

THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH

**BY PHILIP DAWKINS
DIRECTED BY JONATHAN L. GREEN**

**STARRING
JACQUE WILKE***

**STAGE MANAGER
KEVIN KORNBURGER**

**SCENIC DESIGNER
KRISTEN FLORES**

**COSTUME DESIGNER
ELISA BENZONI**

**SOUND DESIGNER AND COMPOSER
MICHAEL HUEY**

**LIGHTING DESIGNER
CURTIS MUELLER**

**PROPERTIES DESIGN
BONNIE DURBEN**

**EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
MATT M. MORROW**

**MANAGING DIRECTOR
JENNY CASE**

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States, appearing under a Special Appearance Contract.

THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH

By Philip Dawkins
Directed by Jonathan L. Green

STARRING
JACQUE WILKE

Run time is approximately 90 minutes with no intermission

The Happiest Place on Earth was commissioned, developed and world premiered in September 2016 by Sideshow Theatre Company, Chicago, IL.

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



It's a gift to work on a new play twice.

I'm from Chicago, the City that Works. In my case, that Work is as the artistic director of Sideshow Theatre, a leading storefront company founded in 2007, and as the literary manager of Goodman Theatre, a theatrical behemoth founded in 1922. I spend most of my waking hours working with playwrights on new works, whether the budget for those shows is ten thousand dollars or a hundred times that amount.

In 2015, it was my honor to midwife a newly commissioned work by one of my favorite playwrights (and Sideshow company members), Philip Dawkins. At Sideshow, at the Greenhouse Theater Center (also in Chicago), at the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis, we toiled away to tell this true story of the tragedy that led the Eakins family, or what was left of it, to abandon everything in search of the happiness that they thought Anaheim's Disneyland might hold for them. We asked Philip to craft this intensely personal solo show, and a year later, for the play's world premiere, we asked him to do something even scarier: take to the boards as a performer, for the first time in 15 years. When Matt Morrow talked to Philip about Diversionary presenting the west coast premiere of his award-winning play, Philip assented with one condition: he wanted to see what another actor would do in the show. As he said to me, "It's the only play of mine I've never seen in rehearsals."

Enter Jacque Wilke, national treasure. It's been a fascinating journey revisiting this play with Jacque: scenes and lines take on new resonances when Jacque says them, rather than Philip. When she talks about the sexism of the 1950s and 60s, it hits a little harder. When she embodies these five women in Philip's family, we visualize them in a different way. When she tells us of little girls wanting nothing more than to grow up to be Disney princesses, we understand it on a deeper level.

Bringing this play to Diversionary has been immensely meaningful, especially because of where we are geographically, right in the heart of Walt's kingdom. I feel, and I know Philip feels, a lot of gratitude to Matt, Jenny and the whole Diversionary staff and board of trustees for giving us the chance to revisit *The Happiest Place on Earth* as though for the very first time, for an audience that contains many more Disneyland annual passholders than we had in Chicago. We're all searching for happiness. To all who come to this happy place, welcome.

-Jonathan L. Green, director

THE COMPANY

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director.....	Jonathan L. Green
Stage Manager.....	Kevin Kornburger
Scenic Design.....	Kristen Flores
Costume Design.....	Elisa Benzoni
Lighting Design.....	Curtis Mueller
Sound Designer and Composer.....	Michael Huey
Properties Designer.....	Bonnie Durben
Technical Director.....	Andrew Young
Charge Artist.....	Kristen Flores
Master Electrician.....	Sean Murray
Sound Engineer.....	Sebastian Perfetto

SPECIAL THANKS

The Queen Bees, Kent Swedell, Robin Reed, San Diego State University, Benno Nelson, Stu Schwartz and San Diego's awesome Usher Corps.

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and it's promotion of culture in our community

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JACQUE WILKE (Performer) Jacquie is thrilled to be back on the Diversionary stage! Recent credits: Diversionary Theater: *Ballast*, *The Divine Sister*, *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler*, *Scrooge in Rouge*, *Next Fall*, *Fair Use*, *The New Century*, *Anita Bryant Died for Your Sins*; Moxie: *Ironbound*, *Or*; Backyard Renaissance Theatre: *Abundance*; Cygnet Theatre: *Stupid F*cking Bird*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Travesties*, and *Mistakes Were Made*; San Diego Repertory Theater: *Honky* (Craig Noel Award); La Jolla Playhouse: *Yoke*, *The Car Plays*; Intrepid Theater: *The*

Winter's Tale, *All My Sons*; North Coast Repertory Theatre: *Unnecessary Farce*, *Lend me a Tenor*, *Mistletoe*, *Music*, and *Mayhem*, and *Don't Dress for Dinner*; Moonlight at the Avo: *Blithe Spirit*; New Village Arts: *The Seven Year Itch*, and *The Heidi Chronicles*; Circle Circle Dot Dot: *Red Planet Respite*, *The Break-up Breakdown*; Bang Productions: *Side Man*; Jacquie is a proud member of Actors Equity and SAG-AFTRA. She will be seen next on stage at North Coast Repertory in *The Father* by Florian Zeller.



