Langham Court Theatre

presents

Better



April 24 - May 11, 2013

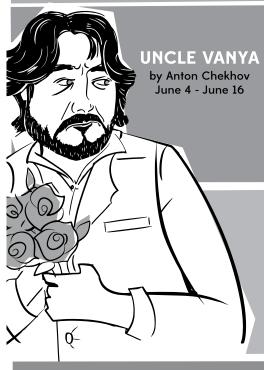


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Director's Notes

I see this play as an allegory about political power: how leaders rise to and maintain power at the expense of reason, peace, and the environment. There are so many themes for us to savour here: fear of the real, or imagined, disintegration of our social and economic order; the avoidance of the reality of growing up and growing old; the belief that "might makes right" and violence solves everything; our disenchantment with religion and other "traditional" values; the power of sex as both an affirmation of life and a destroyer, and the differences, or lack of them, between the genders. All of these themes are featured against a brilliantly comic illustration of family dysfunction. We see what happens when violence is the solution (fighting fire with fire) and how, perhaps, the disintegration of society is merely an illusion, and that we can get organized in the midst of chaos and perhaps ultimately reach our goal of "better living."

Langham Court Theatre presents

Better Living

by George F. Walker

April 24 - May 11, 2013

Langham Court Theatre - Home of the Victoria Theatre Guild & Dramatic School

Produced by special arrangement with

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

Better Living was first produced by Canadian Stage Company in 1986 and in the US in 1987 by New York Stage & Film Co. in association with Vassar College.

Director WENDY MERK*

Producers ODILE NELSON & EVAN ROBERTS

Stage Manager SHARON SUTHERLAND

Set Design/Set Decor DON KEITH

Lighting Design ANASTASIA SCHWARZE

Co-Sound Design ALAN MACKENZIE
Co-Sound Design KEVIN STINSON

Costume Design KAT JEFFERY

Properties MARY ELLEN LAW

Special Effects Advisor TONY CAIN

Cast

PAUL BERTORELLI Jack LORENE CAMMIADE Nora AISLING GOODMAN Gail

KATE HARTER Elizabeth

MICHELLE MITCHELL Mary Ann
COLBY WEEDS lunior

WAYNE YERCHA Tom

Plot Summary

The place is Nora's home in east Toronto. The time circa 1990. Nora is the mother of three daughters – Gail, who lives in the family home with her boyfriend Junior, Mary Ann, who has just had a baby, and Elizabeth, a lawyer.

Before the play opens, Nora has begun excavating through the basement wall of her home. Mary Ann is returning home because she can't deal with the pressures of marriage and motherhood. Nora is building an underground addition to make room.

The action starts with Nora's brother Jack, a Catholic priest, paying a visit. He has discovered that Nora's long-departed husband Tom (who left ten years earlier under violent circumstances) has returned and will soon arrive home.

The news isn't received as expected. Nora insists her husband is dead. Each of her daughters responds in their unique way. Jack is left stumped as to how he can help the situation. But soon enough Tom does return and Nora's family becomes embroiled in a socio-economic experiment that leads to cataclysmic changes for all of them.

There will be one 15 minute intermission.

* Appearing by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

Production Team

Production Asst./Asst. Stage Manager TONY CAIN

Assistant Stage Manager PIPPA CATLING
Head Scenic Carpenter DOUG ANDERSON

Carpenters JULIUS MASLOVAT, GORDON ALEXANDER,

MIKE KUSS, CHARLIE ENCELL, DOUG CRAIG

Set Painters JEAN DE CARTIER, JOHN SMITH, ANNE SWANNELL TONY CAIN, PIPPA CATLING, MARY ELLEN LAW,

ELLEN LAW, JACK HAYES

Lighting Operator EMILY YARNOLD

Lighting Crew PERRY BURTON, VANESSA DAVIES,

ANASTASIA SCHWARZE, ALAN MACKENZIE,

JUSTINE RAFFAELLI, EVAN ROBERTS, LISA VEZINA, EMILY YARNOLD

Sound Operators ALAN MACKENZIE, KEVIN RICH, KEVIN STINSON

Properties Assistants MARY ELLEN LAW, JACK HAYES, ELLEN LAW

Dressser NICOLE STEUDEL

Special FX Development DON KEITH, TONY CAIN,

DOUG ANDERSON, KEVIN STINSON

Special FX Op TONY CAIN

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Programme Advertising, Design and Production



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WENDY MERK

Director

After receiving her Bachelor's degree in Theatre from the University of Victoria, Wendy worked as a professional actor and later went on to direct operettas, operas, children's plays, Shakespearean plays, contemporary comedies, and dramas. She has truly enjoyed directing *Better Living* and trusts that audiences will share in her delight. She particularly wishes to thank the cast, her designers, and her crew for their good humour, hard work, and willingness to go along with some crazy ideas.

