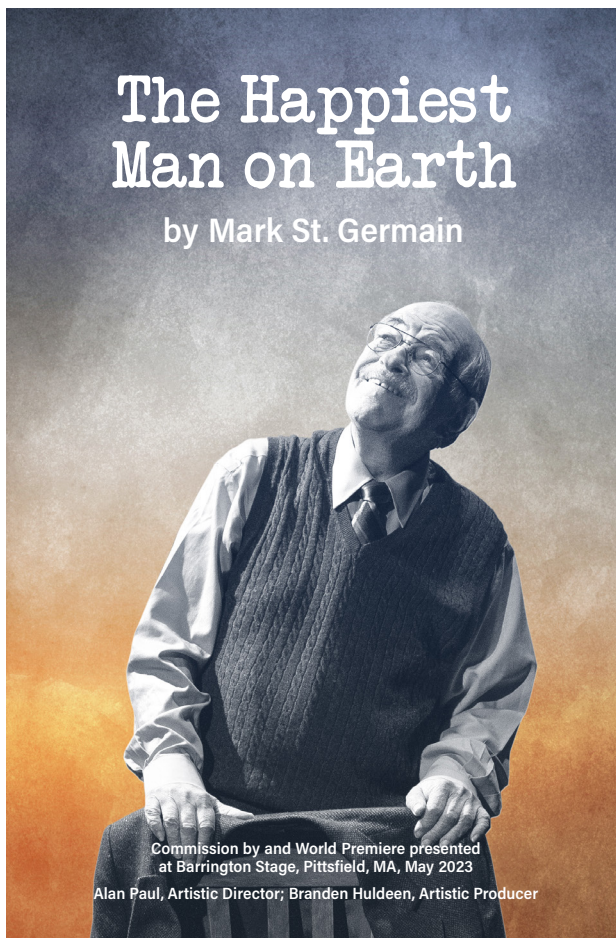


# CONTEMPORARY COMPANION

for *The Happiest Man On Earth*

by Mark St. Germain

created by Leah E. Ott, Audience Services Manger



## ABOUT THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH

"This true, triumphant story brings the extraordinary journey of Eddie Jaku to life. He endured innumerable harrowing experiences while navigating and evading multiple Nazi concentration camps. Eddie's story is one of unimaginable grief and tragic loss, yet it is a testament to the indomitable spirit of the human soul. Defying all odds, he declared himself 'The Happiest Man on Earth,' as evidenced by his resilience and determination to find light even in the darkest circumstances." | Based on the memoir of the same name by Eddie Jaku. -catf.org

## MEET EDDIE JAKU

Born Abraham Jakubowicz in Germany in 1920. He's survived WWII, twice a prisoner in concentration camps for being Jewish, and deported out of Belgium because he's a German. Yet—he's the Happiest Man on Earth.

[The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of An Auschwitz Survivor by Eddie Jaku](#)

On November 9, 1938, during the terrifying violence of Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, Eddie was beaten by SS thugs, arrested, and sent to a concentration camp with thousands of other Jews across Germany. Every day of the next seven years of his life, Eddie faced unimaginable horrors in Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and finally on a forced death march during the Third Reich's final days. The Nazis took everything from Eddie—his family, his friends, and his country. But they did not break his spirit.

## AUSCHWITZ: A GLIMPSE

"Let us ensure that this terrible tragedy, the worst in history, may never happen again and also, will never be forgotten."  
—Eddie Jaku

A lone railway leads through barren land. At the end of the railway stands a sign: "For ever let the place be a cry of despair and a warning to humanity where the Nazis murdered about one and a half million men, women, and children, mainly Jews, from various countries in Europe."

Through the opposite side of the railway, buildings stand in parallel. Everything neat and aligned for a place of chaos. The exit to the car drop-offs stands alongside a dirt road. About one fourth of a mile, stands the gate: Arbeit Macht Frei – or Work Sets You Free.

Across the open field, demolitions of buildings from soldiers with secrets, dirt roads, and golden rust buildings remain, serving now as museums, each hold belongings of Jews, Romani, and the like – hair, shoes, suitcases, etc.

Above on the wall – "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

## THE DENIAL AND DISTORTION OF HISTORY

"The denial or distortion of history is an assault on truth and understanding. Comprehension and memory of the past are crucial to how we understand ourselves, our society, and our goals for the future. Intentionally denying or distorting the historical record threatens communal understanding of how to safeguard democracy and individual rights."

<https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/holocaust-denial-and-distortion/explaining-holocaust-denial>

## JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS & HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

### Theater J – Theatre for Jewish Voices

<https://theatrewashington.org/theatres/theater-j>

### Jewish Federation of Greater Washington

<https://www.shalomdc.org/>

### The Jewish Museum

<https://thejewishmuseum.org/>

Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center (EDCJCC)

<https://www.edcjjc.org/>

### United States Holocaust Museum

<https://www.ushmm.org/>

From Mark St. Germain: "If somebody is the happiest man on earth, I'm just intrigued. What makes them so happy? Is it some philosophy they have? What are they doing that makes them happy?"

–INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT; Conducted and edited by Sharon J. Anderson

## INTERVIEWS WITH EDDIE JAKU: 5 WAYS TO LIVE A LONG, HAPPY LIFE

Across many Eddie Jaku interviews, he has gifted the world with many life lessons that he believes led to his life longevity and happiness.

1. "I do not hate anyone. Hate is a disease which may destroy your enemy but will also destroy you in the process."
2. "Never give up when you're down. Never. After rain comes sunshine."
3. "What you give, you get back. If you give nothing, you get nothing back."
4. "Do not walk in front of me, I may not be able to follow. Do not walk behind me, I may not be able to lead. Walk beside me and be my friend."
5. "Happiness does not fall from the sky; it's in your hands."

## EDDIE JAKU ON VIDEO

### Happiest Man on Earth, shares his wisdom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8P676nVJvU>

### The happiest man on earth: 99 year old Holocaust survivor shares his story | Eddie Jaku | TEDxSydney

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scCvi3vY4jQ>

### The World's Principled Leaders Series: Eddie Jaku

<https://www.youtube.com/>



"My heart was healed; I made promises that from that day to the end of my life I promised to be happy, smile, polite, helpful, and kind [...] and my happiness returned in abundance. I'm doing all that I can to make this world a better place for everyone, and I implore you all to do your best too."

–Eddie Jaku