



Sampson

# Gilroy Community Theatre

presents

## THE CRUCIBLE

by Arthur Miller

**March 18, 19, 25, 26, 1977**

Directed by Kathleen I. Kurz  
Scene design by Yolanda V. Parra  
Lighting design by Rodney J. Smith  
Sound design by Dominee Maurer  
Costume design by Eileen Barnes

*'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world. — William Shakespeare*

# CAST OF CHARACTERS

## (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

REVEREND PARRIS . . . . .	Ron Williams
BETTY PARRIS . . . . .	Kimberly D'Arcy
TITUBA . . . . .	Yolanda V. Parra
ABIGAIL WILLIAMS . . . . .	Rosalind Farotte
SUSANNA WALCOTT . . . . .	Shelly Andrews
MRS. ANN PUTNAM . . . . .	Linda Morris Talluto
THOMAS PUTNAM . . . . .	James Neilson
MERCY LEWIS . . . . .	Kathy Filice
MARY WARREN . . . . .	Robin Jones Koller
JOHN PROCTOR . . . . .	James Mead Maya
REBECCA NURSE . . . . .	Bette Brown
GILES COREY . . . . .	Cal Schlesinger
REVEREND JOHN HALE . . . . .	Brad Ryder
ELIZABETH PROCTOR . . . . .	Helie Rock
FRANCIS NURSE . . . . .	Walden Sampson
EZEKIEL CHEEVER . . . . .	Walter Von Tagen III
MARSHAL HERRICK . . . . .	Joseph Bereznak
GEORGE HOPKINS . . . . .	Frank Vanella
JUDGE HATHORNE . . . . .	Russell Hendrickson
DEPUTY GOVERNOR DANFORTH . . . . .	Joe Brown
CHARITY COOKE . . . . .	Janet Periat
FAITH SHELDON . . . . .	Susan Blumberg
RUTH PUTNAM . . . . .	Laura Almada
PRUDENCE HUBBARD . . . . .	Tonie Berry
SARAH GOOD . . . . .	Lillian M. Buck

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action of the play takes place in Salem Village,  
in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1692.

### ACT ONE

Prologue	The woods, an evening in late February
Scene 1	Reverend Parris' home, the following evening
Scene 2	The Proctor home, eight days later

THERE WILL BE ONE 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

### ACT TWO

Scene 1	The woods, an evening in mid-April
Scene 2	The anteroom of the Meeting House, the next day
Scene 3	Salem Village jail, three months later

## PRODUCTION CREW

Producers . . . . . Reg Keddie, Barbara Bottini  
 Technical Director . . . . . Yolanda V. Parra  
 Assistant to the Director . . . . . Frank Vanella  
 Stage Manager . . . . . Lee Krahenbuhl  
 Properties . . . . . Chuck Barrena, Marge Probert, Marie Perkins  
 Stage Crew . . . . . Randy Tyler, Eric Schlesinger,  
 Mary Gorak, Karla Schlesinger, Doeri Welch  
 Lighting Technicians . . . . . Cliff Mull, Jeff Bawdon  
 Publicity . . . . . Walter von Tagen III  
 Photography . . . . . Kai Lai  
 Pre Sale Tickets . . . . . Rosalie Andrews  
 Poster Design . . . . . Jack Sampson, Joe Brown  
 Program . . . . . Joe Brown, Kai Lai, Linda Hussar,  
 Gerri Armenta, Dorothy Gutterman

## SCENERY CONSTRUCTION

Yolanda V. Parra	Bob Winter	Karla Schlesinger
Reg Keddie	Eric Schlesinger	Barbara Bottini
Randy Tyler	Reggie Keddie	Mary Gorak
Chuck Barrena	Joe Felice	Marie Perkins
Charles Krahenbuhl	Rosalie Andrews	Jerry McConnan
Lee Krahenbuhl	Greg Andrews	Gaird Schlesinger
Kai Lai		and the cast

