

Blank Theatre Review - Solo Artist Presents Profound Theatrical Mosaic About Identity

By [Peter A. Balaskas](#)



Brian Stanton: Actor and Playwright

(Hollywood, CA) June, 2010 – Performing a one-person play is probably the most daunting task any actor has to face. Just ask seasoned veterans like **Christopher Plummer**, **Lynn Redgrave**, **Nicol Williamson**, and **Eric Bogosian** to list a few. In order for the show to work, it must possess two ingredients, very much like a chemical mixture: excellent writing and a talented actor who has such a dynamic presence that the audience's attention will be maintained, no matter what. If the show doesn't have just the *right* amount of one or both of these essential ingredients, it's either going to blow up in your face or just fizzle like tepid champagne. And this high level of pressure is especially intensified if the performer is also the playwright because he or she not only has to concentrate on both skills---acting and writing---to carry the audience through the journey, but the performer is also at risk facing a complete sense of vulnerability, especially if the piece that is being performed is about a traumatic part of that person's past. But one artist has faced those daunting challenges by writing and performing a profound piece of drama that deals with a facet of his life that everyone can relate to: a person's journey into self-discovery. L.A. performer **Brian Stanton** demonstrates his multifaceted skills as an actor and playwright in his one-man show **BLANK**, which details his journey about how an adopted young man decides to meet his birth mother.

The very first moment we see **Stanton**, he tentatively walks a light path leading to the front of the stage. He fidgets, looks around, pulls out a crumpled piece of paper, looks up and reaches out as though he was going to ring a doorbell. But then suddenly, he gets transported to an acting class, which serves as a catalyst, a segue into the mind and soul of **Stanton**. The previously mentioned doorbell belongs to his birth mother, who at the age of sixteen gave him up for adoption, and the show is a spiritual and emotional roller coaster ride for him as he deals with the facts regarding his mother's painful yet understandable reasons for giving him up and his reluctance for arranging a reunion with her. Throughout this exploration, **Stanton** performs many characters that help him try to face his fears and embrace the fact that he is not a blank slate, a person who has no identity, a man who is a byproduct of a violent act, but a talented, intelligent and sensitive young actor who conjures his courage to discover a level of peace he has never faced before.



Stanton confronts his inner psyche

With this kind of subject matter, you need some comic relief to keep the audience's attention. And **Stanton** accomplishes this beautifully as he switches into 10 different characters throughout the show. Some are quite poignant; others are hilarious---the Top Three Favorites **Stanton** portrays include his diminutive Italian grandmother, a flamboyant drama teacher whose foundation for teaching the Acting Method is learning to "discover your meow" (a technique he learned while in a production of **Cats**), and a puritanical Catholic priest who has the frightening ability to perform the **Vulcan Nerve Pinch** on any student who misbehaves during confession. **Stanton's** craft as an actor to transform into any of these personalities is truly phenomenal. However, the most difficult character he has to play on stage is that of **Brian Stanton**. When he is just himself, sharing with the audience about his thoughts and feelings on the road he is on, **Stanton** captures the soul of a man who is determined to fill in the pieces to the puzzle that symbolizes his individuality. He's not a victim, and he's not in desperation. He is a man in conflict, just like every human being on this planet who, at some moment at their own life, questions the personal journey they are on. And when the answers do come, it's that person's character and a sense of integrity and peace that finally settle and calm the soul. And **Stanton's** own discovery and instinctive love for his birth mother, as well as maintaining his loyalty to his own adopted family, is truly heartwarming right to the very last second of the show. **Blank** is a perfect showcase for Stanton as an actor, playwright, and role model for anyone who questions the validity of their sense of worth.

After performing his last show in Hollywood, **Stanton** then takes his show to Dallas, Texas on June 25 and 26 at the **Dallas Hub Theatre** for the **Dallas/Ft. Worth Fringe Festival**. He will also perform at the **Concerned United Birthparents** retreat in Carlsbad, California on October 15, 2010. As time goes on, **Stanton** will hopefully return to Los Angeles and continue to perform this beautiful work of art, where the mosaic within the frame is anything but...blank.



Stanton plays a scene from Oedipus Rex, or as his drama teacher says, "Eeedipuss."

Blank opened Fri, Apr 16 – Thu, Jun 17 • Sundays at 7p • Thursday at 8p
WHERE: The Lounge Theatre – 6201 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90038
HOW: (310) 950-5770 or www.plays411.com/blank
Photos by: **Brenda Stanton**