

9-25-2003

Escape from Happiness

University of Maine- School of Performing Arts

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GRANT PROPOSAL-CULTURAL AFFAIRS
Escape from Happiness
November 2003

The School of Performing Arts had previously submitted a grant proposal for the production of Chicago. Due to timing and budget issues, it was necessary for us to postpone the production until the spring of 2005. We would like to resubmit a proposal at that time, but in the meantime, Tom Mikotowicz has chosen a drama to direct for the fall of 2003.

Escape from Happiness is a darkly entertaining, slice-of-life comedy by George F. Walker, one of Canada's most prolific and widely produced playwrights. It is a very funny drama about a family, riddled with delusions, neuroses, and paranoia; the crooks, who have family issues of their own to resolve; and the investigating officers who arrive at the family's home to deal with a bizarre incident. Playwright Walker's humorous take on reality is riddled with crime, violence, and drugs.

Dramatist George F. Walker has published dozens of works in the past twenty years. *Escape from Happiness* received a DORA Award (the Canadian equivalent of the Tony Award) for Outstanding Play of the Year in 1992. The play also received the Chalmers Canadian Play Award, and the Governor General's Literary Award.

In *Escape from Happiness*, we enter the world of a uniquely dysfunctional, self-consciously insular, working-class family whose response to the predicaments that occur in life is defensive and extreme. Walker has succeeded in creating a fascinating household of clearly recognizable people - in various stages of denial - who have perfectly sound reasons for doing whatever crazy things they do. Clear-sighted but profoundly myopic, these people believe in what they are doing; they are driven by passions so strong that their insane behavior seems perfectly rational to them. And we, the audience, look in on their disordered lives with both disbelief and alarming comprehension.

Guest scenic and lighting designers will be hired due to the elimination of the faculty position. These two positions will be funded by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Escape from Happiness *Projected Income & Expenses*

Cultural Affairs	\$3,500
Patrons of the Arts	1,800
Projected Box Office Sales	1,100
Projected Ad Revenue	500
College of LAS - for designers	7,500
TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME	\$14,400

PROJECTED EXPENSES:

Royalties/Scripts	\$350
Adjudicator	275
Scenic Design	2,000
Guest Scenic Designer	3,000
Scenic Designer Travel	2,100
Lighting	200
Guest Lighting Designer	1,500
Lighting Designer Travel	1,400
Properties	500
Sound	50
Costume	1,000
Make-up/Hair	50
Advertising	800
Posters/Postcards	320
Programs	400
Strike Dinner	100
Opening Night Reception	100
Contingency	255
TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES	\$14,400

As of 9/03

Cultural Affairs Committee
including the
Distinguished Lecture Series
200 Alumni Hall
University of Maine

October 6, 2003

To: Marcia Douglas

From: Kathleen March & François Amar, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Committee, including the Distinguished Lecture Series, it gives me great pleasure to inform you that your proposal, *Escape from Happiness*, has been awarded \$3,500.00. **Please contact Wanda Legere at 1-1516 before your event takes place to arrange for disbursement of award funds.** Note: Reception and University of Maine System payroll expenses are not reimbursable through this award.

Please note that acknowledgment of the *Cultural Affairs Committee* is required on all promotional materials. **A budget report must be submitted at the conclusion of your event and will be considered for future funding requests.** It is assumed that projects are completed within 12 months, therefore, any remaining balance will be returned to the Committee account for further distribution unless otherwise notified.

The Committee notes that it does not fund more than 50% of the amount for any given program. It also asks applicants to consider the most reasonable honoraria possible, as there may not be funding for the higher amounts.

We, the members of the Cultural Affairs Committee, congratulate you and wish you much success on this project.

GRANT SUMMARY - CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES
Escape from Happiness
November 2003

Tom Mikotowicz brought his version of a delusional, dysfunctional, neurotic family to the stage in *Escape from Happiness*, written by Canadian playwright George F. Walker. Crime, violence, and drugs were issues dealt with by the family and the police who arrived at their house to investigate a bizarre incident.

Tom best explained his thoughts on the play in his Director Notes:

To make a comedy out of police and domestic violence, as is done in *Escape From Happiness*, takes some talent. Nevertheless, there is no dearth of that with Walker. As embodied in the characters of Elizabeth and Diane, the playwright sets up parallels between the social and domestic manifestations of violence. Do the "ends" justify the "means"? Do we need to be taken care of at any cost? In this era of Homeland Security and the Patriot Act, Walker's play proves prescient, as it was written in 1991. Walker's characters cry out for respect from both their social institutions and their domestic partners, who are both misguided in their efforts to provide protection and a moral environment for their subjects. Since it is a comedy, Walker's vision is not so bleak. There is redemption and salvation even in the most corrupt institutions of society and family. There is, however, a price to pay, and it has to do with the chaos and ostensible illogic that the characters must undergo before the end is at hand. Yet, it is a price worth paying, and, hopefully, it will be pleasurable too!

The play drew a respectable 793 people, including 489 students.

Guest scenic and lighting designers were hired due to the elimination of the faculty position. These two positions were funded by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Escape from Happiness Final Analysis

Cultural Affairs	\$3,500
Patrons of the Arts	1,637
Box Office Sales	793
Ad Revenue	450
College of LAS - for designers	5,225
TOTAL INCOME	\$11,605

EXPENSES:

Royalties/Scripts	\$375
Adjudicator	310
Scenic Design	1,824
Guest Scenic Designer	3,000
Lighting/Sound	206
Guest Lighting Designer	1,500
Lighting Designer Travel	725
Properties	143
Costume	1,092
Make-up/Hair	390
Advertising	763
Posters/Postcards	381
Programs	434
Strike Dinner	97
Opening Night Reception	102
Contingency	60
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$11,402