

An Inspector Calls

by J.B. Priestley

Director Norman Blumensaadt
Assistant Director Carol Ginn
Stage Manager Maddie Haas
Set Design Paul Davis
Light Design Laura Sandberg
Costume Design Emily Cavasar
Sound Design Frank Benge

CHARACTERS AND CAST

Arthur Birling Sam Z. Damon
Gerald Croft Trey Deason
Sheila Birling Nicole Swan
Sybil Birling Paula Gilbert
Edna Amy Lewis
Eric Birling Andy Smith
Eric Birling - Understudy Patrick Dowty
Inspector Goole Garry Peters

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

It is evening in Spring, 1912.

There will be two 10-minute intermissions

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatist Play Service.



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This project is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.



Cultural Arts
Division

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past..
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

--T.S. Eliot

Burnt Norton in Four Quartets

Our true nationality is Mankind.

--H.G. Wells

There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women.

--Margaret Thatcher

He who fights too long against the dragons becomes a dragon himself: and if you gaze too long into the abyss, the abyss will gaze into you.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

Life changes fast.. Life changes in the instant.. You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends.

--Joan Didion

The Year of Magical Thinking

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

JOHN BOYNTON PRIESTLEY (September 13, 1894 - August 14, 1984) was an English novelist, playwright and broadcaster. Priestley was born in what he described as an "ultra-respectable" suburb of Bradford. His father was a head teacher whilst his mother died young. On leaving grammar school, Priestley worked in the wool trade of his native

city, but had ambitions to become a writer. He was to draw on memories of Bradford in many of the works he wrote after he had moved south. As an old man he deplored the destruction by developers of Victorian buildings such as the Swan Arcade in Bradford where he had his first job.

Priestley served during the First World War in the 10th battalion, the Duke of Wellington's Regiment. He was wounded in 1916 by mortar fire. In his autobiography, *Margin Released*, he is fiercely critical of the British army and, in particular, the officer class.

After his military service, Priestley received a university education at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. By the age of thirty he had established a reputation as a humorous writer and critic. His novel *Benighted* (1927) was adapted into the James Whale film *The Old Dark House* (1932); the novel has been published under the film's name in the United States.

Priestley's first major success came with a novel, *The Good Companions* (1929) which earned him the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction and made him a national figure. His next novel, *Angel Pavement* (1930), further established him as a successful novelist. However, some critics were less than complimentary about his work, and Priestley began legal action against Graham Greene for what he took to be a defamatory portrait in Greene's novel, *Stamboul Train* (1932).

He moved into a new genre and became as well known as a dramatist. *Dangerous Corner* (1932) began a run of plays that enthralled West End theatre audiences. His best known play is *An Inspector Calls* (1946), later made into a film starring Alastair Sim, released in 1954. His plays are more varied in tone than the novels, several being influenced by J.W. Dunne's theory of time, which plays a part in the plots of *Dangerous Corner* and *Time and the Conwerys* (1937).

Many of his works have a political aspect. For example, *An Inspector Calls*, as well as being a "time play", contains many references to socialism - the inspector was an alter ego through which Priestley could express his views.

During World War II, he was a regular broadcaster on the BBC. The Postscript broadcast on Sunday night, through 1940 and again in 1941, drew peak audiences of sixteen million; only Churchill was more popular with listeners. But his talks were cancelled. It was thought that this was the effect of complaints from Churchill that they were too left-wing; however, Priestley's son has recently revealed in a talk on the latest book being published about his father's life that it was, in fact, Churchill's Cabinet that brought about the cancellation by supplying negative reports on the broadcasts to Churchill.

Priestley chaired the 1941 Committee and in 1942 he was a co-founder of the socialist Common Wealth Party. The political content of his broadcasts and Priestley's hopes of a new and different England after the war influenced the politics of the period and helped the Labour Party gain its landslide victory in the 1945 general election. Priestley himself, however, was distrustful of the state and dogma.

