THEATRE AT UBC PRESENTS

PROBLEM CHILD

AND

THE END OF CIVILIZATION

BY GEORGE F. WALKER

DIRECTED BY

CHRIS ROBSON

FEBRUARY 9 TO 18

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Problem Child
and
The End of Civilization

by George F. Walker

Directed by
Chris Robson

February 9 to 18, 2012
Telus Studio Theatre

The University of British Columbia
Department of Theatre and Film
The Suburban Motel: affordable, marginalized, temporary, embarrassingly familiar. The two plays you will see tonight present perspectives on the Canadian Urban Experience. Two couples in Problem Child and The End of Civilization have been forced into temporary lodgings by harsh circumstances. One couple from “the wrong side of the tracks” struggles to put their family back together; the other more “respectable” couple makes desperate choices to avoid crossing those same tracks. Why do some relationships survive crises where others fail? Where do your sympathies lie?

Although the plays were written in 1997, the issues still remain: economic crisis, alcoholism, drugs, prostitution, crime, corruption, corporate downsizing, mass media Schadenfreude. In British Columbia, an average of 271 children are placed in foster care every year. How much has changed between 1997 and 2012?

George F. Walker is English Canada’s most successful playwright. His prolific forty-year career has won him numerous awards, including 3 Governor-General’s awards—one for Lifetime Achievement in the Performing Arts. He is a member of the Order of Canada, and his plays have been translated into several languages and performed on five continents. Not bad for a former taxi driver from the East End of Toronto!

The 6 “Suburban Motel” plays premiered in 1997-98 in New York and Toronto. When Toronto’s Factory Theatre (which had given Walker his start and premiered most of his early works) was facing bankruptcy, Walker offered them an entire season, and directed all six plays himself. The Factory went from the brink of collapse to having enough money to buy its own theatre! Equally important was the realization that there is an audience for Canadian plays, and that they can be profitable.

In my opinion, Walker’s greatest achievement is in generating compassion for the marginalized characters in his plays. In a CBC-radio interview, he said: “People go to the theatre because they want to connect. And we connect through emotions.”

I am grateful to my parents and family, my advisor Stephen Heatley, Alka Murphy of P.A.C.E., and to the brilliant actors, designers, technicians and crew bringing these plays to life. I hope you enjoy your experience.
Biography: George F. Walker

A prolific and popular playwright, director and screenwriter, George F. Walker has greatly enriched Canada’s cultural landscape and garnered critical acclaim at home and abroad.

Over the last 35 years he has written more than 20 plays and has created screenplays for several award-winning Canadian television series. His bold, darkly comic work sounds a unique note in Canadian theatre, and has inspired young writers and artists across the country.

Walker was born in 1947 in Toronto. His theatre career began in the early 1970s when, while working as a taxi driver, he noticed a poster soliciting original scripts for the newly founded Factory Theatre. “At that time I’d only ever seen one play,” he recalls.

“I wrote one (The Prince of Naples), and they produced it. Then they asked me to be their resident playwright. The momentum kind of grew by itself. I just kept writing!”

Walker experiments with form and language, fitting odd concepts and words into the mouths of everyday characters. Part Kafka, part Lewis Carroll, his distinctive, gritty, fast-paced comedies satirize the selfishness, greed and aggression of contemporary urban culture.


He was awarded the C.M. (Member of the Order of Canada) on November 17, 2005 for his services to Canadian Theatre and Literature. He has received nine Chalmers Awards, five Dora Awards, and two Governor General’s Awards. Walker says of his work, “Like so many of my generation, my mind is sort of a media garbage bag sometimes. We’re all so heavily influenced by television and movies and you don’t have to be very perceptive to see it coming out in new plays. The dilemma for me was not to rebel against the problem—it is, after all, a fairly central reality—but to assimilate it and make something of it.”

After a ten-year hiatus from theatre, Walker directed his latest play for the Factory, And So It Goes (2010), which returns to the darker mood of his earlier plays in its portrait of the struggles of a middle-class couple on a downward spiral as they attempt to cope with the husband’s job loss, a missing son, and a schizophrenic daughter. The gloom is ameliorated by the advice of the ghost of Kurt Vonnegut, and the husband’s cooking school exploits.

Sources: The Governor General’s Performing Arts Award Foundation and The Canadian Encyclopedia.
Problem Child  The End of Civilization
by George F. Walker

Cast

RJ
Scott Button
Helen
Jordan Kerbs
Denise
Melanie Reich
Phillie
Matt Reznek

Cast

Lily
Christine Bortolin
Max
Joel Garner
Henry
Mitchell Hookey
Donny
Alex Pangburn
Sandy
Tracy Schut

The performance is approximately 3 hours long. There is one 15-minute intermission. Please turn off all cellular telephones, pagers and watch alarms.

The use of cameras, video or any other recording device is prohibited during the performance.

