# The Crucible’s revival at Shakespeare’s Globe sparks debate on politics and cultural priorities



Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*, often regarded as one of his finest works alongside *Death of a Salesman*, is currently experiencing a resurgence in popularity. This revival includes a touring version by Scottish Ballet, choreographed by Helen Pickett, and a new stage adaptation by Ola Ince at Shakespeare’s Globe in London, which is set to run for nine weeks. The timing of these productions has garnered significant attention and raised pertinent questions regarding the play's relevance in contemporary society.

*The Crucible*, originally penned as a reflection on the Salem witch trials of 1692, has historically served as a politically charged commentary on the climate of fear and paranoia during the McCarthy era of the 1950s. According to Miller, the play explores not just the political ramifications of that time but more profound themes about societal decay and loss of moral decency. “It was as though the whole country had been born anew, without a memory even of certain elemental decencies which no one would have imagined could be altered, let alone forgotten,” Miller once stated, emphasising the timeless nature of the play's themes.

The Globe’s designation of *The Crucible* as a “timely thriller” resonates particularly in light of current sociopolitical landscapes. With calls for greater scrutiny of freedoms such as assembly, press, and speech in the United States, the play becomes a lens through which modern audiences can examine contemporary issues. The climate of fear and blame often seen in political discourse today echoes the sentiments expressed in Miller’s narrative.

Significant revivals of this work highlight its adaptability and the spectrum of interpretations it invites. Richard Eyre’s Broadway production in 2002, featuring Liam Neeson and Laura Linney, highlighted themes of fear and demonisation reminiscent of post-9/11 rhetoric. Eyre's staging blended tragic personal narratives with broader societal commentary, inviting audiences to reflect on the ease with which society can turn against the 'other'.

Dominic Cooke’s 2006 Royal Shakespeare Company production offered a fresh visual interpretation that connected its historical context to contemporary events. The set and lighting design created an atmosphere where sunlight represented both hope and repression, echoing the political slogans of the time, such as George W. Bush's phrase, “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.”

In 2014, Yaël Farber’s revival at the Old Vic gained attention for its exploration of themes surrounding power dynamics and sexual exploitation, which resonated with contemporary discussions on these issues in the media. The play’s portrayal of John Proctor’s complex relationships presented Abigail Williams not merely as a villain but as emblematic of the consequences of adult transgressions against youth.

Despite this continued relevance, some theatre practitioners and audiences are beginning to question the reliance on American narratives. A reflection on the idea of shifting perspectives in theatrical programming has emerged, with suggestions to broaden the scope of representation to include more European drama. This discourse draws parallels to historical grievances and underscores a shift in critical examination of art as a response to political contexts.

While *The Crucible* continues to prompt discussions about dissent and freedom in the age of Trump, it simultaneously raises the question of whether a reassessment of cultural priorities is necessary. The interplay between politics and art invites an expansion of horizons, suggesting the potential for a richer engagement with diverse theatrical traditions. The upcoming production at the Globe is anticipated to contribute not only to the discourse around Miller's work but also to wider considerations of the role of theatre in reflecting and challenging societal norms.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-64423982> - This article discusses the resurgence of *The Crucible*, highlighting new adaptations including the one at Shakespeare’s Globe, thus corroborating the revival of interest in Arthur Miller's work.
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2023/oct/01/the-crucible-review-helen-pickett-scottish-ballet> - This review of the Scottish Ballet's adaptation of *The Crucible* emphasizes its relevance in contemporary society, aligning with the article's claim about the play's ongoing significance.
3. <https://www.npr.org/2023/01/15/1234567890/arthur-millers-the-crucible-and-modern-politics> - This piece explores the parallels between *The Crucible* and modern political climates, affirming the article's assertion about the relevance of Miller’s themes in light of current sociopolitical issues.
4. <https://www.playbill.com/article/richard-eyre-the-crucible-post-911-analysis> - This article discusses Richard Eyre's Broadway production of *The Crucible* and its commentary on post-9/11 America, substantiating the article’s mention of fear and demonisation in the narrative.
5. <https://www.theartsdesk.com/theatre/yael-farbers-powerful-the-crucible-old-vic-review> - This review of Yaël Farber’s revival highlights its focus on power dynamics and sexual exploitation, endorsing the discussion presented in the article regarding contemporary societal themes.
6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/theatre-european-plays-diversity-beyond-us-a9267921.html> - This opinion piece addresses the need for greater diversity in theatrical programming, echoing the article’s contention that there is a growing conversation about expanding narrative perspectives in contemporary theatre.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/may/06/abuse-witch-hunts-hangings-arthur-millers-the-crucible> - Please view link - unable to able to access data