The Homecoming, by Harold Pinter, presented by the MIT Dramashop, directed by Bill Bryant, playing at Kresge Little Theatre this Thursday, Friday and Saturday, May 4-6, and at 8 p.m. admission $4.50/$3.50 with MIT I.D.

The setting: A house in North London. Max, a 70-year-old butcher, lives with his two youngest sons — Lenny, a pimp, and Joey, a would-be boxer — and Max’s younger brother, Sam, a chauffeur. Enter: Teddy, Max’s oldest son, who left for America six years earlier. Teddy shows up for a surprise visit, with wife and Ph.D. in hand.

There are the circumstances surrounding Harold Pinter’s The Homecoming, the MIT Dramashop’s latest production. Both Pinter and director in shape this play demonstrates quite a bit of ambition on their part. The colloquial dialogue, the age of its older characters, and the bizarre second act have defeated more than a few excellent American theater groups. It demands a lot of thought and work from both actors and directors.

Happy, Dramashop’s production of The Homecoming is a strong one. The case is well balanced and has an excellent grasp of Pinter’s slow, tense style. Joel Gluck ’86 leads the cast with his portrayal of Max, the avuncular and cynical patriarch trying to hold on to his position as head of the family. Gluck achieves the very difficult task of making Max vulnerable without making him seem like a wimp. Gluck displays a vocal and emotional maturity which is especially pleasing to see from a sophomore.

When, in the first few minutes Max remarks, “I’m getting old, my word of honor,” one can feel removed with a slight desire for sympathy. When he argues with Lenny about horses, he desperately tries to show his knowledge and experience. He is like an old lion who keeps roaring to prove he is in control.

If Max is the old lion, then Lenny is the young cub who keeps making playful attacks until he is ready to challenge. Lenny is played by James Macioravic ’84, who fills every one of his lines with enough sarcasm to make Don Rickles flinch. There are times when this is a problem, especially in areas where Lenny probably should have been a bit more open, but overall it works very well. Joey, the youngest son, is portrayed by David Altsheul ’86. Altsheul has a hard job in trying to portray this Joey, whom Pinter seems to have neglected a bit. Most likely, all the audience sees is Joey whining or talking about boxing. The performance is a bit weak, but that may be because the role is weak. Altsheul, however, does a very good job of reaching out to Teddy, the returning prodigal, when nobody else will.

Sam (Charles Grimes ’85) is a weak man who takes pride in the fact that he doesn’t disturb the slick pattern which he rides in his Limousine. “I don’t press myself on people, you see,” he says. Sam cleverly allows Max to tease him and push him around. Grimes carries the weakness well, although he sometimes seems to forget how old he is supposed to be.

Teddy (Kevin Cunningham ’84) comes home to realize that he cannot love his family anymore. Teddy appears to feel that he is better than they are because of his education. Cunningham is a good choice for the role, and his charm sets him apart from the rest of the family during most of the play.

Susan Wiegand ’84 plays Ruth, Teddy’s beautiful wife, like an ice cube. This works very well except for a few scenes — notably one in which she flies with Lenny, when she probably should have pretended to be more friendly to him until she had him on a string. However, this was not a major weakness.

The most noticeable problem with the show is the difficulty with accents. Max’s and Lenny’s are fine, and Teddy and Ruth do not need one, but Sam’s is awful and Joey’s is erratic at best. Possibly, Bryant should have let the actors go without them, rather than distracting the audience.

A strong production staff backed up the actors. The set, designed by William Fregeau, is a simple living room with a staircase leading upstairs; it follows Pinter’s description almost to the letter. The lighting, by Marc Dinardo ’84 is quite good, especially in areas where Lenny probably should have been a bit more open, but overall it works very well.

There are times when this is a problem, especially in areas where Lenny probably should have been a bit more open, but overall it works very well. Joey, the youngest son, is portrayed by David Altsheul ’86. Altsheul has a hard job in trying to portray this Joey, whom Pinter seems to have neglected a bit. Most likely, all the audience sees is Joey whining or talking about boxing. The performance is a bit weak, but that may be because the role is weak. Altsheul, however, does a very good job of reaching out to Teddy, the returning prodigal, when nobody else will.

Sam (Charles Grimes ’85) is a weak man who takes pride in the fact that he doesn’t disturb the slick pattern which he rides in his Limousine. “I don’t press myself on people, you see,” he says. Sam cleverly allows Max to tease him and push him around. Grimes carries the weakness well, although he sometimes seems to forget how old he is supposed to be.

Teddy (Kevin Cunningham ’84) comes home to realize that he cannot love his family anymore. Teddy appears to feel that he is better than they are because of his education. Cunningham is a good choice for the role, and his charm sets him apart from the rest of the family during most of the play.