Warning: Blank rounds will be discharged from a firearm during the performance.

Problem Child was first produced by Rattle Stick Productions (New York), September 1997; and Factory Theatre (Toronto), November 1997. The End of Civilization was first produced by Factory Theatre (Toronto), April 1998.

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

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Special Thanks to the entire class of Professor Robert Gardiner’s Section of THTR 405.
Production

Director
Chris Robson

Set & Lighting Design
Wladimiro Antonio Woyno Rodriguez

Costume Design
Diana Sepulveda

Sound Design
Ling Yu Xiu Zhong

Stage Manager
Gabrielle Holt
Assistant Stage Managers (Properties)
Rene Liu, Javier Sotres Porres
Assistant Stage Manager (Set)
Hibiki Morishita
Assistant Stage Manager (Costumes)
Cat Robinson
Production Manager
Jay Henrickson
Technical Director
Jim Fergusson
Scenery and Lighting Specialist
Keith Smith
Scenery Construction
Lisette Alonso, Michael Bock, Keenan Johnston, Masaki Kunimoto, Dean McMillan, Lisette Olga, Carolyn Rapanos, Wladimiro Antonio Woyno Rodriguez, Ivan Yastrebov, Scott Zechner
Assistant Set Design
Carolyn Rapanos
Scenic Artist
Lorraine West
Scenic Painters
Assistant Lighting Design
Sarah Melo, Matthew Norman
Lighting Head
Won-kyoon Han
Lighting Operator
Shelby Bushell
Lighting Crew
Yulia Kim, Tiara Liu, Shelby Mackenzie, Mina Motamedi, Ivan Yastrebov

Costumes Supervisor
Jean Driscoll-Bell
Dressers
Nam Bae, Jae Jun Kwak
Hair and Make-up Artist
Jill Wyness
Hair and Make-up Assistant
Yulia Hee Hyun Kim
Properties Supervisor
Lynn Burton
Properties Builders
Megan Gilron, Elliott Squire
Properties Head
Jayda Novak
Sound Operator
Hayley Petersen
Vocal Coach
Brad Gibson
Movement Coach
Cathy Burnett
Stage Crew
Mert Alatan, Paul Chang, Genessa Knight, Erica Leduc
Faculty MFA Directing Advisor
Stephen Heatley
Faculty Stage Management Advisor
Bob Eberle
Faculty Set & Lighting Advisor
Robert Gardiner
Faculty Sound Design Advisor
Andrew Tugwell
Narrator, Pre-show Speech
Jim Fergusson
Rehearsal Photographer
Nancii Bernard
Gabby Holt is a 4th year BFA Theatre Production and Design student from Honolulu, Hawaii. Stage management credits: *Arms & The Man*, *The Madonna Painter*, and *Wild Honey* (Theatre at UBC). Design credits: *Canadian Gothic* (asst. Set Design, Theatre@UBC), *Seussical, Oklahoma!* and *Once on This Island* (Lighting Design, Punahou Theatre, Honolulu). Thank you to my family, who are amazing, funny & the most supportive people in the world, and to my friends, who are the most talented, entertaining & kind people I have ever known.

"...I have always believed in the innate power of the theatre to change people’s lives because it changed my own.”
- Howard Barker

Melanie Reich is in her final semester of the BFA in Acting Program at UBC and is a graduate of the Douglas College Theatre Program. Recent credits include *Jean (Canadian Gothic)*, *Sue (BASH)*, *Deedee + the Nun (The Trial of Judith K.)*, *Polyxena (Hecuba)* and *Bette/Father Donnelly (The Marriage of Bette and Boo)*. She thanks everyone involved in this production for all of their hard work, support and good humor. She thanks her family and her God for their unconditional forgiveness and love and she thanks you so much for coming and hopes that you have a great night!

Scott Button is in his final year of the BFA in Acting here at UBC. Theatre at UBC credits include *Faust Is Dead*, *The Trial of Judith K.*, *Wild Honey* and *Dead Man’s Cell Phone*, other recent credits include Bash: Latter-Day Plays (Two Plank Productions), *The Verona Project* (Stone’s Throw) and the Canadian Premiere of *Love/Stories* (Kinetichism). Scott is currently participating in the Arts Club LEAP Playwriting Intensive, where his first full-length play will be work-shopped this March. Special thanks to Kevin, Chris, the talented cast and crew, and to his family and friends.

Joel Garner is currently in his intermediate year of the UBC acting program. He is excited to have had the chance to work with everyone involved in the show and has had a great time. Joel would like to thank Chris Robson for all his help. Joel would also like to thank his Family and Michelle for all their support. Recent credits include *Two Merchants* (Theatre at UBC) and *Summer Brave* (Theatre at UBC).