He wrote the travelogue *English Journey* in 1934, which is an account of what he saw and heard while traveling through the country in the autumn of the previous year.

His interest in the problem of time led him to publish an extended essay in 1964 under the title of "Man and Time" (Aldus published this as a companion to Carl Jung's *Man and His Symbols*). In this book he explored in depth various theories and beliefs about time as well as his own research and unique conclusions, including an analysis of the phenomenon of precognitive dreaming, based in part on a broad sampling of experiences gathered from the British public who responded enthusiastically to a televised appeal he made while being interviewed in 1963 on the BBC programme, *Monitor*. Priestley managed the treatment of this potentially esoteric subject matter with warmth and competence.

Although Priestley never wrote a formal book of memoirs, his literary reminiscences, *Margin Released*, provides valuable insights into the author's work. The section dealing with his job as a teenage clerk in a Bradford wool-sorter's office manages to weave fine literature from an outwardly unpromising subject - a characteristic of many of his novels.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

SAM Z. DAMON (Arthur Birling) has only recently returned to the Austin stage, performing in quick order in *Phoenix ~ Unforgiven* as Lucas in UT's New Works Festival, in *The Tempest* as Gonzalo for *The Baron So Men*, and now here in *An Inspector Calls*. Beyond that Mr Damon played the ridiculously evil master of the fire ants in an independent film entitled *Invicta*, still in post production. Mr. Damon has also appeared in productions at the Bastrop Opera House.

TREY DEASON (Gerald Croft) received his BFA in Theatre from Southwestern University. He last appeared with Different Stages in *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* Other Austin credits include *The Secret Lives of the Inbetweeners*, an original musical recently seen here at The Vortex, *Faster Than The Speed of Light*, *Little Murders*, Austin Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, and many appearances with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin, including *The Mikado* (Ko-Ko) and *Ruddigore* (Robin). Also an aspiring playwright, his two-act play *Human Sketches* received its premiere at Sam Bass Community Theatre earlier this year.

PATRICK DOWTY (Eric Birling understudy) is delighted to be on stage for the first time after contributing to various Different Stages shows as a backstage crew member. Patrick is an Austin native and took an interest in community theater at an early age mostly in the technical aspects, such as lighting and sound.

Patrick's interest in technical theater lead to voice-over work and, now, acting. He is proud to be part of this production and its excellent cast and crew.

PAULA GILBERT (Sybil Birding) has a variety of interests including her continued and pleasurable association with The Vortex (18 years) and Austin Habitat For Humanity, on whose board she sits as the homeowner representative. Paula's stint with Different Stages goes back to 1981-82 with the production of *The Tempest* on 6th Street. A few of her favorite roles since Iris the Goddess and a Wasp in Wasp Chorus for *The Wasps*, Fanny in *On The Verge*, Lady in *Orpheus Descending*, Carol in *Talking With*, the mother in *Appointment With Death*, and Mrs. Holly in *Suddenly Last Summer*. Thank you again, Norman, for all my fun throughout the years!

AMY LEWIS (Edna) is a graduate of McMurry University with a BFA in acting and directing with a minor in lighting. She has appeared in many shows in the four years she has lived in Austin including, *Bitten a Zombie Rock Odyssey*, *Bride of Slapdash*, and *The Automat* with Loaded Gun Theory, *Dracula* at the Bastrop Opera House, *Sordid Lives*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *All in the Timing*, *Sister Mary Ignatious Explains it All For You*, *Time Flies*, and *Shakespeare in Hollywood* with Sam Bass Theatre, *The Laramie Project* with City Theatre, *What I Want Now*, *Playboy of the Western World*, *The Hollow*, and *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge* with Different Stages.