## COSTUME CONSTRUCTION

Eileen Barnes	Francis Sampson	Nancy Cooper
Mary Ann Brueggemann	Helie Rock	Ann Keddie
Virginia Lilly	Laura Almada	and members of the cast.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Marilyn Abad	Peggy Fortino	Plaza Drugs
Marilyn Alarcon	Gavilan College	San Jose City College
Michael Alexandar	Community Services	Theatre Arts Department
Gerri Armenta	Gilroy Dispatch	San Jose State University
Al Bloom	Gilroy High School	Theatre Arts Department
Dick Bruhn's	Frank Ginelli	San Martin Winery
Joe Cardinali	Linda Hussar	Theatre Angels Art League
Chappell Steel	Tim Kerr	David Thome
& Hardware Co.	Doris Mason	University of Santa Clara
Crispino's	Darrel McLean	Theatre Arts Department
James R. Earle, Jr.	Jacqui Merriman	The Valley World
Eugene's Salon of Photography	The Music Tree	Cal Warren

## BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY

The Salem witch scare began quietly and gradually in the home of Reverend Samuel Parris, minister in the local church. Several of the young, unmarried girls of the village had taken a liking to listening to Parris's West Indian slave, Tituba, tell stories of the supernatural. They were enthralled by her tales of witches, curses and spells, and Tituba, encouraged by their admiration, proceeded from telling stories to enacting some of the rituals and charms.

Before long this harmless pasttime began to turn into something much more frightening—the girls were beginning to feel the powers of darkness working on them, and by the end of the winter Betty Parris, the youngest of the girls, began to suffer from a strange malady—she would fall into convulsions and scream inhumanly. As her malady became public knowledge, more and more of the girls succumbed to it. While some adults were skeptical about their antics, most were horrified and puzzled and could do little but stand by in helpless awe.

And so Dr. Griggs, the village physician, was called in—he tried all his remedies and reread all his medical books, but the girls' sickness did not appear to be organic. He announced that the affliction of the children was not a medical problem, but actually a legal and theological one, since the girls were apparently the victims of a witch's curse. Parris took counsel with several ministers and the more influential of the Salemites, and under the suggestive pressure of intense adult questioning, the girls began to name the "witches" who were afflicting them.

This is the prelude to the Salem tragedy about to be enacted. Watching the play, it may be easy for us to believe that the tragedy might have been averted if the adults had been less gullible and irrational, and the children less malicious and voracious in naming their tormentors. However, certain beliefs and conditions of the seventeenth century must be considered if we are to understand the Puritans' reaction to this unexplained calamity. Given the stage of medical knowledge and theological beliefs in 1692, Dr. Grigg's diagnosis of witchcraft was not unreasonable. In the seventeenth century, all persons believed literally in "Heaven" and "Hell." The universe was a dualistic one—there was a visible, material world inhabited

by mortal men, and an invisible, spiritual one, inhabited by angels, demons and spirits. As such, the majority of people believed in witches, those mortal beings who could traverse at will in both worlds after having bartered their souls to the devil. Anyone who doubted the existence of witches was considered a heretic, or worse, an atheist, since to deny a belief in witches was to deny a belief in God, the devil, and the most basic teachings of your religion. During the seventeenth century, very few persons could be found who would venture so radical an opinion.

Also, one must not underestimate the genuine power of witchcraft in a society that believes in it, for most accusers, steeped from birth in an unquestioning belief in the supernatural, truly considered that their targets practiced black magic. Their afflictions were probably psychosomatic rather than organic, but that only made them seem more terrible, since they appeared to be the result of occult power.

Modern sociologists believe that epilepsy or some type of psychological illness, such as manic depression, was the sickness which infected at least some of the girls. The fact that the initial illness snowballed into a mass hysteria which was to cause the death of nineteen persons and the ruin of many others may be understood by examining certain sociological patterns in the context of the Puritan colony.

