

Priestley's vision is entertaining theatre

"SUMMER Day's Dream" at the Albert Hall last night was J. B. Priestley's oak-panelled, thatched-cottage vision of the future of Britain.

Brisbane Repertory Theatre made an entertaining evening out of this largely-superficial and often wordy glimpse of the future.

England in 1975 is represented as a land de-populated of everybody but farmer-poets, mystics, and rural philosophers.

Ellis Chesney gives a fine performance as a grand old Englishman presiding benignly over a household blessed in their lack of gadgets.

Dazzling

Intruders come from the ruthless world of "technocrats" outside: Ronnie O'Sullivan as a dazzling Russian snow maiden; Geoffrey Baker as an Indian scientist amazed at the backward English; and Franklyn Evans in one of his best performances, as an efficient but innocent American.

Mr. Priestley loads his dice heavily. The snow maiden thaws as Edmund Bourke, as a haymaker-musician, quotes Shakespeare at her sonorously.

The Indian and the American go away and forget the nasty mission they came on.

The house is left under the spell of one of Mr. Priestley's most tiresome characters ever, a "seer" a long way out of Chekhov (played by Berenice Murray).

Harold Coterell and Olga Massey play characters which are more pleasant to meet.

The play, well-directed last night by Babette Stephens,

night by Babette Stephens, proves one thing at least: The English are incurably poetic, even when, like Mr. Priestley, they are not poets.

—Roger Covell.