

★ LANGHAM COURT THEATRE PRESENTS ★



**APRIL 20 - MAY 7, 2016**

# **ESCAPE FROM HAPPINESS**

**BY  
GEORGE F. WALKER**


**DIRECTED BY  
WENDY MERK**

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## Director's Notes

*Escape From Happiness* is Part 3 of a trilogy of plays celebrating the trials and tribulations of the Quinn family in east end Toronto. Amidst poverty, and family and societal dysfunction, there shines a beacon of humour. Despite the familial differences there peeps a glimmer of affection between its members, even amongst those who refuse to openly acknowledge its existence. Everyone in the story gets a chance to speak his or her piece; therefore, we can't help understanding, if not actually liking, why they do the crazy things they sometimes do. The cast and crew have enjoyed working on this play immensely and we trust you will enjoy its inimitable Canadian humour that sees the funny side of the most bizarre situations, and sees the possibility of lasting love even in the most fractured and feisty families.

Wendy Merk

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Award winning realtor Rashida Malik, with Royal LePage Coast Capital Realty, is passionate about her community of Rockland, including Langham Court Theatre. Rashida and her husband own The Laurels, the charming Rockland mansion that neighbours Langham Court Theatre. As many may be aware, the theatre building was originally a carriage house for The Laurels.

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Langham Court Theatre  
presents

# Escape From Happiness

By George F. Walker  
April 20 – May 7, 2016

Author's Agent: Great North Artists Management  
350 Dupont Street / Toronto, Ontario M5R 1V9

*Escape From Happiness* was first produced by  
New York Stage and Film Co. , August 1991,  
and Factory Theatre Toronto, February 1992.

Director	<b>WENDY MERK*</b>
Producer	<b>ANDREA PITE</b>
Stage Manager	<b>SHARON SUTHERLAND</b>
Set Design	<b>DON KEITH</b>
Lighting Design	<b>CHAD LAIDLAW</b>
Sound Design	<b>MITCH BARNES</b>
Costume Design	<b>DALLAS ASHBY</b>
Properties	<b>MARY ELLEN LAW</b>
Set Decor	<b>MERRY HALLSOR, GELI BARTLETT</b>

## Cast

Nora	<b>LORENE CAMMIADE</b>
Elizabeth	<b>CHILKO TIVY</b>
Mary Ann	<b>MICHELLE MITCHELL</b>
Gail	<b>NATALIE SHAW</b>
Junior	<b>MATT MATHIASON</b>
Tom	<b>WAYNE YERCHA</b>
Dian Black	<b>ROSEMARY JEFFERY</b>
Mike Dixon	<b>ANDREW PIRIE</b>
Rolly Moore	<b>KEVIN STINSON</b>
Stevie Moore	<b>JOHN MANSON</b>

## Setting

The play takes place over several days (and nights) in May, 1998, in a working class household in the east end of Toronto. The Quinn family have lived here since 1966, when Tom and Nora Quinn moved in as newlyweds. They subsequently had three daughters - Elizabeth, Mary Ann, and Gail. When his daughters were young Tom, a police officer, had a psychotic episode and attempted to burn the house down while the family were asleep in their beds. Much to everyone's relief Tom left the household for a number of years. Their daughters are now grown up; Elizabeth, former sex trade worker, is now a lawyer; Mary Ann is a stay-at-home mom who often leaves her husband and daughter to fend for themselves; and Gail is the mother of a newborn and spouse of Junior Dawson, a former car thief. Tom has recently returned to the family home, and thanks to Junior and Gail's kindness, is now staying in the spare bedroom. He is apparently mentally incompetent and unable to fend for himself. Nora, his wife, doesn't recognize him, but his daughters do.

\*Appearing with the permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

## Production Team

Head Scenic Carpenter Set Construction	<b>JEFFERY HUNTER</b> <b>MICHAEL KUSS, JULIUS MASLOVAT, CHARLIE ENCELL,</b> <b>DAVID BURBANK, ALF SMALL, JOHN SMITH, DOUG CRAIG,</b> <b>ERIC MCWILLIAM</b>
Scenic Painters	<b>DAVE CHAPLIN, ANTHONY JOHNSTON, JOHN SMITH</b>
Assistant Producer	<b>ANDREW LEE</b>
Assistant to the Director	<b>JANIE WOODS-MORRIS*</b>
Assistant Stage Managers	<b>SARAH SULEMAN, MICHAEL GOSSELIN</b>
Lighting Operators	<b>DEBBIE LAVERTY, KATHY MACOVICHUK</b>
Sound Operators	<b>TIM WATTERS, AMANDA HEFFELFINGER, JASON KING</b>
Stage Crew	<b>MARY ELLEN LAW, ANDREW LAW, MARILYN KUSS,</b> <b>MIKE KUSS, GLORIA SNIDER</b>
Lighting Crew	<b>BEN BURROW, BRETT BURROW, CAROL-ANNE MOORE,</b> <b>PERRY BURTON, CHINA RUNFINK, JENNIFER ILLINGWORTH,</b> <b>KARRIE AYOTTE, PAUL HILTON</b>
Dressers	<b>GLORIA SNIDER</b>
Sound Engineer	<b>JASON KING</b>

