

Prolific in different media, Pollock defines herself as a dramatist rather than playwright, as this description more aptly describes her multifaceted input into Canadian theatre as an actress, director, playwright, drama teacher and theatre administrator.

Sharon Pollock was born in the Maritimes of eastern Canada and was raised in Quebec's Eastern Townships, but her professional career began in western Canada's Alberta where she still resides. She shows a particular affinity for and understanding of west-

ern Canada in her work — especially in such plays as *Generations* (1981) and *Whiskey Six Cadenza* (1987), which explores the theme of Prairie community.

While she is best known for historical plays, she has also written comedies such as *And Out Goes You?* (1975), and more personal and reflective plays such as *Doc* (1984), a psychological investigation of a ravaged New Brunswick family.

Pollock's early historical plays, such as *Walsh* (1974), the *Komagatu Maru Incident* (1978) and *One Tiger to a Hill* (1981) — which have been produced in theatres across Canada — have earned her a reputation as a "playwright of conscience." These plays also reveal a dark side to Canadian history most conventional playwrights have chosen to ignore.

More recent works — *Generations* (1981), *Blood Relations* (1984) and *Doc* (1984) — show less concern for social issues and more for domestic conflict. *Doc* is

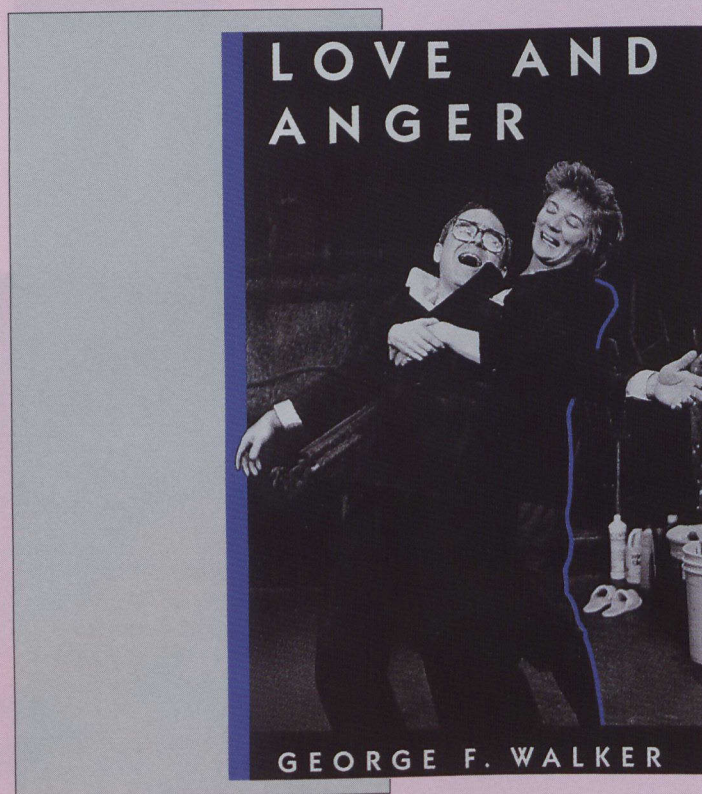
loosely based on Pollock's own family background, and like all her plays, it is brutally honest and painfully telling. Pollock's work has been an outspoken call for a truly Canadian theatre that does not shy away from controversial subject matter in its search for relevance.

In 1988, Sharon Pollock was awarded the Canada-Australia Literary Prize. She is currently working on two new plays and is also contributing to the CBC radio drama series "Sunday Matinée." ♦

## GEORGE F. WALKER: *Living Theatre that Ignites the Imagination*

George F. Walker's gift for harmonizing the serious and comic elements in his enigmatic tragicomedies has won him critical acclaim the world over. Not only is Walker considered the leading comic playwright of contemporary English-Canadian theatre, but his work has also been produced abroad — in fact, more so than that of any other Canadian playwright.

Walker's dramatic career debuted in 1971 when he submitted a play entitled *Prince of Naples* to Toronto's Factory Lab Theatre. Thus began a long and fruitful collaboration between playwright and company. Walker credits the Factory Lab for allowing him the artistic freedom necessary to further develop this highly imaginative and unconventional drama. Walker has been described as a "writer of the imagination" as opposed to a "realist." Throughout his career, he has bypassed conventional theatrical modes and has experimented with forms that enable him to better express his creative voice. He describes his plays, which are characterized by their episodic plots, their vigorous dialogue and their dream-like settings, as an attempt to impose order



on chaos. An eclectic reader, Walker uses pop-art forms such as B-movies, detective novels, gothic romances and comic books, which give his plays their lurid colouring and frenzied energy.

In *Beyond Mozambique* (1974), Walker uses the B-movie as a frame. In a crumbling jungle outpost, Rocco, a mad scientist, and his wildly disparate fellow exiles play out their obsessions, oblivious to one another and to the drumming that threatens to overwhelm them.

The B-movie mode is one of Walker's favourite dramatic techniques, and he has used it in *Gossip* (1977), *Ramona and the White Slaves* (1978), *Filthy Rich* (1979), *Rumours of Our Death* (1980) and *The Art of War* (1984). His plays drawing on the B-movie conventions — stock characters resembling those in melodrama, stock situations, a simplified view of life — are not simple parodies but ironic political commentaries.

Walker's plays, the winners of many international literary awards, have been produced widely in Canada, the United States, England, Wales, Israel and Australia. *Nothing Sacred* (1987), an adaptation of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, was voted one of the top 10 plays of 1988 by *Time* magazine.

Raised in the working-class east end of Toronto, Ontario, Walker moved east to New Brunswick, but is now again living in Toronto with his wife and daughter. He is currently writing a play and says he plans to work on a novel.