

'DENTITY CRISIS

By Christopher Durang

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Excerpts from the introduction of *Christopher Durang: 27 Short Plays*

Christopher Durang is relentlessly entertaining. Whether his play is a burlesque of other playwrights or an annihilation of the myth of the happy American family, or a vitriolic challenge to organized religion, homophobia, psychoanalysis, or parenthood, the plays are constantly arousing their audiences with hilarity and mirth. He succeeds because of the extraordinary fertility of his imagination, inventiveness, courage, and audacity. Blessed with twin gifts—originality and an anarchic spirit—he provides an audience with unruly laughter and outlandish amusement.

From the time of his earlier plays, he has been responsive to the profound and baffling question, "What is the nature and purpose of the universe and to the human condition within that universe?" I had the opportunity to both observe and participate in his development as a playwright. On the day Gilman and I accepted him into the program [Yale School of Drama], I rushed into Dean Robert Brustein's office to announce, "We took in a kid from Harvard who is about twenty-one or twenty-two and who already has a subject: A scream for help in a world he knows provides none, so he keeps on screaming and laughs at it." Laughter for Durang not only affords a relief but a temporary refuge which might very well be the only remaining source of salvation.

Durang shouts for reason in an unreasonable universe in an unreasoning society. He has to be offensive to be effective. That offensiveness is in the service of an objective to aid an audience to see not only its follies and vices but also its misplaced values, its lies and deceptions, its infirmities, even its cruelty and callousness. Only by having such conditions razed in front of us can we begin the process of building, of correcting. With his uncommon talent, Christopher Durang lights a candle rather than curses darkness.

Howard Stein, September 1995
Retired Chairman, Oscar Hammerstein II Center for Theatre Studies,
Columbia University

AUTHOR'S NOTE

From *Christopher Durang: 27 Short Plays*

The summer after I graduated college and was waiting to go to Yale School of Drama, I stayed up in Cambridge, Massashusetss for the summer, working as a stock boy in the Physics Department. And I shared a house with seven or eight fellow students.

I was reading a book called *Madness, Sanity, and The Family* by R.D Laing and A. Esterson, which consisted of case studies of schizophrenic patients. It was Laing and Esterson's belief that the schizophrenia shown by the patients made sense—and was even a “normal” response—once you saw them in the context of their family interaction.

The stories were fascinating, and the interaction quite blatant. One patient told the doctors her parents were always whispering about her; when the doctors interviewed the girl with her parents, he told them what she said; the parents whispered to one another, and then said: “No, it's not true, we never whisper about her.” Then they whispered some more.

Or then another pair of parents complained that their daughter masturbated. Then they said no, she was a good girl, she never did that. They didn't seem to find a contradiction in these two assertions, though the schizophrenic daughter did; from a lifetime of contradictions, she felt totally confused and unable to see what was real and what wasn't.

Anyway I come from a family of extremely strong-willed people, especially women. And so reading these case studies, I found myself drawn suddenly to writing this play about an extreme and blatantly malfunctioning family where the craziness is totally evident and totally denied.

I wrote it all in one night, and especially got the giggles writing the Peter Pan sequence.

Christopher Durang, Playwright

DIRECTORS NOTE

"Iconoclastic...a person who attacks or ridicules traditional or venerated institutions or ideas he regards as erroneous or based on superstition" -Christopher Durang describing himself-

When I first read 'dentity Crisis, I was immediately intrigued by Durang's use of comedic, absurd non-realism to tell the tragic story of a young girl, Jane, as she fights to find sanity in her anything but sane family. As a theatre artist who firmly believes one of the main purposes of theatre is to be a reflection of life and the darker sides of humanity we often deny, I love plays that require the audience to empathize with characters they normally would not. 'dentity Crisis is one such play. Durang employs comedy to address the topics of mental illness and sexual identity so that through the absurdity Jane endures on an everyday basis, we are able to see a world through the eyes of a character whose true story is often overlooked. This enables us to understand Jane's character, and others like her, whose mental instability is a result of dysfunctional familial environment. While this play is filled with hilarious physical comedy and countless witty innuendos, it has the capacity to leave a lasting, powerful punch.