Sociologists theorize that such outbreaks of mass hysteria are likely to coincide with times of political stress or anxiety. The persecution of witches is an important function in assuring community survival during times of peril, since it is an efficient way to deal with hostility by using a witch as a scapegoat for a problem which can't be confronted directly without destroying the entire community. During the winter of 1691-92, the Massachusetts colony was experiencing many threats which made survival uncertain: a possible war with France, great fires in Boston in 1690 and 1691, drought in 1691 which destroyed the harvest and was creating increasing famine. The edge of the wilderness was close by, full of mystery, wild animals and Indians. When the Puritans had settled in Salem in 1640, they believed that they held in their steady hands the candle that would

light the world. A theocracy was formed, a combination of state and religious power whose function it was to keep the community together against destruction by material and ideological enemies.

By 1692, this theocracy was receiving blows from the mother country with the decree for religious toleration in 1689 which forbade their persecution of Quakers (who were considered by the Puritans to have a philosophy closely related to witchcraft). Quakers objected to the highly organized structure of the traditional church, and believed in a strict separation of church and state, and in the equality of women.

Quakers believed that each individual could determine God's divine will by following the inner light that glowed within each person's soul, while Puritans believed in the "predestination" of man's fate by God, with "good works" not necessary for salvation, but merely a sign that one has been "elected" for heaven. The belief in predestination swept away all the Aristotelian ideas of degrees of good and evil. To the Puritans, any sin was all sin, and the sinful act itself was not an act leading to damnation, but merely evidence of divine judgment already determined. This led to a curious confusion of values, for being "undutiful" to one's parents was as bad as adultery or murder.

The Puritan's creed is an irrational one when compared with the Roman Catholic doctrine, where the ideas of good and evil prevail: sins are mortal or venial, with different penances imposed for different sins. The psychological advantage of this system was that it taught man to analyze his behavior, and it allowed man a ritual for the washing away of sins. Puritanism failed to make allowances for human weaknesses, and if human failure is impossible, then any human flaw must be the work of the devil.

The Puritan way of life was strictly regulated by church dogma, and their creed forbade anything resembling vain enjoyment or any form of relaxation, such as games, dancing, physical recreation or social gatherings. The only social events allowed were church going, or "roof-raisings." Probably more than the creed, hard work kept the morals of the place from spoiling, for the people were forced to fight the land like heroes for every grain of corn, and no one had much time to fool around.

The women and children especially were

subject to harsh discipline and the prevalence of women, children and poor folk as accusers may have started out as a safety valve to let off steam, and as a defense mechanism among the poorer or less powerful elements of the society. Banned from the rights men had, this was one way women could make their voices heard.

The children were searching for parental approval when they accused persons their parents disliked, but might hesitate to accuse, for fear of the reprisal of a slander suit. In Salem, everyone had a predilection for minding other people's business, and this undoubtedly created many suspicions which were to feed the coming madness. The witch scare provided a long-overdue opportunity for everyone to express publicly his guilt and sins, under the cover of accusations against the victims.

Long-held hatreds of neighbors could be openly expressed and vengeance taken, and the land lust which had been expressed before by constant bickering over deeds and mortgages could now be elevated to the level of morality. Old scores were settled on a plane of heavenly combat between Lucifer and the Lord, and if one wonders how women of impeccable character, such as Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey, could be accused of witchcraft, one must look at the fields and boundaries of the time to understand. And when it is recalled that until the Christian era the universe was not regarded as particularly hostile, and all gods were essentially good and useful, we see the methodical inculcation into humanity of the idea of man's worthlessness—until redeemed—and the necessity of the devil becomes evident as a weapon designed and used in every age to whip men into surrender to a particular church or church-state. The evolution of the devil is interesting in itself, for devil worship can be traced to pre-Christian fertility rites, whose god was a deified sun or herd-animal (the goat being commonly used because of its reputation for lechery). This god reappears in Greek and Roman mythology, worshipped respectively as Dionysus and Bacchus. The Christians apparently felt that this god was the most abominable of all, since they gave his attributes, the horns and cloven hooves, to the devil. Throughout history, and particularly to the prudish Puritans, devil worship, sex and sin were closely linked.