Susan Wiegand ’84 plays Ruth, Teddy’s beautiful wife, like an ice cube. This works very well except for a few scenes — notably one in which she flies with Lenny, when she probably should have pretended to be more friendly to him until she had him on a string. However, this was not a major weakness.

The most noticeable problem with the show is the difficulty with accents. Max’s and Lenny’s are fine, and Teddy and Ruth do not need one, but Sam’s is awful and Joey’s is erratic at best. Possibly, Bryant should have let the actors go without them, rather than distracting the audience.

A strong production staff backed up the actors. The set, designed by William Fregeau, is a simple living room with a staircase leading upstairs; it follows Pinter’s description almost to the letter. The lighting, by Marc Dinardo ’84 is quite good, especially in areas where Lenny probably should have been a bit more open, but overall it works very well. Joey, the youngest son, is portrayed by David Altsheul ’86. Altsheul has a hard job in trying to portray this Joey, whom Pinter seems to have neglected a bit. Most likely, all the audience sees is Joey whining or talking about boxing. The performance is a bit weak, but that may be because the role is weak. Altsheul, however, does a very good job of reaching out to Teddy, the returning prodigal, when nobody else will.

Sam (Charles Grimes ’85) is a weak man who takes pride in the fact that he doesn’t disturb the slick pattern which he rides in his Limousine. “I don’t press myself on people, you see,” he says. Sam cleverly allows Max to tease him and push him around. Grimes carries the weakness well, although he sometimes seems to forget how old he is supposed to be.

Teddy (Kevin Cunningham ’84) comes home to realize that he cannot love his family anymore. Teddy appears to feel that he is better than they are because of his education. Cunningham is a good choice for the role, and his charm sets him apart from the rest of the family during most of the play.

Susan Wiegand ’84 plays Ruth, Teddy’s beautiful wife, like an ice cube. This works very well except for a few scenes — notably one in which she flies with Lenny, when she probably should have pretended to be more friendly to him until she had him on a string. However, this was not a major weakness.

The most noticeable problem with the show is the difficulty with accents. Max’s and Lenny’s are fine, and Teddy and Ruth do not need one, but Sam’s is awful and Joey’s is erratic at best. Possibly, Bryant should have let the actors go without them, rather than distracting the audience.

A strong production staff backed up the actors. The set, designed by William Fregeau, is a simple living room with a staircase leading upstairs; it follows Pinter’s description almost to the letter. The lighting, by Marc Dinardo ’84 is quite good, especially in areas where Lenny probably should have been a bit more open, but overall it works very well. Joey, the youngest son, is portrayed by David Altsheul ’86. Altsheul has a hard job in trying to portray this Joey, whom Pinter seems to have neglected a bit. Most likely, all the audience sees is Joey whining or talking about boxing. The performance is a bit weak, but that may be because the role is weak. Altsheul, however, does a very good job of reaching out to Teddy, the returning prodigal, when nobody else will.

Sam (Charles Grimes ’85) is a weak man who takes pride in the fact that he doesn’t disturb the slick pattern which he rides in his Limousine. “I don’t press myself on people, you see,” he says. Sam cleverly allows Max to tease him and push him around. Grimes carries the weakness well, although he sometimes seems to forget how old he is supposed to be.

Teddy (Kevin Cunningham ’84) comes home to realize that he cannot love his family anymore. Teddy appears to feel that he is better than they are because of his education. Cunningham is a good choice for the role, and his charm sets him apart from the rest of the family during most of the play.

Susan Wiegand ’84 plays Ruth, Teddy’s beautiful wife, like an ice cube. This works very well except for a few scenes — notably one in which she flies with Lenny, when she probably should have pretended to be more friendly to him until she had him on a string. However, this was not a major weakness.

The most noticeable problem with the show is the difficulty with accents. Max’s and Lenny’s are fine, and Teddy and Ruth do not need one, but Sam’s is awful and Joey’s is erratic at best. Possibly, Bryant should have let the actors go without them, rather than distracting the audience.

A strong production staff backed up the actors. The set, designed by William Fregeau, is a simple living room with a staircase leading upstairs; it follows Pinter’s description almost to the letter. The lighting, by Marc Dinardo ’84 is quite good, especially in areas where Lenny probably should have been a bit more open, but overall it works very well. Joey, the youngest son, is portrayed by David Altsheul ’86. Altsheul has a hard job in trying to portray this Joey, whom Pinter seems to have neglected a bit. Most likely, all the audience sees is Joey whining or talking about boxing. The performance is a bit weak, but that may be because the role is weak. Altsheul, however, does a very good job of reaching out to Teddy, the returning prodigal, when nobody else will.

Sam (Charles Grimes ’85) is a weak man who takes pride in the fact that he doesn’t disturb the slick pattern which he rides in his Limousine. “I don’t press myself on people, you see,” he says. Sam cleverly allows Max to tease him and push him around. Grimes carries the weakness well, although he sometimes seems to forget how old he is supposed to be.