



Richard Griffiths as Galileo

PHOTOGRAPH: HENRIETTA BUTLER

leo: the sensual life lover, the silky ironist and, above all, the moral coward prepared to sacrifice others, but not himself, to the diligent pursuit of truth. There's a genuinely shocking moment when — without a flicker of hesitation — he squashes his daughter's marital prospects to prosecute his forbidden sun-spot experiments. Griffiths unsentimentally presents us with the blind egotism of the born innovator.

The supporting cast — including Edward de Souza as Cardinal Barberini who becomes more oppressive as he dons the Papal robes, Alfred

Burke as the inflexible Inquisitor and Anthony O'Donnell as Galileo's prophetic friend — is also exemplary. What I missed was the visual clarity of the Berliner Ensemble and the vital information about what year or place we were in. But although Kent's production does not match the unencumbered lightness of Hare's text, Galileo remains a seminal masterwork about the eternal struggle of reason against superstition and self-betrayal.

At the Almeida Theatre, Islington (071-359-4404), until March 31.

## Billington On Galileo Part Two

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