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## Acknowledgements

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**WENDY MERK** *Director*

Wendy has directed approximately 30 plays, operas, and musicals for many companies, including Theatre Inconnu, Puente Theatre, Langham Court Theatre, Dragon Monkey Theatre, the Victoria Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Victoria Conservatory of Music Opera Studio, and the former Victoria Shakespeare Festival. Her most recent productions were *Terrorism*, a staged reading at the Belfry, *If We Were Birds*, *Lady Audley's Secret*, and *The Penelopiad*. She has served as a producer and artistic director, and teaches acting classes in Victoria. From 1989 to 1996, she worked as a professional actor in Toronto.

## Production Biographies



**ANDREA PITE** *Producer*

This is Andrea's sixth time at Langham Court as Producer. She produced *Stepping Out*, *The Penelopiad*, *The 39 Steps*, *A Month in the Country*, and *Rabbit Hole*. She has also volunteered at St. Luke's Players and Gilbert & Sullivan. Besides duties at the theatre, Andrea is an avid duplicate bridge player and sometime Lawn Bowler. Thank you to Wendy for the opportunity to work with her again and to the dedicated cast and crew.



**SHARON SUTHERLAND** *Stage Manager*

Since stumbling into her first play fourteen years ago, Sharon has had the opportunity to work in a variety of behind-the-scenes roles and feels very lucky to get to work with, and learn from, such a talented community of dedicated and passionate people. Having previously stage-managed *Better Living*, she's excited to be back for the next chapter in the lives of this eccentric family. She'd like to thank everyone involved for another fantastic experience.



**DON KEITH** *Set Designer*

A Life Member of Theatre Kelowna Society, and a retired Theatre Teacher, Don keeps himself busy designing and directing in Victoria. Most recently he designed and directed *Doubt, A Parable* for Langham Court Theatre. In the summer he is a very busy Tour Guide, leading City tours and Wine Tours of the Cowichan Valley.



**CHAD LAIDLAW** *Lighting Design*

Chad is excited to return to design at Langham, after working as Assistant Stage Manager on *Female Transport*. Previous design credits at Langham include *Harvey* (2013), *84*, *Charing Cross Road* (2013). He co founded Jarvolution Theatre with his wife, Heather, and produced *A Beautiful View* (2014) and *The Weir* (2015). He dedicates his design to the memory of Sylvia Rhodes.



**MITCH BARNES** *Sound Design*

Mitch is delighted to be able to weave sound and music into this production that features so many talented and creative people in the cast and crew. Previously, he has performed on stage in Langham Court shows such as *You Can't Take It With You*, *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Laramie Project*. Special thanks to Wendy for the opportunity to have so much fun and to Jo for her constant love and support.



**DALLAS ASHBY** *Costume Design*

This is the first Costume Design Dallas has done for Langham Court, however, she has appeared on Langham's stage in *The Laramie Project* (2011), *Perfect Wedding* (2010), and *A Shot in the Dark* (2009). Her designs away from Langham include the Set Design for both *Wild Honey* (Phoenix Theatre 2016) and *Cliffhanger* (St. Luke's Players 2016) and the Costume Designs for *Hello, Out There* (Phoenix Theatre MFA project 2015) and *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (Phoenix Theatre 2014).



**MARY ELLEN LAW** *Properties*

Mary Ellen is happy, despite this play's title, to be back working as props manager and backstage crew again for this crazy family from the play *Better Living*. This season, Mary Ellen also worked backstage as dresser for *You Can't Take It With You* and in the sound booth for both *Doubt*, *A Parable* and *Female Transport*. She would like to thank her husband Andrew and her cat for allowing her to take over the house once again with her mountain of props for this show.



**MERRY HALLSOR** *Set Decor*

Merry has been involved in Community Theatre since childhood and is a life member of the Terrace Little Theatre. After serving 12 years on the Board of Theatre BC, Merry was awarded the prestigious Eric Hamber trophy for her contribution to Community Theatre throughout BC. Since moving to Victoria, Merry has been involved in St. Luke's Players and Langham Court in a variety of positions including co-directing St. Luke's annual pantomime, *Mother Goose* and costuming Langham Court's production of *Pride and Prejudice*.

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## About the Playwright

Like so many of the characters in his plays, George F. Walker was raised in East Toronto. He wrote his first play while working as a taxi driver. The play was produced by Toronto's Factory Theatre in 1972. Walker then became the Factory Theatre's resident playwright for several years. The company continues to produce his work. Today, Walker is easily one of Canada's most popular dramatists. He is best known for his dark comedies that satirize the effects of urbanization and capitalism on modern life. Walker has also written for television. He has written for *Due South*, *The Newsroom*, and *This is Wonderland*.

*Escape From Happiness* is the third play in Walker's East End Trilogy. The other two plays in the trilogy are *Criminals in Love* and *Better Living*, which was produced by Langham Court Theatre April/May of 2013. Other popular works include: *Nothing Sacred*, *Zastrozzi*, *The Master of Discipline*, and *Suburban Motel*.

