

*Talent, set superb*

# Crucible most engrossing

By Jim Elledge

Although "The Crucible" can't be referred to as the best major production given, it must be admitted that it was one of the most engrossing, to have lasted some two and a half hours, partially due to the excellent script, to the talent of the majority of the cast and to the beautiful set, designed by Bill Bielby.

Written by Arthur Miller and directed by Gerald Sullivan, it delves into more than just the Salem witch hunts of the 17th century: love on its most idealistic and its most physical planes, revenge and courage play a less superficial part in the plot.

There will be no forgetting the accusation scene in the first act with Tituba, played by Frieda Hicks, and her Barbadoes-revival. The "children", Kristine Kirkham as Abigail, Linda Timberlake as Mercy and Judy Rolandi as Betty, create all the excitement and suspense necessary in this

opening scene for a work of such length.

Although Ms. Rolandi seems a little giddy, a little too cutesy to have been bewitched as almost does Kris Hofacker as the fourth accuser, Mary. However, she later gives a fine performance during the trial.

The forest scene, in which love is exhibited at its most base level, was the second highlight of the production. Michael Boyll, as John Proctor, and Ms. Kirkham's performance can only be called excellent.

**Mr. Boyll realistically presents a Proctor torn between his "lechery" and his love for his wife, and Ms. Kirkham's Abigail is just in love with Proctor enough and just enough insanely egotistical that they give a boost to the suspense and the magic created during the first scene.**

One must salute Anne Brady for her portrayal of Elizabeth Proctor, the most difficult role of the twenty-two to portray realistically, displaying such strength and

such tenderness that one can only admire.

Ms. Brady captured Elizabeth's idealism and just simple goodness and yet was able to show her being strangled by her husband's rejection, Abigail's revenge and her own innate courage. Ms. Brady's talent is so obvious by the concluding scene that one wonders why she is so rarely on stage.

Brent Schweisberger, who plays Rev. Samuel Parris, is the weakest performer of the entire cast, considering that Parris is one of the major characters. Mr. Schweisberger tends to over-act in parts and merely to recite his lines during other scenes.

It makes Parris almost invisible to the audience, and Rev. John Hale, played by Marc Campbell, doesn't come alive on stage until the court scene, when Mr. Campbell suddenly releases Hale from bondage giving a fine performance thereafter.

Mr. Campbell's style is great for 18th century comedy of manners, but has no place in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Ms. Kirkham is as fantastic as usual but as usual is given the role of a hysterical woman, and one only wishes that someone would finally see her potential.

She has too much talent to be type-casted continuously. And Ken Shivers, who plays Deputy-Governor Danforth,



## *'The Crucible'*

Members of the Theatre Arts Department are shown preparing for the presentation of "The Crucible", performed Friday, Saturday, Monday and Tuesday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Fine Arts Theatre. (News photo by Jeff Amenda)

does a fine job of it, but he can do better. He has a great deal of talent, but his Friday night performance seemed off somehow, seemed somehow to drag at times.

Mention must also be made of several others who do fine jobs with their roles: Judith Ann Larkin, Tom Rupp, Diane Byrd, Joseph L. Allison, Eddie Eldred and J. Said added much to Friday night's performance.