I would like to thank David Harwell, Amy Guerin, Chad Thomas, Karen Baker, and Johnna Doty, for their constant support, encouragement, and guidance. Their tireless devotion to their students and passion for the Theatre Program has inspired me even more to pursue a career in Theatre Education in hopes of teaching at the collegiate level. To my cast and crew, I love and respect you more than you know for trusting me to guide us on this adventure and for helping bring to life what will be my final mark at UAH. You have exceeded beyond my every hope and expectation.

This production is dedicated to my husband, Chad Burkhardt, without whom I never would have found the courage to pursue my dreams. You are the words to my melody, Burkie, and the heartbeat to everything I do. Thank you for the gift that you are, for believing in me, and for teaching me the value of believing in myself. Being your wife will always be my favorite.

Finally, I thank you, the audience, for supporting UAH Theatre, and for lending yourselves to the "willing suspension of disbelief" for an evening as we tell you what we believe to be a funny, and relevant story. Now sit back, buckle up, and enjoy the thrill ride that is 'dentity Crisis.

Sincerely,

Kailey Burkhardt, Director

CAST

Amelia Enix

Mary J.C. Segal

Davis Walker

Chris Wilson

Stella Broussard

JANE

EDITH

ROBERT

MR. SUMMERS

WOMAN

CREATIVE TEAM

Kailey Burkhardt

Laura Martin

Savannah Rutherford

Bakari Prigg

Kailey Burkhardt & Bakari Prigg

Ronnie Foreman

Kaylie Miller

Claire Collins

Hayden Miller

Jesse Pate

Bakari Prigg

Kaylie Miller

Lydia Chappell

Director

Assistant Director

Stage Manager

Technical Director

Set Designer

Lighting Designer

Costume Designer

Costume Assistant

Sound Designer

Co-Sound Designer

Props Master

Marketing

Stage Crew

CAST



AMELIA ENIX – JANE

Amelia Enix is a freshman at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, where she is pursuing a Theatre major and a Music minor. Although this is her debut with UAH Theatre, she has previously performed several shows with Oak Mountain High School Performing Arts. She played Vi Moore in *Footloose the Musical* and the Sugar Plum Fairy and Pinocchio's Understudy in *Shrek the Musical*. Amelia would like to express her love for the cast and crew of *'Dentity Crisis*, who have encouraged her pursuit of acting. She would also like to thank her friends and family for their support.



MARY J.C. SEGAL – EDITH

Mary J.C. Segal studies English and Theatre at UAH. In the last two years she has played Kate in *Taming of The Shrew*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Mrs. Frank in the staged *Diary of Anne Frank*, Five Wits in *Everyman*, and Imogene in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, in addition to her backstage roles. She dedicates this performance to her late Aunt, who would have hated such a play for its candor.



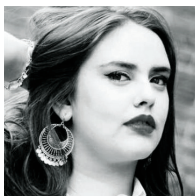
DAVIS WALKER – ROBERT

Davis Walker is a Sophomore Theatre major here at UAH, with an emphasis on Tech. His previous acting experience includes UAH's 2015 Play Festival, as Shark in *Justice Man vs. Numerous Lawsuits* and Prince Naïve in *An Ancient Modern Fairy Tale*. He also played Frederick in the Oahu Arts Center's 2008 production of *The Sound of Music*. His other interests include building props and costumes from popular video games and being a huge nerd.



CHRISTOPHER WILSON – MR. SUMMER

Christopher Wilson is a 4th year student at UAH with a dual-degree major studying in Biological Sciences and Theatre with emphases in Performance and Tech. Chris has performed in many plays starting from *West Side Story* in Rush-Henrietta Senior High School to *Romeo & Juliet* in Monroe Community College in Rochester, New York. He is currently working as Sound Designer for the opera in October: *The Medium*. Chris would like to thank his friends and family from both Alabama and New York for all the undying love and support and strive to keep going.



