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**THIS *BIRTHDAY PARTY* IS A WICKED CELEBRATION  
Harold Pinter's Classic Comedy of Menace Opens at the Jungle April 6**

(Minneapolis) — Harold Pinter's celebrated play, **THE BIRTHDAY PARTY**, appears at the Jungle Theater for the first time and features an all-star cast, including **Richard Ooms** and **Claudia Wilkens** as Petey and Meg Boles, and **Stephen Cartmell** as Stanley Webber, the lone lodger in the Boles' shabby English boarding house. One of the great black comedies of the 20th century, *The Birthday Party* will be on stage April 6-May 13 at the Lyn-Lake theater, 2951 Lyndale Av. S., in Minneapolis.

From the very start, Stanley senses danger when two mysterious strangers (**Tony Papenfuss** and **Martin Ruben**) arrive on a day that his landlady insists is his birthday. What do these men want? Who are they looking for? And what's inside their briefcase? The only other party guest turns out to be the attractive next-door neighbor Lulu (Ivey Award-winning **Katie Guentzel**) and after a few glasses of whiskey and a game of blindman's buff, Stanley's innocuous birthday party turns into a totalitarian nightmare.

Harold Pinter's play is at once funny and frightening in its study of the individual's imperative need for resistance. **Joel Sass** directs this deeply political and timeless classic written by Pinter in 1958. Winner of the 2005 Nobel Prize in Literature, Harold Pinter (1930-2008) is also the author of *The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming*, *Old Times* (Jungle 1993) and *Betrayal* (Jungle 2006).

Sass said, "*The Birthday Party* is a rare event and very germane to our cultural landscape." The play had been on his radar for a long time but because of what he calls the "current, scary partisan discourse," the time now seemed right to stage Pinter's pitch-black comedy of menace, which hasn't been professionally staged in the Twin Cities since the Guthrie's 1986-87 production (also starring Claudia Wilkens). "It'd be easy to compare Pinter's 'Party' to something hatched up by David Lynch or Quentin Tarantino with its absurdist mix of humor and horror," said Sass. "But in reality, there is an overlay of power and politics, which makes Stanley's bizarre world more terrifying than anything they could imagine."

Sass is also the scenic designer for *The Birthday Party*. His creative team includes **Barry Browning** (lighting design), **Annie Enneking** (fight choreographer), **Andrea M. Gross** (costume design), **Lucinda Holshue** (dialect coach), **Samantha Johns** (charge painter), **C. Andrew Mayer** (sound designer), **John Novak** (props and stage management) and **John Stillwell** (technical director).

*The Birthday Party* performances are Tuesdays (\$20) and Wednesdays (\$28) at 7:30 p.m.; Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. (\$33); Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. (\$38); Sundays at 2 p.m. (\$33); and Sundays at 7:30 p.m. (\$28). Senior, student and group discounts are also available, and half-price rush tickets are available every night of the week 30 minutes prior to the performance for \$10 off the regular price. Tickets are available at (612) 822-7063 or online at [www.jungletheater.com](http://www.jungletheater.com).

### Calendar Information

#### THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

By Harold Pinter

Directed by Joel Sass

April 6-May 13, 2012

#### The Jungle Theater

2951 Lyndale Av. S., Minneapolis

Tickets: \$10-\$38

Box office: 612-822-7063 or [www.jungletheater.com](http://www.jungletheater.com)

#### Dates

<b>Opening</b>	Friday	April 6	@ 8:00 p.m.
<b>Media Nights</b>	Friday	April 6	@ 8:00 p.m.
	Saturday	April 7	@ 8:00 p.m.
<b>Audio-Described</b>	Thursday	April 19	@ 7:30 p.m.
<b>Closes</b>	Sunday	May 13	@ 7:30 p.m.

In Harold Pinter's THE BIRTHDAY PARTY, Stanley Webber (**Stephen Cartmell**), the only lodger in a shabby English boarding house, senses danger when two mysterious strangers arrive on a day that his landlady insists is his birthday. What do these men want? Who are they looking for? And what's inside their briefcase?

After a few glasses of whiskey and a game of blindman's buff, Stanley's innocuous birthday party turns into a totalitarian nightmare in this deeply political and timeless classic. One of the great black comedies of the 20th century, Harold Pinter's play is at once funny and menacing in its study of the individual's imperative need for resistance.

In addition to Cartmell, *The Birthday Party* cast includes **Katie Guentzel** (Lulu), **Richard Ooms** (Petey Boles), **Tony Papenfuss** (Goldberg), **Martin Ruben** (McCann) and **Claudia Wilkens** (Meg Boles).

#### About the Jungle Theater

The Jungle Theater is one of the region's most dynamic theaters, renowned for its definitive productions of plays drawn from our rich theatrical heritage as well as from the body of work written in our own time. Since founding the Jungle in 1991, Artistic Director Bain Boehlke has won numerous awards for his exquisite design, brilliant casting, and razor-sharp direction. A flagship example of the transformative power of the performing arts, the Jungle Theater plays a vital, continuing role in the economic, social and cultural life of its Minneapolis neighborhood.