

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## Laurier will stage Robert Ward's opera *The Crucible*

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WATERLOO – Fans of the recently departed Arthur Miller can see the American playwright's allegory for McCarthyism and mass hysteria when Laurier's faculty of music presents *The Crucible* as its annual opera.

Laurier is staging three performances of an opera based on *The Crucible*, originally a flop and later Miller's most produced work, from March 4 to 6. Composer Robert Ward turned Miller's play into a Pulitzer Prize-winning opera in 1961.

Based on court records and historical personages of the Salem witch trials of 1692, the play resulted from an investigation of communist influence in the arts by a U.S. Congress committee led by Joseph McCarthy. It's recognized as a social commentary on the accepted notion that conscience was no longer a private matter, but one of state administration.

Graham Cozzubbo, who will stage direct a cast that includes 24 Laurier music students on stage and another 39 in the orchestra, says the opera is a great choice as a teaching piece that offers rich material to explore.

"The opera involves a large ensemble with many interesting roles to inhabit and I've also been drawn in because of the subject matter," says Cozzubbo. "Miller wrote this play in 1951 and it remains pertinent today. Through storytelling, he explored how the pressures that affect a community can cause that community to ostracize some of its members. It's been interesting, exploring the question 'Why are we telling this story, at this time?'"

The three performances will be held in Laurier's theatre auditorium. The Friday and Saturday performances begin at 8 p.m. and Sunday's begins at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students, and are available by calling (519) 884-0710 ext. 2150.

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