28, 29, from 7-10 pm in room 4-416 on the MIT Campus.

Improv Workshops - Free workshops in improvisational acting will be held Thursdays, January 10-31 as part of IAP. You do not have to be affiliated with MIT to attend. Check out our website for more info.

Audition for our next show! - Auditions will likely be held in February for our May production of *The Dining Room*, by A.R. Gurney, to be directed by Megan Bell. Check our website for updates!