

## Summer production nails down lid on Graves' dream

*The Last Real Summer*  
by Warren Graves  
Directed by Steven Ross and Karen Conderan  
Samuel Beckett Theatre

By S.D. GOLDSTEIN

True as it may sound, Intrepid Productions lived up to its name by tackling a play which even major theatre companies might shy away from. And, to listen to Co-Directors Steven Ross and Karen Conderan describe their production of Warren Graves' *The Last Real Summer*, a fearless approach might be considered necessary but a cautious one is more justified. The play ran last week at Samuel Beckett Theatre.

The cast of primarily first and second year theatre students were assaulted on two fronts about their script and space. The theatre is inhibiting because of its small size, with actors knocking themselves into the audience one time, and into the wall another.

The script was even more of a difficulty, dealing with theatre aesthetics and human emotions (Graves implies in his forward to the play), rather than political or philosophical issues.

Set during World War II, the play concerns a woman—Elizabeth—who realizes that although life has not quite met her childhood dreams and ambitions, she is by no means a failure. "We worked hard with the actors," Ross said, "to get them to understand the feelings of the time. It's very relevant for people in the theatre. Just because you don't get to



**REAL HAPPY:** Cast of *Last Real Summer*.

Broadway doesn't mean that you've failed. I think at the end of the play, Elizabeth realizes this."

As her function in the play is split between participation in, and observation of her life in a series of flashbacks, Elizabeth becomes more than the mere focal point of the play; she becomes the link in a tension created by the opposing time frames.

This was at times shattered, however, by actor Lisa Moore's quick delivery, her often poor sense of timing, and her contrived emo-

tional outbursts. Moore recovered sufficiently by the second act, building the tension in a steady and sincere manner, allowing the text to speak for itself.

Jamie Johnson played the quiet and ironic adolescent lover, Doug, with an ear more for Elizabeth's fallacious description of him as a "hooligan." Johnson thus never permitted his character's underlying seriousness to sneak through, so that moments which clearly called for a maturity (a tender funeral scene, for instance) of character became lost.

## MoreStuff

□ Harbourfront's *International Festival of Authors* continues until Saturday at the Premier Dance Theatre with internationally-known authors such as **Thea Astley** (Australia) and **Robert Stone** (USA). Time: 8 p.m. Tonight \$6, F-S \$8. Reviewed this issue.

□ **Danceworks 36** continues its premiere of *This Ain't Swan Lake* through to Saturday. St. Michael's College Theatre, 121 St. Joseph St., 8 p.m. \$9/\$6, members \$7/\$5. 533-1487.

### OCTOBER 18

□ *Video and Musicians* workshop will examine price/quality levels of promotional video. Toronto Musicians Assoc. Local 149, 101 Thorncliff Pk. Dr., 4 p.m. Free. 421-1020.

### OCTOBER 21

□ *Witches Sabbath*, the first of a four-part series of Story and Music concerts by storyteller **Helen Porter**. New Drama Centre, 35 Hazelton Ave., 8:00 p.m. \$10. 967-5642.

### OCTOBER 22

□ The fifth annual *Dora Mavor Moore Awards* will be celebrated at the Palais Royale. Awards in 22 divisions will be presented to Toronto theatre artists. Gourmet dinner, show and party for \$41. 363-6401.

Compiled by BEVERLY MILLIGAN



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