GARRY PETERS (Inspector Goole) has been acting primarily in the Austin area for over eight years - performing on stage, in film, and in animated productions. He previously appeared in the Different Stages production of *Molly Sweeney* (Mr. Rice). Other theatre work includes *Still Fountains* (Shannon Burke), *American Misfit* (as George Washington and other characters), *The Road to Wigan Pier* (where he wrestled Margaret Thatcher), *Hedda* (Judge Brack and Aunt Julie), and *Billy Budd* (Capt. Vere). Among his feature film credits are the features *12 Year Movie* (directed by Richard Linklater), *Mars* (delivering lines in Russian), *The Life of David Gale* (where he can be seen on the cutting room floor, opposite Kevin Spacey), and *Master of the Game* (voted audience favorite at the Austin Film Festival). He has also appeared in the shorts *Death Ranch*, *Perils in Nude Modeling* (a winner at the HBO Comedy Arts Festival) and *Gay by Dawn*, among many others. Garry's (disembodied) voice can also be heard in the animated shorts, *Flatland: the Movie* (starring Martin Sheen and Michael York) and *Present Distress* (as the Moon); the computer game *Freelancer*; and animes *Zaion* and *Birth*. His most recent artistic achievement was walking through Central Park and Times Square yelling "The mushrooms are real!" to promote the new computer game *Mushroom Men*.

ANDY SMITH (Eric Birding) is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin's College of Communications in Radio-Television-Film, and is originally from Ponca City, Oklahoma. This is Andy's third Different Stages production, as he was previously seen in *Appointment with Death* (Raymond Boynton) and *The Hollow* (Sergeant Penny). This is, however, Andy's eighth time to refer to himself in the third person for biographical purposes for an Austin theatre production. You may have seen him in Loaded Gun Theory's *The Grind* (Silas), *Bent* (Rudy) at the Blue Theatre, *Floyd Collins* (Skeets Miller) at ZACR, Ionesco's *Jack, or The Submission* (Grandfather Jack) or *Death of a Salesman* (Bernard) at City Theatre. Andy wonders why all actors' bios sound like a resume. Oh, also, Andy is a DJ and goes by "The Mouth" and is part of a DJ tandem called Stay Gold.

NICOLE SWAHN (Sheila Birding) is thrilled to be returning to the stage for this production of *An Inspector Calls*. A performer since childhood, Nicole minored in theatre arts at St. Edward's University where she performed in *Amadeus*, *Lysistrata*, and *Villains, Vuens and the Virtuous*. She has also been seen in roles for film and television, playing the emotionally abused Melanie in the cult film *Teeth* (2007) and Tammy in the controversial series, *Swingtown*, on CBS (2008). You can also see her alongside Seymour Cassel and Owen Wilson in the 2006 comedy, *The Wendell Baker Story*, and she has also worked on the *Friday Night Lights* television series. (But careful! Blink, and you're sure to miss her!)

DIRECTION AND DESIGN BIOGRAPHIES

NORMAN BLUMENSAADT (Director) is the Producing Artistic Director for Different Stages. As an actor he has worked in Shakespeare Festivals in Odessa and Dallas, Texas, and Madison, New Jersey. For Different Stages he has recently appeared in *A Number*, *The Miser*, *Arms and the Man* and *The Playboy of the Western World*. Among the numerous shows that he has directed are *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *An Ideal Husband*, *The Beard of Avon*, *The Hollow*, *The Constant Wife*, and *Getting Married*. In celebration of his long and outstanding work in the Austin theater scene, the Austin Circle of Theaters bestowed upon Norman the 1998 Deacon Crain/John Bustin Award. His production of *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?* won the 2006-2007 ACOT Award for Best Production of a Drama.

CAROL GINN (Assistant Director) has appeared on stage in Different Stages' productions of George Bernard Shaw's *Getting Married*, Jean Baptiste Moliere's *The Miser*, Moss Hart's *Light Up the Sky*, and Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*. She has also enjoyed working as the director's assistant and doing

music and sound for several Different Stages productions: Terrence McNally's *A Perfect Ganesh*, Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, Giles Haverhill's *Travels with My Aunt*, Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, Jean Baptiste Moliere's *The Hypochondriac*, Amy Freed's *The Beard of Avon*, Agatha Christie's *The Hollow*, and W. Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife*.