JONATHAN L. GREEN (Director) has been the artistic director of Sideshow Theatre in Chicago, Illinois since its founding in 2007. He has directed and assisted for Sideshow, Greenhouse Theater Center, Lookingglass, Steppenwolf, Goodman Theatre, Diversionary Theatre, Chicago Dramatists, Theatre Seven of Chicago, Pavement Group and the Earl Hamner, Jr. Theatre. Recent projects include *truth and reconciliation*, *The Happiest Place on Earth*, *Antigonick*, *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Idomeneus* (Joseph Jefferson Award for ensemble), and others. Recent dramaturgy

credits include *Blind Date*, *Objects in the Mirror*, *Gloria*, *War Paint*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, and *Disgraced*, all at Goodman Theatre. Jonathan is a graduate of the University of Virginia, currently serves on the board of directors of the League of Chicago Theatres, and is the literary manager for Goodman Theatre.

PHILIP DAWKINS (Playwright) is a Chicago playwright and educator. His plays include *Le Switch* (About Face Theatre, The Jungle), *The Homosexuals* (About Face Theater), and *Dr. Seuss's The Sneetches, the Musical* with composer David Mallamud (Children's Theater Company, Minneapolis), as well as many plays for young audiences and performers. He received the Joseph Jefferson

THE COMPANY

Award for Best New Work for his plays *Charm* (Northlight Theatre) and *Miss Marx: Or The Involuntary Side Effect of Living* (Strawdog Theatre), as well as the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Solo Performance for his play, *The Happiest Place on Earth* (Sideshow Theatre/Greenhouse Theater Center). His play, *Charm* received its NY premiere at MCC this fall, 2017 under the direction of Will Davis. Philip teaches playwriting at Northwest University, Loyola University Chicago, DePaul University and through the Victory Gardens ACCESS Program.

KEVIN KORNBERGER (Stage Manager) is delighted to be making his debut with Diversionary Theatre. He has previously stage managed with ion theatre, New Village Arts, and Talent to aMuse, among others. He heartfully thanks Sebastian and Matt for this opportunity for magic, and is honored to be working with the amazing Jonathan and Jacque on this wonderful story!

KRISTIN E. FLORES (Scenic Design) Past design credits: *Cardboard Piano*, *The Moors*, *Homos or Everyone in America*, *A Civil War Christmas*, *Bright Half Life* and *Baby With the Bathwater* (Diversionary Theatre), *Eternally Bad* (Moxie), *God of Carnage* and *American Hero* (New Village Arts), *Almost, Maine* (Onstage Players), *Globe for All-Twelfth Night* (The Old Globe), *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Triad Productions), *Ragnarok* and *Red Planet Respite* (Circle Circle Dot Dot) Kristen was Prop Master and Stage Master for The White Theatre at The Old Globe from 2014 to 2016. She is currently the Scenic Charge and Prop Master for San Diego State University. For more on Kristen please look on. www.kristenflores.org

ELISA BENZONI (Costume Design) is thrilled to be working again with Diversionary Theatre. Select credits include: *Ballast*, *Mystery of Love and Sex* (Diversionary Theatre), *Sex with Strangers* (Geffen Playhouse), *The Who and The What*, *Our Town*; *Tall Girls*; *Brahman/I*; *Sam Bendrix at the Bon Soir* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Constellations* (Old Globe); *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, *Reckless*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Measure for Measure* (USD/Old Globe); *Travels with my Aunt*, *The Illusion*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, *The Cocktail Hour*, *Fox on the Fairway* (Nominated for a Craig Noel Award), *Chapatti*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Great Nome* *Gold Rush* (North Coast Repertory Theatre); *Awake and Sing*, *Sylvia* (New Village Arts); Assistant costume credits: *Dialogues des Carmelites* (Teatro Petruzzelli, Bari), *Paradise Found* (Menier Chocolate Factory, London), *Milk Like Sugar* (La Jolla Playhouse), *As You Like It*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Old Globe). Elisa holds a costume design MFA from UCSD. www.elisabenzoni.com