Production Biographies

ODILE NELSON

Producer

Odile loves organizing and budgeting. She's also quite fond of George F. Walker plays so her first production gig at Langham has been a great fit. She's enjoyed working with all the production crew and cast and wishes them a successful run!



EVAN ROBERTS

Producer

Evan has been active at Langham for several years, having been a treasurer for the Victoria Theatre Guild and an actor in *Maggie's Getting Married*, *Shadowlands*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This is his first foray into producing and he would like to thank all of the cast, crew and production team for their hard work in making this such a great experience.



SHARON SUTHERLAND

Stage Manager

Sharon has been involved in community theatre for several years – everything from props to producing – and has stage-managed more than twenty productions with various organizations. She's thrilled to be back working with (and learning lots from) Wendy Merk, having previously stage-managed Isn't It Romantic for her. Sharon would like to thank the wonderfully easygoing cast, the talented production team, and, in particular, ASMs Pippa and Tony, for making this another fantastic experience.



DON KEITH

Set Design

Don is always immersed in the theatre arts. He has received significant directing and design awards for his work with Theatre Kelowna Society and is recognized internationally for his work in theatre education. Recently, he directed White Christmas (Victoria Operatic Society) and The Constant Wife (St. Luke's). He designed the sets for The Melville Boys (Langham) and Casting for Murder (St. Luke's). Next season he will direct Heroes for Langham Court Theatre.



ANASTASIA SCHWARZE

Lighting Design

Anastasia has been involved in theatre one way or another since middle school and is very pleased to be creating her second lighting design for Langham Court, the first being *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. She obtained her BFA in Theatre from UVic a while ago and moved to the mainland last year. Doing this design has reminded her how special Victoria and this little theatre are, but also how annoying the ferries can be.





ALAN MACKENZIE

Co-Sound Design

As one of our most prolific sound designers, Alan has worked on numerous productions since joining Langham Court while still in high school, (about 50 years ago!). He has designed sound for several Victoria Operatic Society productions and he has spent many years working and touring with the Victoria-based "Doc & The Doo Wops" and more recently "String of Pearls." Besides being one of our honourary life members, Alan is also Langham's Technical Director.

KEVIN STINSON

Co-Sound Design Explosions and gunshots and jackhammers – sound design heaven. Kevin

previously designed sound at Langham Court for The 39 Steps, 1959 Pink Thunderbird Convertible, That Summer and Blithe Spirit. He also designed the sound for Theatre Inconnu's productions of In the Next Room and Kafka the Musical. Recent onstage performances include The Laramie Project and Elizabeth Rex at Langham, Glengarry Glen Ross with Stellar Jay/Island Repertory



Company, and Falstaff in Keep It Simple Theatre's production of Henry IV Part I. Also, if you need help with your Mac, he's your friendly neighbourhood Mac Geek 4 Hire.



KAT JEFFERY

Production Biographies

Costume Design Kat Jeffery has just completed her degree in Costume and Set Design at the University of Victoria and is pleased to have the opportunity to design at Langham Court this season. Kat has previously designed costumes for In the Next Room (Theatre Inconnu), Good Person of Setzuan (Phoenix Theatre) and Rookery Nook (Phoenix Theatre). Kat also produced, choreographed and designed Desdancia (UVIC) last spring. Kat hopes to continue designing and creating theatre internationally.



Mary Ellen is new to Langham Court and new to the world of community theatre. Better Living being her first production at Langham, she hopes to 'do it justice' as props manager. Previously, Mary Ellen has enjoyed working on St. Michael's University School productions including costumes in The King of Elfland's Daughter, props in The Wedding Singer for the 2012 Fringe Festival, and most recently, head set painter in *The Secret Garden*. She would like to thank Odile and Wendy for giving her the opportunity. It's been fun and a great experience!



PIPPA CATLING

Assistant Stage Manager

Pippa has been seen onstage at Langham Court, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, Waiting in the Wings, and Theatre Inconnu, Pornography, Madwoman of Chaillot. She is delighted to be working with this talented and entertaining cast and crew and she relishes the black humour of this play. If only all dysfunction began and ended on stage!



TONY CAIN

Production Assistant/Assistant Stage Manager Tony feels lucky to be part of Wendy's team. He has thoroughly enjoyed sitting in on the rehearsals, watching the talented cast bring this play to life. Tony spends his winter months helping out in the theatre and the summer time on his sailboat cruising the Gulf Islands.



About the Playwright



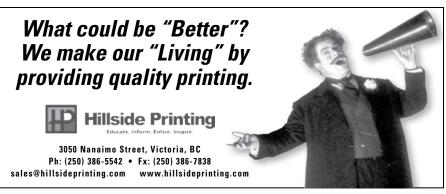
GEORGE F. WALKER

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. It 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 televi-

sion. He has written for *Due South, The Newsroom,* and *This is Wonderland. Better Living* is the second play in Walker's East End Trilogy. The other two plays in the trilogy are *Criminals in Love* and *Escape from Happiness*. 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.









