

## **"The Birthday Party," presented by the UCSD Theatre**

**January 16, 1975**

Harold Pinter's hilarious and chilling mystery, "The Birthday Party," will open Jan. 31 at the University of California, San Diego for a run of eight performances.

The play, second offering of the 1974-75 UCSD Theatre season, will be presented at 8 p.m. Jan. 31, Feb. 1-2 and Feb. 5-9 in the UCSD Theatre on the Matthews campus.

Directing the production will be Dr. Arthur Wagner, chairman of the UCSD Drama Department.

Pinter's classic of contemporary theatre takes place in a house on the English seacoast. Although it seems to be a boarding house, there have been no real visitors in years.

Stanley, a man in his late thirties with an unknown background, is the only boarder. Meg, the landlady, has developed a motherly attitude for her long-time guest and treats him like the son she and her husband never had.

Mysteriously, two men come to the house posing as boarders, but they're really after Stanley. At a birthday party for Stanley, the two attempt to break him down. The men, McCann and Goldberg, succeed in breaking through Stanley's resistance and finally take him away from the house.

"The Birthday Party" was first presented in 1958 in Cambridge, England and was one of Pinter's early plays. Critics first dismissed the work, but it has since become a classic play and Pinter is now considered one of the most important English-speaking playwrights.

According to Wagner, the bizarre happenings within a realistic situation are typical characteristics of a Pinter play.

"And the audience never knows the meaning behind the action," he said. "They must just believe what is happening and Pinter pushes credibility as far as it goes."

In the course of the play, Wagner said, it's hard to verify anything. "Pinter always seems to be asking 'what is true?', suggesting that many times we don't know what happens."

"We never know what Stanley did, who the two men are or why they take Stanley away. Since there are so many unanswered questions in the play, the audience shouldn't try to look for meaning," the director suggested.

"They should just open themselves up to the experience of the play-- the constant surprise, the menace, the comedy and the mystery. Pinter himself claims there is no intended meaning. His concern is the characters themselves."

Cast of the production includes Larry Deckel, senior drama major, as Stanley. Meg, the landlady, is played by Joan Rosenfels and Rich Revelli is seen in the role of her husband Petey. Goldberg and McCann are portrayed by Pat DeSantis and Bob MacDougall, respectively. Sue Denaker is Lulu, a neighbor.

Set design is by Daniel Dryden, assistant professor of drama, and costume design is by Marie Chiment, junior drama major.

Admission for the production is \$1.50 for students and \$3 for the general public. Tickets are available at the UCSD Drama Department, Building 407, Matthews.

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