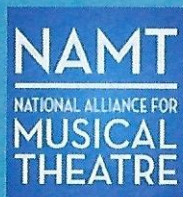
MICHAEL HUEY (Sound Designer and Composer) A composer based in Chicago, Michael and has worked with companies such as Lookingglass, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakes, Adventure Stage, North Park University, Sideshow, and many

(continued) more. In Los Angeles he composed the score to the Lance Henriksen film *Dark Awakening*. officialmichaelhuey.com

CURTIS MUELLER (Lighting Designer) returns to Diversionary having designed *Homos, Well, 2.5 Minute Ride, Lizard Boy, Manhandled, Now or Later, A Civil War Christmas, Amazons and Their Men, Man Clan, and A New Brain*. Select local credits include: *Withering Heights, Margin of Error* (Roustabouts Theatre Company); *End of The Rainbow, Quality of Life, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, I Hate Hamlet, All My Sons, Macbeth* (Intrepid Theatre Company); *Big River, The 1940s Radio Hour, Seascape* (New Village Arts); *Chess in concert, Next to Normal, Spring Awakening* (Cabaret at the Merc Summer Series). Curtis has also worked extensively with Coronado School of The Arts. Curtis holds a BFA in Lighting Design from California Institute of The Arts.

BONNIE DURBEN (Properties Designer) Diversionary Theatre: *The Moors, 2.5 Minute Ride, Well, Ballast, Mystery of Love and Sex, The Boy who danced on Air, Now or Later, She-Ranculas, Baby With The Bathwater, A New Brain and Amazons and Their Men*. Moonlight Theatre Productions: *Aida, Little Mermaid, Sunset Blvd, In The Heights, Sister Act, Peter Pan, Titanic, Addams Family, Music Man, Shrek, All Shook Up and Big Fish*. Scripps Ranch: *Skin Deep, Good People*. Mira Costa Theatre: *Waiting For Lefty, Oklahoma, These Shining Lights, Romeo and Juliet, Seven, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, and Urinetown*. Cygnet Theatre: *Animal Crackers, On The Twentieth Century* and 57 other productions. Bonnie is a member of the Society of Property Artisans and Managers.

Diversionary Theatre is a proud member of:



ABOUT DIVERSIONARY



MATT M. MORROW (Executive Artistic Director) Since joining Diversionary, Matt has directed the World Premiere of Georgette Kelly's *Ballast*, the San Diego Premiere of Bash Doran's *The Mystery of Love and Sex*, and the West Coast Premieres of Jordan Harrison's *Amazons and Their Men* and Christopher Shinn's *Now Or Later*. Prior to joining Diversionary Theatre, Matt was the Associate Artistic Director of City Theatre

Company, a LORT theatre in Pittsburgh dedicated to producing work written in the past five years. With City he directed the Regional Premiere of Jessica Dickey's *Charles Ives Take Me Home*, the World Premiere of Tami Dixon's *South Side Stories* (Pittsburgh Post Gazette & Tribune Review's Top Ten of 2012), Kim Rosenstock's *Tigers Be Still*; and workshops of the new musical *The Shadow Sparrow* by Anton Dudley, Keith Gordon and Charlie Sohne, and *Don't You F*cking Say A Word* by Andy Bragen for City's Momentum Festival of New Works.

He has developed new work with The Sundance Theatre Institute, The Banff Centre, American Conservatory Theater, Lincoln Center, PlayPenn, and Page 73 Productions in residence at the Yale School of Drama. His work as a director has been seen in NYC at Amas, Playwrights Horizons, Urban Stages, EST, HERE, Dixon Place, Cherry Lane, The York, The Tank, NYC Int'l Fringe, Midtown Int'l Festival, among others. His production of Jennifer Haley's *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom* with Bricolage Production Company was cited in the Top Ten of 2010 by The Pittsburgh Tribune Review.

Matt is currently developing Jennifer Haley's *FROGGY*. He served as The John Wells Professor of Directing at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama (Graduate & Undergraduate Directing programs), and is a member of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab. He holds a BFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University. www.mattmmorrow.com



JENNY CASE (Managing Director) Jenny has 16 years' experience in working for non-profit theatre in San Diego, including the last 10 years as the Associate General Manager of La Jolla Playhouse. She also served as the Producer of the *WithOut Walls (WOW) Festival* and one of the producers of the wildly successful *Accomplice: San Diego*, which was performed in Little Italy in 2013. She also line produced many of the Playhouse's New York developmental workshops including *Escape to*

Margaritaville, *Hands on a Hardbody*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Little Miss Sunshine* and many others.

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