MADDIE HAAS (Stage Manager) is a high school graduate from Georgetown, TX and has three years of technical theater experience with the Georgetown Performing Arts Center. She has stage managed four shows: *Good Women of Setzuan*, *Great Expectations*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, and *Merry Wives of Windsor*. She was Assistant Stage Manager for *Annie Get Your Gun*, and starred in *Julius Caesar*. This is her first show with Norman and Different Stages, and she hopes to gain as much experience as she can.

PAUL DAVIS (Scenic Designer) Past productions for Different Stages include *The Hollow*, *The Constant Wife*, *Appointment With Death*, *Molly Sweeney*, *Two Gentleman Of Verona*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, and *An Ideal Husband* (Circle Critics Nomination). Other designs include *Black Bird* (Capitol T), *The Pillowman* (B. Iden Payne Nomination), *Featuring Loretta*, *Perdita*, *The Drawer Boy* (B. Iden Payne Nomination), *The Water Principle*, *Ham*, and *Vigil* (Hyde Park Theatre). Paul currently teaches Theatre and Technical Theatre at Leander High School.

LAURA SANDBERG (Light Design) has been designing around Austin for far longer than she cares to admit, and far more often than her demanding dogs and cats would prefer. However, she is an addict, so keeps coming back. Favorite past projects have included making puppets for *The Secret Garden*, doing lighting for *The Snow Queen*, *King Stag*, *The Dragon King*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast* and scenery for *A Perfect Ganesh*, *Mad Forest*, *Etta Jenks*, *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's*, *Wild Christmas*, *Binge*, and Gary Grinkle's *Battles with Wrinkles*. Laura will be leaving Austin this year to get married and take her crazy life on to new levels of madness and adventure.

EMILY CAVASAR (Costume Design) came to Austin in 2001 after receiving a BFA in Technical Theatre Design and Acting from Abilene Christian University. Currently in her seventh season with Ballet Austin as Wardrobe Assistant and Shoe Manager, she has constructed costumes for *The Danger of Speaking*, *Substrata*, and Stephen Mills' *Cult of Color: Call to Color and Liminal Glam*. Emily has also designed and constructed costumes for Different Stages production of *Getting Married* and for Trouble Puppet Theatre and Dede Clark's *Kids Acting*.

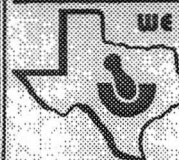
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 Web Master Martina Olhauser
 Properties Norman Blumensaadt
 Costume Construction Emily Cavasar
 Graphic Design Matthew Eng
 Photography Bret Brookshire
 Program Design Emily Erington
 Publicity Carol Ginn, Norman Blumensaadt, Martina Olhauser

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Russ Wiseman & The Dougherty Arts Center, Austin Circle of Theatres,
 Karen Jambon, Emily Erington

ABOUT DIFFERENT STAGES

Different Stages, Inc. has been a community-based organization since its inception in 1981 and incorporation in 1984. It produces works by playwrights whom we believe to be defining forces in theatre. We seek to entertain with performances that reveal life in all its comedy, tragedy and intensity; and we hope to educate by choosing plays that provide exceptional insight into the human condition. By challenging ourselves as artists, and our audiences as participants, we endeavor to provide the community with vigorous and exciting live theatre.

