



Alumnae Theatre Company

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Please don’t do anything you can’t live with later.”

“I can live with a lot.”

TORONTO—Alumnae Theatre launches our 2014-2015 season with George F. Walker’s *Escape From Happiness* September 26-October 11, 2014. A bizarre event in a dysfunctional family prompts an incident of brutality in this intensely dark Canadian comedy. Part of Walker’s East End Trilogy, this play explores the most tender moments at the most violent times.

Nora Quinn (Heli Kivilaht) is the head of an eccentric, working-class family fighting alcohol, drugs, corruption and organized crime in their dangerous, impoverished neighborhood while trying to manage the turmoil in her own house. Eldest daughter and protector Elizabeth (Andrea Brown), middle child Mary Ann (Lesley Robertson) whose sunny disposition is maintained through constant cooking, youngest daughter, and new mother, Gail (Renée Haché) desperately trying to help her family mend their past, Gail’s husband Junior (Maxwell King) who has “bad luck following him like a best friend”, and their recently returned father Tom (David Cairns) who may or may not be the abusive, uncontrolled ex-cop he once was round out this unruly family. Throw in ambitious ladder climbing police officer (Joanne Sarazen), her reluctant partner (Ryan Seeley), and father and son criminals (Robert Skanes and Colin MacDonald) and anarchy prevails.

“Adults can let you down. They’re not perfect.”

Director Andrea Wasserman has assembled an extremely talented cast and production team to bring this very dark, very funny slice-of-life comedy to the Alumnae Theatre MainStage. Under Wasserman’s direction we can see how everyone’s insane behavior seems perfectly rational to them. “I was drawn to this play because of the story it explores,” Wasserman says. “What happens when people are pushed to the edge of circumstance with no tools to cope.”

“Maybe there’s a limit to what you can do and you’ve crossed it.”

The New York Times raved “Mr. Walker takes once radical techniques right to the edge, to the very risky brink, but stops short of despair. If *Escape From Happiness* -- telling, terrific title – does not care about how the truth can ruin your day, it’s because the play is concerned with more important things, like changing our lives.”

Escape From Happiness features a design and artistic team that includes Brandon Kleiman (set designer), Sara Brzozowski (costume designer), Paul Hardy (lighting designer), Jeremy Hutton (fight director), Jackie McClelland (properties), Lindsey Alston (stage manager) and Susan Bond (assistant director). For interview opportunities, high-res images or more information, contact Chloe Whitehorn at marketing@alumnaetheatre.com.

Escape From Happiness @ The Alumnae Theatre Mainstage

70 Berkeley Street (at Adelaide)

September 26-October 11, 2014 (Wednesday-Saturday @8PM, Sunday @2PM)

Tickets: Wednesdays 2-for-1, Thurs-Sat \$20 @ door, Sunday PWYC

Advance Tickets available online at www.alumnaetheatre.com, call 416-364-4170 (press 1) or email reservations@alumnaetheatre.com

The box office opens one hour before the show for cash purchases. The Alumnae box office does not accept credit/debit at the door.