

Artfully done

THEATRE

- **Review: The Crucible**
- **Seymour Centre, cnr City Rd and Cleveland St, Chippendale**
- **Tonight 7.30pm, until September 6**
- **\$25-\$34 (Tuesday \$22), 9351 7940, seymour.usyd.edu.au**

When theatreland's offerings are as bland and unmemorable as they have been this year (with a handful of exceptions), it's good, even refreshing, to return to the classics.

Shakespeare, well done, can still awe audiences with its mesmeric word play and one could say that Arthur Miller, regarded as one of the greatest playwrights of the 20th century, was The Bard of his time.

Certainly *The Crucible*, perhaps his best play (though I would argue for *Death Of A Salesman*), contains universal, still topical themes expressed in language that at times leaves you shaking your head in wonderment at its majesty.

When, near play's end, John Proctor refuses to cave in to the ruling hysteria in the village about the presence of witches, tearing up his own signed "confession" and explaining why by declaring, "because it is my name", the full weight of the moral dilemmas and the human flaws that Miller explores are revealed in several giddy, monumental moments that recall the paranoia of 1950s McCarthyism.

Miller was questioned by the House of Representatives' Committee on Un-American Activities in 1956, three years after the play premiered on Broadway.

This is a return season of New Theatre's production of last year, staged at the Seymour as part of the BITE season of the best independent theatre and, if anything, director Louise Fischer has managed to ratchet the tension up a notch or two over its impressive original outing.

Most of the main players are the same as last year, too. Ben Brock, as John Proctor, and Belinda Gosbee, as Elizabeth Proctor, return with outstanding performances that are even more polished than last time.

Their love story this time has an even more heart-rending poignancy.

But *The Crucible*, with its collection of disparate, solidly written and important characters, is very much an ensemble piece. And this cast, overall, does sterling work.

Anthony Weir's quirky, nervous Nellie take on the Reverend Samuel Parris is a particular delight. Barry French, playing Reverend John Hale, and Tori Hartigan (pictured with Brock) as Abigail Williams, Proctor's young mistress, are also convincing.

GARY SMITH

If you have an event during the week, phone 9288 2616 or email yoursydney@dailytelegraph.com.au



outdoor

DAFFODIL DAY

Shops, trains and bus stations across Sydney; all day, 1300 656 585, daffodilday.com.au

As well as fresh daffodils, other gifts on sale to support Cancer Council NSW include glowing wrist bands, cuddly bears, pens, sparkling diamantes and enamel pins.



music

JEFF DUFF: ZIGGY

The Vanguard, 42 King St, Newtown; tonight 8pm, \$27, 9557 7992, moshtix.com.au

Jeff Duff, backed by the Diamond Dogs rhythm section, pays tribute to the music of the chameleon-like David Bowie from *Ziggy Stardust* to *Heroes* and beyond.

theatre

GALLIPOLI

Sydney Theatre, 22 Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay; tonight 8pm, until tomorrow, \$66-\$77, 9250 1777, sydneytheatre.com.au

The STC's Actors Company and NIDA students share the stage in director Nigel Jamieson's stylised, documentary-style take on Gallipoli.



dance

BORDERLINES/TARKOVSKY'S HORSE

Campbelltown Arts Centre, cnr Camden and Appin Rds, Campbelltown; today 12.30pm and 8pm, \$15-\$20, 4645 4100, campbelltown.nsw.gov.au

Australia's leading bodyweather artists Linda Luke and Peter Fraser present two very contemporary and dynamic dance works.