

Inspector's call comes up fresh

An Inspector Calls The Loft Theatre, Leamington — until January 14
PIRSTLEY and his best known play, *An Inspector Calls*, have been enjoying a revival in the last few years.
 A well-crafted play outlives the vagaries of fashion, and the playwright's fascination with Time shows to good effect in the "supernatural" aspects of this play.

sion to Priestley's own ironies.
 Set in 1912 the play opens at a dinner party to celebrate the engagement of Sybil Birling. Her father is the classic Northern industrialist, former mayor and stout Conservative party member who knows what's what.
 His wife sits on charity boards. Sheila and her weak brother Eric are typical of their time and class.

I still felt "Oh, no not again" at the prospect of seeing a play I thought I knew so well. But I was wrong.
 The last time I viewed the play it seemed extremely dated, despite a star-studded cast. The Loft Theatre production, which opened on Wednesday, is fresh and exciting and director Stuart Waterworth has added an extra dimen-

And then a police inspector calls, subjecting them to an inquisition which changes the younger pair for ever. As the mysterious intruder says: "We do better with the younger ones."
 But nothing, even fear of disgrace, will soften the hard hearts of their parents. Also caught up in the circle of guilt is Sybil's fiancé Gerald Croft, who has some traces of good in him.



Roger Harding, John Fenner, Richard Burgone and Liz Compton 1/10

The play is a gripping detective story, a morality play and a socialist tract.

At the centre is the inspector, played with a menacing confidence by Bryan Ferriman. The rest of the company wear the clothes of the period but he is clad in the uniform of the Bolshevik left-winger throughout the century—peacock blue shirt, red tie and suede shoes, for goodness sake.

Both detective and recording angel, he changes character once more at the close of the play.

The Loft interpretation points up the play's relevance for today, and the audience become as guilty as the Birlings by the very act of leaving the theatre at the end.

Imaginative set design by Anne-Colette and lighting by William Wilkinson, complement a first rate cast — absolutely faultless performances. John Fenner is particularly strong as hard-headed Arthur Birling and Liz Compton is terrifying as his stony-hearted wife. — *Joan Hewitt.*

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

by J. B. Priestley

Director: Stuart Waterworth

Set Design: Anne-Collette

Lighting Design: William Wilkinson

CAST

Arthur Birling	JOHN FENNER
Gerald Croft	ROGER HARDING
Sheila Birling	LUCY HENWOOD
Sybil Birling	LIZ COMPTON
Edna	MARGARET REES
Eric Birling	RICHARD BURGON
Inspector Goole	BRYAN FERRIMAN

THE SETTING

The events of the play occur during the course of one evening in the Birling family home in Brumley - a northern industrial town in 1912.

There will be one interval of 20 minutes.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager	LIZ HUNTER
Assistant Stage Manager	ALISON COLLINS
Wardrobe Mistress	MARY MacDONALD
Wardrobe	MADELINE GORRILL
Property Mistresses	TRICIA SPELMAN, ELSPETH DALES
Properties	MARGARET REES
Sound Designer	EAMON PICKERING
Lighting and Sound Operators	LOFT TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS
Set Construction	RON GREY, RICHARD PEMBERTON, C MOORE, RICHARD MOORE, JOHN WYATT, GRAHAM TAYLOR
Theatre Technician	C MOORE
Photographs	CHRISTOPHER BRADLEY
Programme Cover & Poster Design	GUS MacDONALD, TIM MEACOCK
Hairdresser	WENDY JONES

The Director would like to thank his friend Martin Hayes for the several evenings of wine and curry, which provided some of the inspiration behind this production.



LOFT THEATRE
 Victoria Colonnade,
 Royal Leamington Spa

4th - 14th January 1995
7.30 p.m.



AN INSPECTOR CALLS

by J.B. Priestley
 Directed by Stuart Waterworth

Are the Birlings guilty - or are we?

BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE: (0926) 426341
 Box office opens: Saturday, 17th December 10.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.
 and subsequent Saturday mornings; Wednesday, 7.00 p.m. - 8.30 p.m. from
 17th - 23rd, 28th - 30th December and from 2nd January.



Play stands up to close inspection

AN INSPECTOR CALLS: Loft Theatre, Leamington, until January 14.
 Running time: 2 hr.
 J B Priestley has been receiving plenty of attention in what was the centenary year of his birth. And this production is a worthy contribution. It is, however, quite difficult to go wrong with the tight-constructed

powerfully written, and thoroughly dramatic play.
 It offers six actors the chance of meaty parts and everyone rises to the occasion.
 Brian Ferriman takes on the role of the Inspector, a nicely judged performance which conveys authority and menace without ever

over doing. John Fenner keeps up a sturdy, blistering performance as self-important Arthur Birling and Liz Compton is splendidly chilly as his snooty wife.
 The actors look the part as well which is more than can be said for the set, which is simply a mess.
 — *Helene Barratt.*



Another thrilling success



© Roger Harding (Bernard), John Fenner (Mr. Birling), Richard Burgone (Evil Birling) and Liz Compton (Mrs Birling) perform during the Loft's latest production.

An Inspector Calls - Loft Theatre
 J B Priestley's "An Inspector Calls" marks another success for the hugely talented Loft Company.
 The psychological thriller takes place during an evening in the home of the Birling family, who are quietly celebrating a family engagement when an inspector calls.
 Slowly and quietly the Birlings are interrogated to find out who is responsible for a young woman's suicide.
 Although playing to a half full house the cast rose to the occasion and captured the family tensions admirably.
 Bryan Ferriman was superb as the mysterious Inspector Goole - the alarmingly sinister man who undermines the superiority of the family and tries to help the audience determine who is the guilty party.
 And Liz Compton brought to life the utterly contemptible figure Mrs Birling looking genuinely stunned by each new revelation about her not so perfect family.
 Also worthy of a mention was newcomer Lucy Henwood as Sheila Birling. Although she started as the weak link she settled well into the part of the guilt ridden daughter.
 Stage settings were simple and minimalist and the clever use of spot lighting added to the tense and claustrophobic atmosphere that director Stuart Waterworth has tried so hard to create.
 And the twisting final scene provides a useful injection of surprise into what is an undeniably well-constructed and well-acted play.
 — *Charlotte Bevers*