Producing Artistic Director

Norman Blumensaadt

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Mary Alice Carnes, Sarah Seaton

DIFFERENT STAGES' REPERTORY

Begun as Small Potatoes Theatrical Company

1981: August Strindberg's *Creditors and The Stronger*. 1982: William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 1983: George Bernard Shaw's *Candida*; Anton Chekhov's *The Brute*, *Swan Song*, and *Celebration*. 1984: Luigi Pirandello's *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*; Jane Martin's *Talking With...* 1985: Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9*; William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*; Carl Sternheim's *The Underpants*; Michael Weller's *Moonchildren*. 1986: Anlin, Gray's *How I Got That Story*; William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*; Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*. 1987: Michael Weller's *Loose Ends*; Aristophanes' *The Wasps*; Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart*; Arthur Schnitzler's *Anatol*. 1988: Wallace Shawn's *Aunt Dan and Lemon*; Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*; Moss Hart's *Light Up the Sky*; Jean Racine's *Phaedra*; Jean-Baptiste Moliere's *The Misanthrope*. 1989: Caryl Churchill's *Fen*; Charles Ludlam's *The Artificial Jungle*; William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. 1990: Eric Overmeyer's *On the Verge*; Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; Milan Kundera's *Jacques and His Master*; Tom White's *The Trouble with Tofu*; William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. 1991: George Kelly's *The Show-Off*; George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*; Keith Reddin's *Life and Limb*; Mozart/Lorenzo da Ponte's *Così fan Tutte*; Jean-Baptiste Moliere's *The Learned Ladies*. 1992: Alan Ayckbourn's *Woman in Mind*; Carlo Gozzi's *The Raven*; Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*; Charles MacArthur's *Johnny on a Spot*; George Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*. 1993: Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good*; Charles Ludlam's *The Secret Lives of the Sexists*; Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending*. 1994: Constance Congdon's *Tales of the Lost Formicans*; William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*; George M. Cohan's *The Tavern*; Marlayne Meyer's *Etta Jenkins*. 1995: Pierre Marivaux's *The Triumph of Love*; Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*; Larry Kramer's *The Destiny of Me*; Alexander Ostrovsky's *The Diary of a Scoundrel*. 1996: Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*; Agatha Christie's *Black Coffee*; William Congreve's *The Way of the World*. 1997: Terrence McNally's *A Perfect Ganesh*; Dorothy Parker's *Here We Are*; Alan Ayckbourn's *Drinking Companion*; Terrence McNally's *Noon*; George M. Cohan's *Seven Keys to Baldpate*; Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*. 1998: Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*; Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*; Giles Havergal's *Travels with my Aunt*; Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*. 1999: Edit Villareal's *My VISiS with MGM*; Jean-Baptiste Moliere's *The Hypochondriac* (tr. Martin Sorrel); Edward Percy and Reginald Denham's *Ladies in Retirement*; Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. 2000: Peter Parnell's *The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket*; Ann Ciccolella's *Fruits and Vegetables*; George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly's *Merton of the Movies*; Martin McDonagh's *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. 2001: Milsha Sanchez-Scott's *Roosters*; George Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*; J. B. Priestly's *Dangerous Corner*; Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke*. 2002: Ann Ciccolella's *Madame X*; David Lindsay-Abaire's *Fuddy Meers*; Agatha Christie's *The Unexpected Guest*; Federico Garcia Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*. 2003: Christopher Durang's *Betty's Summer Vacation*; Horton Foote's *The Traveling Lady*; William Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*. 2004: John Patrick's *The Hasty Heart*; Tom White's *The Misses Overbeck*; Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney*; George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. 2005: William Shakespeare's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*; Edit Villareal's *Marriage is Forever*; Agatha Christie's *Appointment with Death*; John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*. 2006: *Two into War (The Gifts of War and The Retreating World)*; Amy Freed's *The Beard of Avon*; Agatha Christie's *The Hollow*; Christopher Durang's *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge*. 2007: Edward Albee's *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*; Peter Shaffer's *Lettice and Lovage*; W. Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife*. 2008: Tennessee Williams' *Garden District*; *Something Unspoken & Suddenly Last Summer*; Diana Son's *Stop Kiss*; Tom White's *What I Want Right Now*; George Bernard Shaw's *Getting Married*. 2009: Christopher Durang's *Miss Witherspoon*; Caryl Churchill's *A Number*.