



# The SUN STAR

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by Chris Hawk

## ‘An Inspector Calls’ hooks audience with poignant characters

Theatre UAF is presenting the play “An Inspector Calls” in the Lee H. Salisbury Theatre in the Fine Arts Complex Friday, Nov. 7 and Saturday, Nov. 8. The play is a three-act drama, taking place over one night in 1912, centered on the well-to-do middle-class Birling family. The family is visited by a man calling himself Inspector Goole, who questions the family about the suicide of a young working-class woman.

The play is sanctimonious in nature, with Inspector Goole blame upon the family as each member is in turn discovered to have made a decision leading to her death. The part of Goole was to place the blame of the girl’s demise upon the family: the father fired her, the daughter complained to the manager at her new job to fire her, the fiancé courted her then left her, the son impregnated her and the mother turned her away from her charity for the needy. Of course, none of them knew that their actions would lead to her into a state of desperation and ultimately to her suicide.

The part of the Sheila Birling, acted by Katrina Kuharich, was played especially well. I found

myself becoming frustrated with her devolving into hysterics so constantly. I lost immersion once or twice when I happened to discover that the costume prepared for her did not appear to fit appropriately, but even then it didn’t take much more than her emotional outbursts to draw me back in.

The father of the family, Mr. Arthur Birling, played by Nolan Raapana, fit his role perfectly. Despite looking something like the intended character, his accent conjures the stereotypical image of a greedy capitalist exploiter that the Socialist Priestly wanted to portray. His buffoonery, especially when trying to make claim of plans presented by Croft as originally his, was worthy of a good chuckle.

I found myself growing angry at Inspector Goole and his sanctimonious accusations, a testament to Marley Horner’s acting ability. His visage was a powerfully disconcerting one, exactly as I expect was intended by the original author. If it had not been intended as such, then Horner has found an even better way of performing than was intended by Priestly; Horner does not make Goole an especially

likeable person, but rather an ominous and dangerous one.

Ian Hendren, playing the part of Gerald Croft, wore evocative facial expressions indicating the state of his mental anguish as he discovered that a woman who he had almost loved had died such a horrible death. I thought it was amusing when he came to odds with the Inspector Goole, given how much taller Hendren is than Horner, as the two vied for control of the situation while Goole interrogated the family.

Mrs. Sybil Birling was the perfect caricature of stubbornness as acted by Rachel Blackwell. On more than one occasion the audience found itself laughing at her declarations that she had known all along about Inspector Goole’s true motives and nature.

Remaining performances for the play are Nov. 14 and 15 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 15 and 16 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$16 for adults, \$12 for seniors or military and \$8 for students, if purchased ahead of time online at [www.uaf.edu/theatrefilm](http://www.uaf.edu/theatrefilm), or by calling the Box Office at 474-7751. At the door, tickets will all be an additional \$2.