Christine Bortolin is in her final year of the BFA in Acting program at UBC. She is also a graduate of Douglas College Theatre. She is a member of Sister Act and Ghost Jail Theatre. She would like to thank her friends, family, and especially Ryan. Selected credits: *Hecuba, Imperfect, When Ya Comin’ Back, Red Ryder?*, and *The Trial of Judith K.* Christine would like to thank you for supporting live theatre.

Mitch Hookey in his final year of the BFA, Mitch is excited to be back in the Telus Studio Theatre. He would like to thank Chris Robson for this exciting opportunity. Select credits include Lockstock in Urinetown (IAA), Harold Hill in *The Music Man* (MWPV), Agamemmon in *Hecuba* (Sarah Rodgers), and Pollock in *The Trial Of Judith K.* (Tom Scholte). He’d like to thank his family and friends for their undying support with extra love to Lauren and Dexter! You can see him next on the Frederic Wood stage as Macduff in March’s production of *Macbeth*. Enjoy the show!

Jordan Kerbs is in her final year of the BFA Acting program at UBC. Her past credits include Judith K. in *The Trial of Judith K.*, Peasant One in *Wild Honey*. And while living in Seattle, Washington she performed in *Baby with the Bathwater* and *The Actor’s Nightmare* at the Wodinville Repertory Theatre. She would like to thank her parents and Guillaume for their unconditional support and thank them for always being there for her.

Alex Pangburn is in his graduating year of the BFA Acting program here at UBC. He is a graduate of the VIU Theatre program. Recent credits include *Faust Is Dead*, *The Trial of Judith K.*, *Wild Honey*, *La Marea*, *Private Wars*, and *Hecuba*. Past George F. Walker credits include *Problem Child* and *Tough!* He cannot thank the cast and crew enough for their devotion and zeal in addressing the contemporary issues paramount in Walker’s work.

Matt Reznek is in his intermediate year in the BFA acting program. Select credits include *Two Merchants, Summer Brave* (both for Theatre at UBC), *Spring Awakening* (Delinquent Theatre) and *Dead Ends 666* (Spectral Theatre). When not pretending to be someone else, he dabbles with photography, graphic design and illustration. Matt would like to thank the faculty and his family for their support and guidance. Enjoy the show(s)!
Chris Robson, Director: (UBC: BFA: Acting; MFA: Directing) As a director, Chris enjoys plays that affirm the strength of the human spirit and foster a sense of community. Recent directing credits include City of Beaches by David King, Figment by Jim Cunningham, The Last Five Years by Jason Robert Brown (also performance pianist), Sex and Madness, Rock and Roll (also writer, music director, and performance pianist.) Acting credits include Richmond Gateway Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Stratford Festival, Carousel, Cascade Theatre, Edmonton and Vancouver Fringe Festivals, and numerous TV, film and commercial credits.

Wladimiro Antonio Woyno Rodriguez is an international student from Colombia, finishing UBC’s BFA Theatre Design and Production program. Wlad’s goal is to work professionally as a set, lighting and projections designer for live performance. He is interested in the dramaturgical powers of scenography, and passionate about incorporating new technologies into theatrical tradition. Other design credits include Thane of My Existence (Thane Malabar), 10x10x10 (Vancouver Dance Centre), Figment (ButterDragon Productions) Try Me, Good King (Songfire Theatre) Love/Stories (Kinetichism Theatre), Wild Honey (Theatre at UBC), Dead Man’s Cellphone (Theatre at UBC). http://wawr.ca

“...The purpose is to inspire argument and inquiry into the deepest concerns of humanity, such as equality, identity, responsibility and love. To consider our own lives and our own world in new ways... To make theatre is to create opportunity for a society to discuss its own orchestration.”
- Paula Danckert, National Arts Centre Company Dramaturge

Tracy Schut is so excited to be Sandy in The End of Civilization. She is returning to the TELUS Studio having just been Launcelet in Two Merchants. She is in her intermediate year of the UBC acting program and is also a graduate of the acting program at Douglas College. While at Douglas she played Actress/Lizzie in Blood Relations and Maria in The Suicide. Tracy would like to thank her family, friends, and everyone involved in making this play happen!

Diana Sepulveda is originally from Mexico City, Diana is in her third year of the BFA Production and Design Program at UBC. Past production credits include costume designer for Try Me, Good King and Songs from Spoon River (Vancouver International Song Institute), set designer for Two Merchants (Theatre at UBC), Brave New Play Rites 2011 (Theatre at UBC), The Pillowman (UBC Players Club), and scenic artist for Hecuba (Theatre at UBC). She would like to thank her parents, her sister, and her boyfriend for all their support.

Ling Yu Xiu Zhong is in her final year of the Theatre Design and Production program at UBC. She feels honored to be a part of the production Problem Child and The End of Civilization. Her previous credits include Thunderstorm (lighting and sound design), Figment (sound design), Wild Honey (sound design). Thanks for coming, and enjoy the show!

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