STELLA BROUSSARD– WOMAN

Stella is a freshman at the University of Alabama in Huntsville and is majoring in Theatre and Graphic Design. She has most recently been seen as student choreographer and an ensemble member in Huntsville Community Chorus Association's *Fiddler on the Roof*. She has previously performed various roles in Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater's *A Christmas Carol*, Princess Anise in FPCT's *12 Dancing Princesses*, Ensemble in HCCA's *Aladdin Jr*, and the Sea Witch in FPCT's *The Little Mermaid*. Additionally, Stella is a Teaching Assistant for FPCT's Fantasy in the Classroom and summer camp programs. She would like to thank her wonderful family for their support.

'*Dentity Crisis* is Kailey Burkhardt's senior capstone project in Theatre. It is the culmination of her work within the Theatre Program at UAH. The senior project is a visible way for students to synthesize into a final production all that they have learned over the course of their college career. Projects are hands-on and display both a deep and broad understanding of each student's chosen emphasis and allow for close collaboration with a diverse team of faculty and fellow theatre majors.

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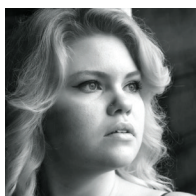
KAILEY BURKHARDT – DIRECTOR

Double majoring in Theatre and English, Kailey Burkhardt is thrilled to make her directorial debut at UAH. She was most recently seen on the UAH stage as the title character in *Eurydice* (2016). She received her first professional credit working as an Assistant Stage Manager for the off Broadway production of *New Country* at the Cherry Lane Theatre in NYC. After graduating in December, Kailey will begin working as a full time Education and Outreach Coordinator for Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theatre. She thanks the UAH Theatre Faculty for making all of this possible and her husband Chad for his endless supply of love, laughter, support, and candy.



LAURA MARTIN – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Laura Martin is a Junior at UAH double majoring in English and Theatre (focus in Acting and Dramaturgy). Her previous works at UAH include *Little Stone* and Understudy for *Eurydice* in *Eurydice*, Narrator in *The Laramie Project*, and Assistant Stage Manager for *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow* and *Picasso* at the Lapin Agile. Her current works include Assistant Director for *'Dentity Crisis* and Stage Manager for *The Medium*. She hopes to be a future teacher of English Literature and Theatre.



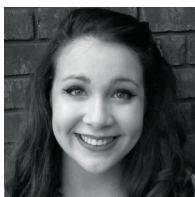
SAVANNAH RUTHERFORD – STAGE MANAGER

Originally from Seattle, Washington, Savannah Rutherford is a senior at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, double majoring in Music with a voice emphasis and Theatre with a performance emphasis. *'Dentity Crisis* is the first show she's stage managed. She was most recently seen on stage in March during UAH's production of Stephen Sondheim's *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*. Her favorite performance credits include: Hedy LaRue in UAH's production of *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (2014) and Audrey, the roller skating waitress, in Theatre Huntsville's production of *Leading Ladies* (2015).



BAKARI PRIGG – TECHNICAL DIRECTOR/PROPS MASTER

Bakari Prigg is in his fourth year at UAH and is proud for this production to be his debut production as the set designer. This is Bakari's first production in the Black Box Theatre. Previous works include directing the Oakwood Academy Choir musical I.M.A.G.E. in 2015, and directing and choreographing the same choir's 2016 revue of Black Broadway Musicals; At UAH: Sailor and FBI Agent in *Anything Goes*, Bud Frump in *How to Succeed*, Robin Starveling in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Moises Kaufman and other characters in *The Laramie Project*, and Loud Stone and Interesting Man u/s in *Eurydice*. Thanks to all of the theatre faculty and family and friends for their support. Other than acting, Bakari has been a puppeteer for over ten years.



