The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature an impossibility.

— Oscar Wilde

**The Importance of Being Earnest**

**Performances**

October 7 - 17, 1999
Mendelssohn Theatre

**Tickets** (734) 764-0450
Escape from Happiness
written by George F. Walker

Director: John Neville-Andrews
Scenic Designer: Tim Reynolds
Costume Designer: Dominick Veldman
Lighting Designer: Damian Caza-Cleypool
Assistant Director: Marc Kamler
Stage Manager: Heather Chockley

Setting: Nora's kitchen in a house at the east end of a large city.

There will be one intermission.


About the Artists

Damian Caza-Cleypool (Lighting Designer) is a senior BFA design and production student. U M: Lighting design: Grease, MUSKET; Boy's Life, Basement Arts. Regional Theatres: Two years as a staff electrician, Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC; Lighting designer and assistant technical director, Michigan Shakespeare Festival, Jackson, M I.

Heather Chockley (Stage Manager) is an undergraduate in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama. U M: assistant stage manager: Endgame, Endgame (ACTF), The Best People; assistant lighting designer: The Tempest. Other: Managing director of Young People's Theatre of Ann Arbor, scenic designer for the Mercury Theatre of Ann Arbor.


Tim Reynolds (Scenic Designer) is an undergraduate in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama. U M: Scenic Design: Orphan Train; Lighting Design: Anything Goes, Antigone; Impact Dance; Basement Arts: Those Talented, Barefoot in the Park, Getting Out; assistant designer: Le Rossignol/L'enfant et les Sortilèges, The Turn of the Screw (scenic design). Regional Theatres: New Jersey Opera; Apprentice carpenter/staff electrician, Spoleto Festival. Other: Lighting engineer for Disney Cruise Line, Walt Disney Theatre, Disney Magic; assistant to the scenic designer, The Oresteia, Juilliard.

Dominick Veldman (Costume Designer) is a BFA candidate in theatre design and production. U M: Costume design: Our Country's Good, The Wiz; assistant costume design: La Traviata (Olga Dimitrov), The Best People (Jessica Hahn), Pilates Wife (Rebecca Valentino). Regional Theatres: Michigan Shakespeare Festival: costume design, Willy and the Hairy Man; assistant costume design, Hamlet, Twelfth Night (Jessica Hahn). Other: Costume coordinator, Ring of Steel.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Erik Fredricksen for fight arrangements.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater productions. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC/ACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KC/ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

This play is dedicated to the loving memory of BFA directing major Sarah Emily Metzger May 19, 1980 — January 18, 1999
**About the Playwright**

George F. Walker has written more than twenty plays, winning six Chalmers Awards and four Dora Mayor Moore Awards and twice winning the Governor General's Award for Drama. His plays have been widely produced in Canada, the United States, Britain, and Australia. They have been translated into German, French, Turkish, Polish, and Czech. He was born in Toronto in 1947. His career as a playwright began in 1970 when he wrote his first play in response to a lamp-post bill soliciting scripts for Toronto's Factory Theatre Lab, then a fledgling, shoe-string operation housed in a former candle-factory. He spent the next five years as playwright-in-residence at the Factory Theatre, where he wrote Beyond Mozambique, which premiered there in 1974. In 1977, Walker began a three-year affiliation with Toronto Free Theatre, which premiered Zastrozzi: The Master of Discipline. He served as playwright-in-residence at the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1981. Walker had directed his first production in 1976; over the next decade he would direct the premieres of Theatre of the Film Noir, The Art of War, and Criminals in Love, all produced by the Factory. Better Living premiered in 1986 at the St. Lawrence Centre in Toronto and Walker won the Governor General's Award for Criminals in Love; in 1989, he won his second Governor General's Award, for Nothing Sacred. In 1991, Escape from Happiness premiered at Vassar College in a production by New York Film and Stage Co. at The Powerhouse Theatre; the following year Walker directed the Canadian premiere of the play for the Factory. Tough! premiered at Vancouver's Green Thumb Theatre for Young People in 1993. In 1994, he was awarded the Toronto Arts Award for Drama. His most recent play is Heaven.

- from Shared Anxiety: The Selected Plays of George F. Walker

**Cast of Characters**

- **Nora**
  - Nora's eldest daughter
- **Mary Ann**
  - Nora's middle daughter
- **Gail**
  - Nora's youngest daughter
- **Junior**
  - Gail's husband
- **Tom**
  - Nora's father, the father of Nora's daughters
- **Dian**
  - A police detective
- **Mike**
  - A police detective
- **Rolly**
  - A criminal

The performers and designers in this production are composed of undergraduate students in the department of Theatre and Drama. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music.

**About the Cast**

- **Steve Best** (Rolly) sophomore, BFA Performance, Jackson, MI
- **Krista Braun** (Elizabeth) senior, BFA Performance, Cleveland, OH
- **Aimee Penfield Clark** (Gail) sophomore, BFA Performance, Muskegon, MI
- **James Frounfelter** (Stevie) senior, BFA Performance, Ishpeming, MI
- **Markitwia Jackson** (Junior) senior, BFA Performance, Lansing, MI
- **Charlie Jett** (Tom) senior, BFA Performance, Wheaton, IL
- **Angela Lewis** (Dian) senior, BFA Performance, Detroit, MI
- **Dara Seitzman** (Nora) senior, BFA Performance/BA General Biology, Orchard Lake, MI
- **Julia Siple** (Mary Ann) senior, BFA Performance, Wayne, PA
- **Anthony von Halle** (Mike) junior, BFA Performance, Phoenix, AZ

**Director's Notes**

It is with great pride, and some sadness, that I am directing this extraordinary comedy by the ingenious playwright George F. Walker. Having been a tenacious champion of George's work over the years, I was quite surprised when a student asked me if I possessed any of his plays. Walker's plays are not produced very often in the states and therefore few people know of him or his body of work. The student was the exceptional Sarah Emily Metzger, to whom this production is dedicated in loving memory. Through the mutual interest and admiration of George F. Walker, I came to know Sarah, unfortunately for only a brief time, and cherish her enthusiasm for life and the theatre. She was to have directed this play in the student-run Basement Arts. It seemed only fitting that the play be brought to the main stage and given the most thrilling, inspired, and enthusiastic production possible as a tribute to Sarah, her passion for theatre, and the gift of enlightenment that she bestowed on everyone with whom she came in contact.

John Neville-Andrews