Cast and Crew of Better Living

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PAUL BERTORELLI

lack

Paul is originally from Wales. Previous plays at Langham have included *Habeas Corpus, Racing Demon, Under Milk Wood* and *Pack of Lies*. He is pleased to once again be working with Lorene and Wayne and to be directed by Wendy Merk for the first time.

Cast Biographies

LORENE CAMMIADE

Nora

Lorene loved this timely dark comedy from the first time she read it. She is thoroughly enjoying spending time with her stage family, who make her real life family seem wonderfully normal! Lorene's most recent Langham Court roles include Mary in *The Memory of Water* and Becca in *Rabbit Hole*, for which she was nominated for



an M Award for Favourite Performance. She hopes you enjoy this zany look at "better living" and thanks her three children who make her life better every day!



AISLING GOODMAN

Gail

Aisling is honoured to work with such a wonderful cast and crew in her first theatre appearance since graduating high school. In high school, she played Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Alice in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, and Amelia Earhart in *Chamber Music*. When not acting, Aisling enjoys travelling, danc-

ing like a fool, and living life! She hopes you enjoy this production and leave feeling as if you have witnessed a very auspicious new beginning.



Elizabeth

Originally from London, Ontario, Kate was last seen by Langham audiences as Izzy in the 2011-2012 season production of *Rabbit Hole*. Previous credits: Poins/Lady Mortimer in *Henry IV Part 1* (KeepItSimple), Heidi in [title of show] (another theatre company), Milady in *The Three Musketeers* (LCP), Jessica/Julia



Youngstead in *The Last Resort* (LCP), and Anna in *Closer* (Iglesia Productions). Recently back at school as a full-time student, Kate would like to thank her very supportive husband Nick for all his love, support and help keeping her sane.



MICHELLE MITCHELL

Mary Ann

Michelle is thrilled to be back on the Langham stage working with this great cast and crew. Recent local credits include Zubaida Ula/*The Laramie Project*, Bear/*Elizabeth Rex* (Langham Court Theatre); Jan/*I'll Be Back Before Midnight* (St. Luke's Players); Mrs. Beauregard/*Willy Wonka*, Dwarf/*Narnia* (Four Seasons

Musical Theatre). Many thanks to her friends and family who have stood by her side along the way, in particular her husband who is always a continuous source of patience and support.



COLBY WEEDS

lunior

Colby Weeds is an aspiring waiter currently paying his bills through acting. He is a co-producer of the monthly Back Alley stand-up comedy show, and is in absolutely no way secretly two small children standing on each other's shoulders pretending to be an adult.

WAYNE YERCHA

Tom

Wayne has performed in a number of Langham productions over the years, the latest being *The Odd Couple* in 2010. He's happy to have another opportunity to enter the "weird world of Walker"...

having also appeared in *Love and Anger*, Langham's previous staging of a George F. Walker play. He has greatly enjoyed working with this very talented and dedicated group.



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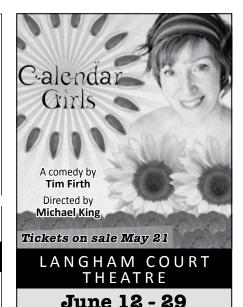
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Art Exhibition

Veronica Stewart

This collection of jewelry and paintings is a new collaboration of art forms for me. Painting has always been a part of my creativity but this year I found a need to explore the medium further and began by using pieces of bronze embedded in the work, which led to the photo-montages. It has been a great pleasure to put my jewelry pieces on display with the new paintings and I hope to be able to pursue this combination of passions in the coming years.

I worked as a ceramic artist for 20 years before discovering silver in the form of precious metal clay. As I became more fascinated with working on this smaller scale, I gradually spent more time making jewelry and am now working exclusively as a jewelry artist. Crocheted and knitted fine wire and chain are combined with silver and semi-precious gems to create the pieces in my collection. In a similar fashion, I have combined small details of photographs with acrylic paint on canvas to create the semi-abstract images in my artwork.



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Denise Brown, Theatre Manager, at 250.384.2142.

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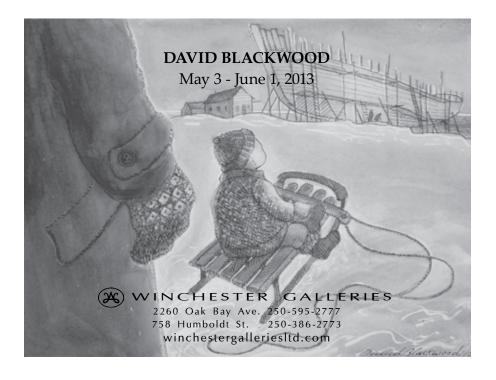
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