

Talented pupils in Miller's 'The Crucible'

THE performance by 21 pupils of Rye Grammar School in Arthur Miller's famous (and dramatically, fiendishly difficult) play 'The Crucible' was astonishing—both for its depth of understanding and the fine sense of 'theatre' which pervaded the presentation in the School Hall.

The producer, Mr. R. D. Gaunt, who thrives on such challenging demands, once again deserves the highest praise.

Arthur Miller seeks in this play to reveal the tragedy of mass hysteria, based on authentic research of witchcraft trials in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692.

The play shows how respected citizens are hanged for crimes they have not committed.

In doing so, it also reveals the motives of those who denounced them, and why some made false confessions under pressure.

The play, of course, has lessons for modern times. In writing it, the author had in mind his own experiences between 1950 and 1954 of Senator Joseph McCarthy's investigations to hunt out Communists.

The Senator used the same methods as the judges of Salem, first to extract confessions, and then the names of alleged associates.

Miller, under this very same pressure, refused to name a certain person, and was committed for contempt of the committee.

In a notice as brief as this must be, we can only proclaim the complete adequacy of this young cast to sustain the course of constant conflict of character and emotion.

It is difficult to single out individual performances; but Peter Ewart as the strong-willed John Proctor and Denise Dean, as his wife, Elizabeth, reached some telling dramatic heights.

As, indeed, did Kay Baldock as Abigail, and Elizabeth Kent, as Tituba, the Negro slave.

The climax is reached when Proctor, broken into 'confessing', refuses to betray his own integrity by implicating others—and is finally hanged. This scene was played with a finely controlled intensity.

All who were concerned with the building and painting of the scenery for the four acts made cleverly economic use of basic set.

And the 30 or more backstage workers, to say nothing of the excellent costume makers, must be

very content with the outcome of their labours.

The cast comprised Betty Parris as Leda Hodgson, the Rev. Samuel Parris (Graham Dann), Tituba (Elizabeth Kent), Abigail Williams (Kay Baldock), Susanna Walcott (Elizabeth Pearce), Goodwife Ann Putman (Julia Rudkin Jones), Thomas Putman (Peter Smith), Mercy Lewis (Caroline Neil), Mary Warren (Marilyn Purrington), John Proctor (Peter Ewart), Goodwife Rebecca Nurse (Mary Phillips), Giles Corey (Neil Barnes), the Rev. John Hale (Grant Parrott).

Goodwife Elizabeth Proctor (Denise Dean), Francis Nurse (Jeremy Fern), Ezekiel Cheever (Christopher Atkins), Marshal Herrick (Charles Tremear), Deputies (Digby Hobson, Tony Harwood), Sarah Good (Susan Panter), Judge Hathorne (Adrian Gotts), Deputy Governor Danforth (Christopher Williams).

K.M.

It's just ... shattering!

AS MANY as 15 car windcreens and one bus windscreen were said at Camber parish assembly to have been shattered in one week by broken stones falling off heavy lorries on the Camber-Lydd-Dungeness roads.

Said Mr. J. Hunt: 'I cannot afford to pay high road taxes to have my windcreens cracked!'

A ratepayer attending the meeting held at Camber Memorial Hall, blamed the speed of the lorries, which she said often exceeded the 40 m.p.h. limit imposed on heavy vehicles.

She added that they were often overloaded and ought to be covered with tarpaulins.

The chairman (Mr. F. Hoad) said the Parish Council would take up the matter with the appropriate authorities.

OFFICERS FOR SOCIETY

FORTY-THREE members, including three junior members, of Rye Natural History Society were present at the annual meeting of the society at the Further Education Centre, Rye, when the following officers were elected:

Chairman, Mr. E. Burt; vice-chairman, Mr. G. Sim; hon. treasurer, Mr. D. Southerden; hon. secretary, Miss F. Henley; committee, Mrs. Burt, Mrs. Pankhurst, Mr. J. Pankhurst, Mr. M. Mathews.



Members of the cast in a scene from the play.

[EH.202/5]