Walker has won two Governor General Awards for Drama and is a member of the Order of Canada.

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**LORENE CAMMIADE** *Nora*

Lorene is very excited to be back in the old familiar messy kitchen reprising the role of Nora she originally played in Langham Court's *Better Living*. Other recent roles for Langham Court include Barbara in *August: Osage County*, and you may also have seen her playing Nanny/Principal in *Baby With the Bathwater* for Theatre Inconnu and the dastardly Lady Audley in the 2014 Victoria Fringe Festival. Lorene is happy that so many of the cast and crew have returned for this sequel to *Better Living* and welcomes all the new people to the show and to Langham.

## Cast Biographies



**CHILKO TIVY** *Elizabeth*

Born and raised in Vancouver, Chilko studied acting at the National Theatre School of Canada in Montreal. There she began developing her one woman musical *Gravity: A Tragedy*, which premiered at the Montreal Fringe 2014, and which she performed in a solo festival in NYC last fall. She has since returned to the West Coast, and continues her passion for theatre. Favourite Roles include *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and playing Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene in Langham Court's Spooky Shakespeare last Halloween. She is enjoying the challenge of Elizabeth's "rage and love veiled by calm professionalism". Thank you for coming-Enjoy the Show!



**MICHELLE MITCHELL** *Mary Ann*

Michelle is excited to be back on stage as Mary Ann. Recent Langham credits include: *Better Living* (Mary Ann), *Harvey* (Myrtle Mae), *The Graduate* (Stripper), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Ophelia), *You Can't Take it With You* (Essie) and *Elizabeth Rex* (Bear). Many thanks to her husband for his never-ending love, support and patience, and to the entire cast and crew.



**NATALIE SHAW** *Gail*

Natalie Shaw has been performing since the age of three. She started off being primarily a dancer and as she grew her love for all genres of performing arts expanded, as well. She attended the Canadian College of Performing Arts, where she spent two years of intensive training and earned a Diploma in the Performing Arts. Natalie is very delighted to be on the Langham stage as part of this production of *Escape from Happiness*.



**MATT MATHIASON** *Junior*

You might recognize Matt from Langham's production of *Picnic* a few years ago. If not, you may have seen him with St.Luke's, the Victoria Operatic Society, Four Seasons, Pacific Opera, Peninsula Players, Theatre Inconnu, and Victoria's Shakespeare by the Sea! Matt is planning a move to the mainland in the near future and is happy to get the chance to do another show at Langham.



**WAYNE YERCHA** *Tom*

Wayne's last appearance at Langham Court was earlier this season, playing Father Flynn in *Doubt*. Previous to that, he's appeared in *August: Osage County*, *The Graduate* and a number of other Langham productions. In 2013, he played Tom in *Better Living* (the prequel to *Escape from Happiness*). He's delighted to now have the opportunity to further develop that role... and to be part of this very talented and fun group.



**ROSEMARY JEFFERY** *Dian Black*

Recently seen in Langham Court Theatre's production of *Doubt* in the role of Mrs. Muller, Rosemary is delighted to be appearing in her 4th stage role at Langham. Between stage roles she stage managed last season, Langham's production of *Humble Boy* and *Small Room at the Top of the Stairs*. She thanks the wonderful talented production team and cast who made this production possible.



**ANDREW PIRIE** *Mike Dixon*

Andrew is delighted to be working with such a talented production team and cast in his debut with Langham Court Theatre. Favourite stage credits with Lawyers on Stage Theatre include *Twelve Angry Jurors*, *Romulus the Great*, *Murder on the Nile*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Working*, *All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, *Scrambled Feet*, and *Amadeus*. Off stage Andrew is a Professor Emeritus in the Faculty of Law at UVic.

## Cast Biographies



**KEVIN STINSON** *Rolly Moore*

Kevin is happy to be appearing in his 12th show at Langham Court. Recent onstage appearances here include *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Harvey*, *Elizabeth Rex* and *The Laramie Project*. Last fall he appeared as King Pandion in Theatre Inconnu's *If We Were Birds*. Offstage, he sometimes dabbles in Sound Design, and is currently serving as President of the VTG. His favourite Langham experience was getting married on our stage.



**JOHN MANSON** *Stevie Moore*

John is beyond thrilled to be back playing another whiny basket-case at Langham, after his role as "Deputy" in last year's *Mystery of Edwin Drood*. He has deeply enjoyed working on this challenging script with such an extremely funny group of people, under Wendy's insightful and imaginative direction. Other recent shows include *Meet Me In St. Louis* (VOS), Gotta Getta Gimmick's CLC series, *The Addams Family* (Kaleidoscope), and *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (VOS).

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A recipient of the Herbert Siebner Practising Artist Award, Frances has had numerous solo, group and juried shows in the Pacific northwest and in Toronto. Among her many commissions is a 10 foot square mural for the City of Victoria beautification project at Royal Athletic Park.



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