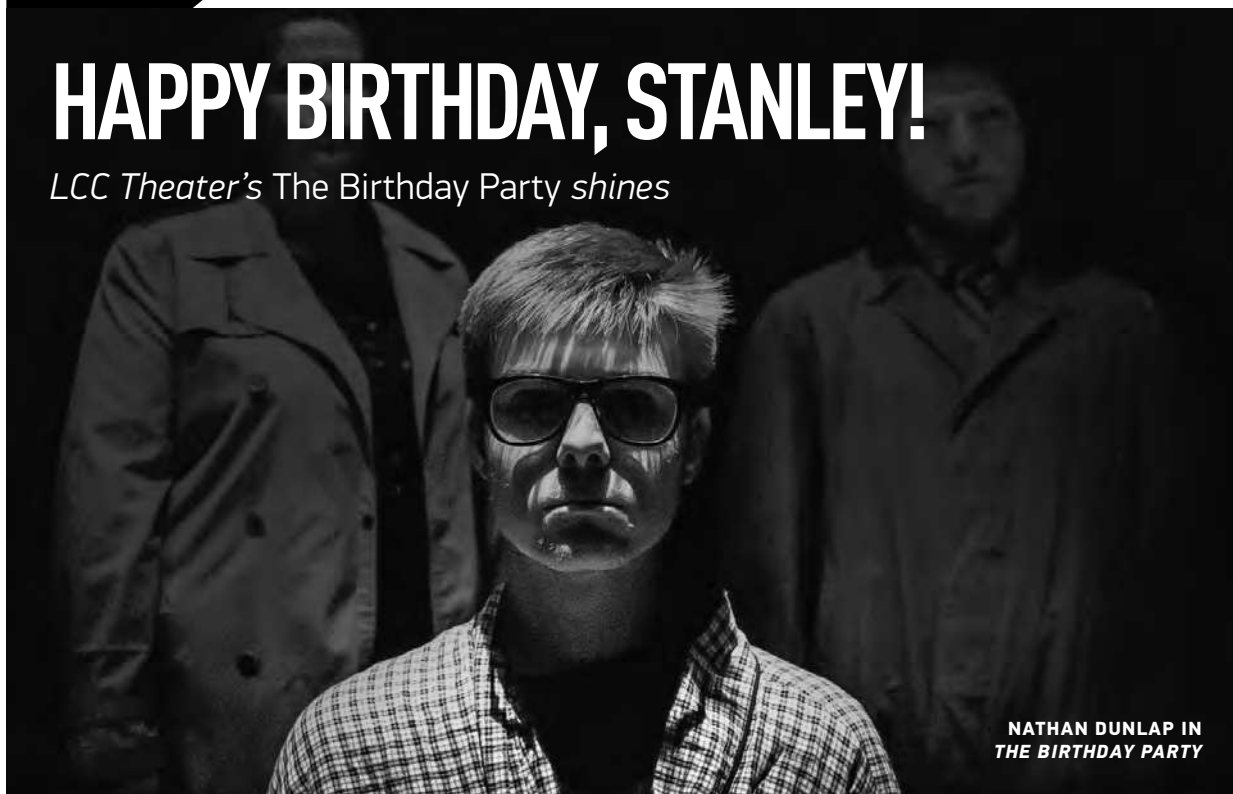


# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, STANLEY!

LCC Theater's *The Birthday Party* shines



NATHAN DUNLAP IN THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

They don't make them like Harold Pinter anymore, and right now at Lane Community College you can enjoy Pinter's masterful *The Birthday Party*, tenderly cooked to a lustrous crackle. This production whizzes by, with direction and performances that fully embrace Pinter's penchant for the absurd.

Director Cullen Vance finds the musical score within Pinter's cadence, his rich, piping hot words, and this taut cast chomps through the proceedings like a tight jazz sextet.

Writer of 29 full-length plays, 24 screenplays, six collections of poetry and three books of prose, Pinter received

the 2005 Nobel Prize for literature — the highest honor available to any writer in the world. In announcing the accolade, Nobel chairperson Horace Engdahl said Pinter was an artist who in his plays "uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms."

Pinter was also a known curmudgeon, and this only adds to his endearment.

Several of his letters — remember letters? — have recently resurfaced, including a 2001 gem to fellow playwright Tom Stoppard, who had asked Pinter to co-host a theater fundraiser:

Dear Tom,  
Thank you for your invitation to host a fundraising dinner in the private room of a top London restaurant. I would rather die.

All the best.

Yours,

Harold.

And between each line of text, appropriately, is a double space — A Pinter pause.

*The Birthday Party* was initially a flop, closing after only eight performances in 1957. But it's since come to be one of Pinter's most celebrated plays.

This production's ensemble moves with such stylistic ferocity and choreographed punch that, together, the actors elevate already great dialogue to a whirling typhoon of energy.

Nathan Dunlap broods as Stanley, and Taelor Critchett effervesces as Lulu.

Matthew George as McCann and Katie Dobrowski as Goldberg stalk the stage like two menacing apex predators who've had their teeth and claws pulled. It's perfect.

Brianne Orloski's Meg consistently hits the highest notes on the register. She's both sharp and flat, like a puff of disinfectant from an aerosol can. I love her.

But MVP goes to Larry Brown as Petey. Brown's physicality, intonation, gestures and mannerisms, his listening and timing, suggest a seasoned, veteran actor. But from his bio we learn that Brown is taking acting classes at Lane as part of his retirement from a lifetime in business. Every theater director in this region should go see this production, just to scout Brown. He's a natural, and we hope to see more of him onstage soon. ■

*The Birthday Party continues at 7:30 pm Nov. 16-18 and 2 pm Nov. 19 in LCC's Blue Door Theatre, Building 6. Tickets are pay-what-you-will, with a suggested donation of \$3 to \$7. Call 541-463-5648 for more info.*

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## EVENTS

### Events

**BUY NOTHING DAY GIVEAWAY EXTRAVAGANZA AT BRING!** Friday, Nov. 24, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. only, BRING parking lot 4446 Franklin Blvd. [Store/donation area closed.] Select items available for FREE. First come, first served. Items must be taken away by 3:00.

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# EVENTS CALENDAR



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