# The Crucible staged at Shakespeare’s Globe highlights chilling parallels with today’s political scapegoating



Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* remains alarmingly relevant today, especially in light of the current political landscape that seems to mirror the hysteria of the Salem witch trials. Staged in 1953, the play is a powerful lens through which we can view the alarming tendency to scapegoat individuals during times of crisis—something increasingly prevalent in today's society, as we witness the consequences of mass hysteria gripping our nation.

Director Ola Ince's commitment to a faithful portrayal, complete with period costumes and authentic British accents, immerses audiences in the frenzied atmosphere of the trials. However, the decision to inject absurdist humour into the production risks trivializing the true horrors behind the Salem trials. Characters like Deputy Governor Danforth are depicted in a clownish light, leading to a bizarre juxtaposition that diverts attention from the malevolence of the judicial system. This comedic angle may seem entertaining, but it undeniably undermines the grave realities that the play seeks to address.

The introduction of songs by composer Renell Shaw attempts to amplify the voices of the town's women, yet one must question whether such embellishments detract from the urgency of the narrative. While the initial acts may maintain a brisk pace, the production falters in its later stages, with the extended runtime dulling the tension that should resonate throughout the narrative. This inconsistency is emblematic of a broader failure to sustain dramatic momentum, mirroring the challenges facings those who speak against the status quo in our contemporary political environment.

The strong performances by Gavin Drea as John Proctor, along with Hannah Saxby as Abigail Williams, do bring some much-needed depth to the story, shedding light on the personal turmoil that arises in the face of societal pressure. However, the dynamic between John and Elizabeth Proctor falters when viewed against the backdrop of a government increasingly inclined to scapegoat and vilify dissenters. Mary Warren, as portrayed by Bethany Wooding, becomes a symbol of an era when individuals were coerced into conforming to oppressive narratives, paralleling the situation many face today as they grapple with a system that strives to silence their truths.

Amelia Jane Hankin's set design effectively evokes the stark cruelty of the Salem trials, yet the visual tableau featuring the accused women captures a haunting metaphor for how fear perpetuates injustice. This rich imagery resonates with the alarming atmosphere of political scapegoating we observe in today's world, where accusations can be levied with little regard for truth or fairness.

This production marks a crucial exploration of Miller’s work, being the first staged at Shakespeare’s Globe, precisely at a time when audiences need to confront the cyclical nature of hysteria and injustice. Reviewers have rightly pointed out that the play’s examination of witch hunts speaks volumes about our current political climate—now more than ever we should be vigilant against the manipulation of truth and the rise of societal paranoia.

Miller’s *The Crucible*, while rooted in the context of McCarthyism, offers a stark warning of the fragility of truth in our contemporary society. Ince’s production, despite its pacing issues, serves as a chilling reminder that the battle against scapegoating and the distortion of reality continues to rage, making it an essential piece of theatre for our times. As political divisions deepen and the narrative of truth becomes increasingly weaponized, the lessons of *The Crucible* resonate with alarming clarity.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/may/22/the-crucible-review-miller-revival-shakespeare-s-globe> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/may/22/the-crucible-review-miller-revival-shakespeare-s-globe> - This review discusses a recent production of Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible' at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. The production is noted for its faithfulness to the original 17th-century setting, featuring period costumes and British accents. Director Ola Ince introduces absurdist humor, portraying the judges as bumbling figures reminiscent of country fair disputes. The inclusion of songs by composer Renell Shaw provides the town's women and girls with a greater voice. While the first half is engaging, the third act is criticized for losing momentum. The review highlights the production's relevance to contemporary issues of truth and hysteria.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/may/06/abuse-witch-hunts-hangings-arthur-millers-the-crucible> - This article explores the enduring relevance of Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible,' particularly in the context of modern political climates. It highlights the play's examination of witch hunts and mass hysteria, drawing parallels to contemporary issues. The piece also discusses the Globe Theatre's decision to stage the play, noting its departure from the usual Shakespearean repertoire. The article emphasizes the play's capacity to reflect societal pressures and its capacity to take on new meanings over time.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2010/jun/03/the-crucible-review> - This review evaluates a 2010 production of Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible' at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. The production is praised for its boldness in staging the play in an open-air venue, though the reviewer notes that the large space may have led to a more melodramatic interpretation. The acting is commended, with particular praise for Patrick O'Kane's portrayal of John Proctor and Emma Cunniffe's depiction of Elizabeth Proctor. The review also highlights the play's political resonance, drawing parallels between the Salem witch trials and McCarthyism.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2011/may/10/the-crucible-review> - This review assesses a 2011 production of Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible' at the Lyric Theatre in Belfast. The production is noted for its contemporary resonance, with the reviewer highlighting the parallels between the play's themes and modern issues. The set design is described as spare and timber-framed, enhancing the immediacy of the staging. The performances are praised, particularly Patrick O'Kane's portrayal of John Proctor and Catherine Cusack's depiction of Elizabeth Proctor. The review emphasizes the human passions behind the moral arguments presented in the play.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/oct/03/the-crucible-review-miller-puritan-paranoia-urgency> - This article reviews a 2014 production of Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible' at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds. The production is noted for superimposing the era in which the play was written upon the period in which it is set, resonating with contemporary times. The set design includes an electric-ringed cooker and microphones, blending eras to highlight the play's themes. The performances are highlighted, with Martin Marquez's portrayal of John Proctor and Susie Trayling's depiction of Elizabeth Proctor receiving particular praise.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2023/jun/16/the-crucible-review-gielgud-theatre-london> - This review discusses a 2023 production of Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible' at the Gielgud Theatre in London. The production is noted for its use of horror film tropes, with Caroline Shaw's churchy music and gothic lighting creating a bleached-out chorus of accusers. The performances are highlighted, with Milly Alcock's portrayal of Abigail and Nia Towle's depiction of Mary being particularly noted. The review emphasizes the play's relevance to contemporary issues of truth and hysteria.