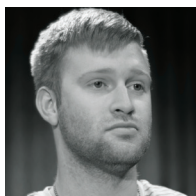
KAYLIE MILLER – COSTUME DESIGNER/MARKETING

Kaylie Miller is a junior pursuing her dual degree in Theatre and Marketing. While Kaylie has experience on both sides of the stage, her passion lies with costuming. She assisted with costumes and makeup for UAH Theatre's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and IMP's production of *Mary Poppins*. She is thrilled to work with this amazing cast and crew for her costume design debut with *'Dentity Crisis*. Kaylie's UAH Theatre marketing credits include *The Laramie Project*, *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*, and *Eurydice*. She works as the Marketing Intern at Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theatre and Marketing Director at Fig Leaf Costumes.



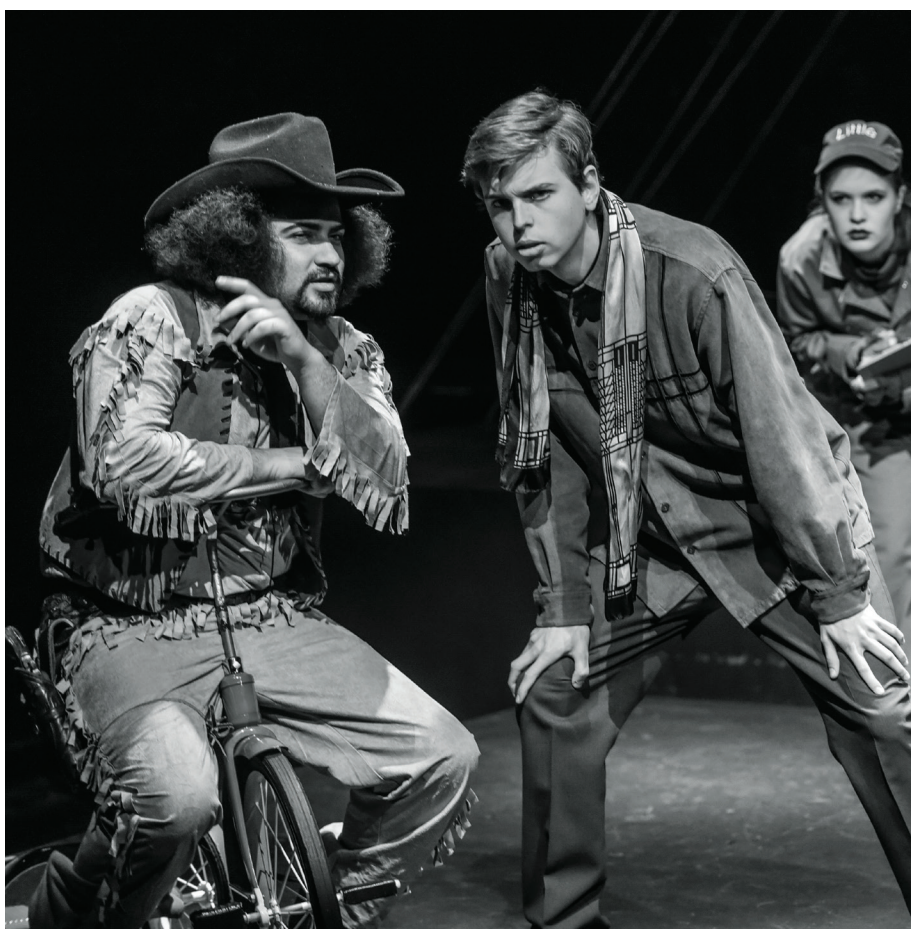
RONNIE FOREMAN – LIGHTING DESIGNER

Ronnie Foreman is a computer engineering major with a minor in theatre. He grew up here in Huntsville and served six years in the Navy. He ran the lighting console during *The Laramie Project* and has designed and run lights for the UAH productions of *Eurydice* and *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*. Along with designing and running lights for *'Dentity Crisis*, he is also running the lights and projections for the upcoming opera, *The Medium* by Gian Carlo Menotti.



HAYDEN MILLER – SOUND DESIGNER

Hayden Miller is a fifth semester junior at The University of Alabama in Huntsville. He is a technical theatre major and a music technology minor. Hayden is very thankful to have the opportunity to work with the *'Dentity Crisis* cast and crew. This is the first show he has designed.



Eurydice

Spring 2016 - UAH Theatre



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