

An Inspector Calls

by J. B. Priestley
Directed by Richard Murray



Program

February 25 to March 15 2026

Director's Notes

The opportunity to direct JB Priestley's first class drama for Maitland Repertory Theatre was just too good a one to let slide by. Having played Inspector Goole in a production in 2009, I found it is one of those roles that one simply does not easily forget. *An Inspector Calls* leaves an audience questioning the way things are and wondering how we ever allowed an elite few to dominate the vast majority and lord it over us as though our lives do not really matter.

If you consider the world as we know it, then the Birlings and Crofts of the play are like the Musks and Bezos' of today - obscenely rich and yet miserly and indifferent toward their workers. When one sees the statistics that equate the combined wealth of top 1% being equal to that of the bottom half of society, then one realises that Priestley understood the machinations and manipulations of capital only too well.

The challenge for a director, cast and crew in presenting this play is finding a way of making it fresh and relevant for a 21st century audience, even though it was written some eighty-one years ago. While this play was written near the end of World War II, Priestley, to show that some things never seem to change, set the play in 1912, just prior to World War I. He has the family of a wealthy industrialist, Arthur Birling, celebrating the engagement of their daughter Sheila to the son of an even wealthier 'captain of industry', Gerald Croft. Life looks good when you have everything you could want - money, nice house, beautiful clothes, and servants to do your bidding.

Into this happy event arrives, unexpectedly, a police inspector, making enquiries into the suicide of a young working woman.

How could this well to do family possibly have anything to do with the unfortunate demise of this young woman? And so unwinds a tale of class, entitlement, indifference and abuse that will leave you thinking long after the final scene ends.

I hope you enjoy - is that the right word? - our production of *An Inspector Calls*. It has been a joy and a privilege to direct this fine cast, who range in experience from first timers, to those who have only tread the boards a few times, mixed with others who are seasoned performers. But I challenge you to figure out which is which, as they have all 'come up trumps' (I refer to the card game idiom in this instance) in their respective roles.

I would also like to thank my dedicated crew, especially Jason King, who worked tirelessly on the lighting, sound and projections for the play, and ably assisted by Colin Campbell and Geoff McLauchlan. A huge shout out as well as the Saturday Morning building team who created the set and found all the necessary props. Thanks to Kaysia Dowie for the costumes and helping to set that 1912 tone. My thanks also to David Smith for jumping on board as my 'Man Friday' to help with prompting during rehearsals, as well as being a go to for finding things, creating live sound effects and coordinating any adjustments required for the set. It is indeed true that 'team work makes the dream work!' Finally, my thanks to the Maitland Repertory Theatre Committee, for taking a gamble on allowing me to direct my first play for this company. I hope you feel it was worth it.

Richard Murray

Setting

All three acts, which are continuous, take place in the dining room of the Birlings' house in Brumley, an industrial city in the North Midlands.

It is an evening in Spring, 1912.

About the Playwright

John Boynton Priestley (1894 – 1984) was a leading English novelist, playwright, screenwriter, broadcaster and social commentator, known for his passionate belief in social justice and the widening of democracy.

J. B. Priestley is one of the giants of British literature and *An Inspector Calls* is a wonderful showcase of his talent for stage writing. Priestley wrote *An Inspector Calls* in 1945 as an allegory for class driven human behaviour and attitudes repeated in Britain, before, during and after World War II. The lessons still apply today. How well do we treat others, particularly those less fortunate? And how easily do we rationalise questionable behaviour by ourselves and those we hold dear?

Run Time

Approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes including a 20 minute interval.

Strobe Effect Warning

This production uses strobe lighting effects.

Cast



INSPECTOR GOOLE

Alex Murray



ARTHUR BIRLING

Drew Pittman



MRS BIRLING

Amanda Hiles



SHEILA BIRLING

Ashleigh Thresh



ERIC BIRLING

Corbin Martin



GERALD CROFT

Joel Latham



EDNA

Ally Brain

Production Credits

Director	Richard Murray
Production Manager	Matt Scoles
Stage Manager	Robert Comber
Set Designer	Richard Murray
Set Construction /Realisation	Danny Shaunessy, Richard Rae, Richard Boulton, Meg Wallace, Matt Scoles, Dimity Eveleens, Robert Comber, Ian Robinson, the Saturday crew
Costumes	Kaysia Dowie
Hair	Cast
Properties	Dimity Eveleens, Meg Wallace
Lighting Technician	Jason King, Colin Campbell
Lighting Operator	Geoff McLauchlan
Projection Operator	Geoff McLauchlan
Projection Design	Jason King, Richard Murray
Sound Design	Jason King, Richard Murray
Sound Operator	David Smith
Foley	David Smith
Poster	Richard Murray
Photography	Kaysia Dowie, Sonya Solomou, Cast
Program	Alexandra Comber, Dimity Eveleens
Publicity	Alexandra Comber, Ian Robinson

Thank You

To our volunteer members who make this show possible.

To The CONDA Judges

Joanna Andrew, Christine Fletcher, Larni Christie, Jackie King, Sascha Okenhall, Wendy Ratcliffe, Dan Stranger and Claire Williams.

To Our Patrons - Meryl Swanson MP,
Mayor Philip Penfold, Keith Cockburn.

And to: Maitland City Council, 2NUR-FM, ABC Radio 1233, The Sign Shop,
Scott Deamer (Jim's Test and Tag)

and to our audiences for their continued patronage.

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MAITLAND
REPERTORY
THEATRE



Harvey

BY MARY CHASE
DIRECTED BY DREW PITTMAN

April 29 to May 17, 2026

Tickets: \$27/\$32

Bookings: mrt.org.au or 02 4933 2766