"The Crucible," however, must be examined in another historical context other

than the Massachusetts of 1693. Although Arthur Miller states that he was "overcome by the breathtaking heroism of certain of the victims" and that he had "a strong desire to raise them out of historic dust," it is impossible to ignore the statement Miller makes about the United States in the early 1950's, during the Communist "witch-hunts" of the McCarthy era. "The Crucible" opened in 1953, and to a certain extent the character of John Proctor is autobiographical, for Miller, too, refused to implicate others when he was accused of being friendly with Communists. When one remembers the "invisible" nature of the crimes charged, the use of confessed conspirators against defendants who refused to confess, the punishment of those only who insisted on their innocence, then the analogy to McCarthyism is quite valid.

The Salem episode has become a symbol of the bigot's tyranny against those individuals who would think for themselves. "The

Crucible" is the dramatization of an innocent man, John Proctor, who must confess falsely and give his name to lies if he wants to live, and who finally gains the courage to insist on his innocence. The Salem judges, Danforth and Hathorne, are the rule-bearers; the symbol of those who would guard men's ignorance and destroy any who would change the status quo, and who finally punish Proctor for cleaving to the truth.

Miller's play is rich in another theme—it is a love story in which Abigail becomes the third corner of the triangle in a drama of passion and fidelity, but the many ironies in "The Crucible" are directed against the basic objective of the play—absolute morality. In our century as well as the seventeenth, this construction of human pride makes devils of the opponents of orthodoxy and destroys individual freedom, but its greatest sin, as Reverend Hale learns, is that it blinds people to truth.

## ECHOES DOWN THE CORRIDOR

Not long after the fever died, Parris was voted from office, walked out on the highroad, and was never heard of again.

Legend has it that several of the girls (Abigail and Mercy?) turned up later as prostitutes in Boston.

Tituba, after confessing, was quietly sold to a Virginia planter.

Elizabeth Proctor left the jail with her baby when the Governor ordered a general pardon to all the accused in 1693. Although sentence was never carried out, in the eyes of the law she was considered a dead woman, until she remarried four years after Proctor's death.

John Proctor's and Rebecca Nurse's bodies were thrust into a shallow grave, until Rebecca's family, in the dead of night, gathered up her body and laid it in a secret grave.

In 1697, the jury of the Salem trials made public repentance for their part in the executions.

In March 1712, upon orders of the government, the First Church of Salem revoked the excommunication of Giles Corey and Rebecca Nurse, and the government awarded compensation to the victims still living and the families of the dead. John and Elizabeth Proctor headed the list.

Reverend John Hale, in his book "A Modest Inquiry Into the Nature of Witchcraft," made the most thorough confession of any:

"Such was the darkness of that day, the tortures and lamentations of the afflicted, that we walked in clouds, and could not see our way. And we have most cause to be humbled for error on that hand, which cannot be retrieved."

## AUTHOR'S NOTE ON HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE PLAY

This play is not a history in the academic historian's sense of the word. Dramatic purposes have sometimes required that many characters be fused into one; the number of girls involved in the "crying-out" has been reduced; Abigail's age has been raised; there

were several judges of almost equal authority which have been symbolized in Danforth and Hathorne. However, the fate of each character is exactly that of his historical model.

# GILROY COMMUNITY THEATRE

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# Gilroy Community Theatre

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### *'Sugar'*

A MUSICAL

JULY 15, 16  
22, 23,  
29, 30

Auditions to be held  
April 24 & 25

### *'Private Lives'*

A DINNER SHOW


NOVEMBER  
Dates to be announced

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For donating the seasoned barn wood  
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