IN TRANSIT: PLAYS ON THE MOVE
THE 2013 PLAYBACK SHOWS
Every October, in our Playback show, the kids write for THEMSELVES (and an adult partner who also directs). This year’s Playback was rehearsed in Bridgehampton, NY and staged at the Five Angels Theater Oct. 25-27.

THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM
Loren Toolajian .................... Composer/Music Director
Lara DeBruijn ..................................... Costume Designer
Mitchell Ost ..................................... Lighting Designer
Maury Schott ..................................... Sound Designer
Donald Fried ..................................... Stage Manager

THE HOST FAMILIES
John Vassilaros, Alex Gersten-Vassilaros, & Tonio, Luka, & Stefano Vassilaros, and Cathy Dantchik.

SCENES FROM PLAYBACK, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
1. Chef John Sheehy, Jade Cuevas, a mysterious horse, and Darcy Fowler found out who made the biggest and best cupcakes in the kingdom in Jade’s play Princess’ Wants, directed by Darcy.
2. In Amber Ureña’s Successful, Amber helped Nancy Noto with a science project in exchange for an introduction to a fashion designer.
3. Richard Brea and Nick Mills learned a few lessons about cooking, clowning, and footballing in Richard’s Football.
4. Gus Rogerson bullied Adnan Ahmed once too often while Jeremy Rishe watched helplessly in Anything is Possible, which Adnan wrote and Jeremy directed. Gus is very contrite now.
5. In Undercover Type Aways, Britney Trinidad and Zoey Martinson were typewriter saleswomen who discovered they were both secret agents AND long-lost sisters.
6. Chayse Peña gave us The S.S. Seashark, Also Known as The 4 S’s, in which he and Grant Harrison were the hapless co-captains of a party boat lost at sea. Fortunately, they had a big red flare gun.

More Playback on page 2
In her play *The Not So Evil Vampire*, Kaitlin Feliciano played a young apple-picker who taught an unhappy revenant (Angela Lewis) how to cure her bloodthirsty nature. This was Angela’s second Project play about the undead this year.

Mike and Ike, by Steven Baez-Padilla, was a tragically hip reboot of the age-old cat-and-mouse drama. Steven was the doomed rodent while Vayu O’Donnell was the cat (whose languid Southern cadences reminded us eerily of Kevin Spacey’s Congressman Underwood in *House of Cards*).

In her play *The Hacker, The Photographer, and The Instagrammer*, an examination of the perils of social media by Genesis Hires. Seen here in the same character order as the title are Armando Riesco, Genesis, and Rachel Rusch.

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The Rich and The Hunter, written by Kaylee Zambrano and directed by Don Nguyen, told the tale of an impoverished huntress (“I hunt to live.”) and an overprivileged girl who learned each other’s secrets and became better people. Emma Galvin and Grace Rex were the titular characters.

Frank Wood was an aging European basketball (seen holding his spherical son Clake) and Matthew Saldivar was a bullied kid (aka an “unfortunate human.”) They struck a deal, Matt shot a winning basket, and Frank and Clake went to Basketball Heaven. The play was The Two Opposites, written by Ahmed Musa and directed by Michael Walkup.

Dimitri Smallwood penned the antic How to Be Friends Then Enemies. If you can’t tell by the photo, Debargo Sanyal played a testy violin and Will Rogers was an affable piano. Together, they made beautiful music and learned how to count, play hide and seek, and be pop stars. Megan Cramer directed this playful romp.

Here is Project board member Lisa Benavides-Nelson as an overbearing ghostly grandma haunting the elderly person’s clothing store (Forever 91) that daughter Clea Alsip inherited from her. Kayla Ortiz wrote Grandmas These Days, which was directed by Leslie Kramer.

Farah Bala was a kleptomaniacal cat that helped find a family and a home for Genesis Oliver’s biscuit-lovin’ dog in Joshua Gomez’s Rivals Reborn, directed by Rick Meese.

Cookies and Milk, by Dariana Lugo-Vargas, featured Pun Bandhu as a crunchy treat and Sarah Nina Hayon as the beverage that wanted to devour him. Danielle Mindess directed this filling fable.

In Raymond Alameda’s The Cool and the Reckless actor Christopher Randolph offended designer Stephen Tyrone Williams by vomiting on his custom-made outfit on stage. Jordan Mahome directed this (literally) gut-wrenching drama.
by dEGrEEs:
sIx PLAys oF sEPArAtIon

THE 2014 TWO-ON-TWOS

In this annual format, we line up 6 pairs of kids and match each team with an adult playwright and an adult director. The plays were rehearsed in Nyack, NY over the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day weekend and performed Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 2014 at the Five Angels Theater.

THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM
Robert Cowie ..................... Composer/Music Director
Kimberly Goings ........................... Costume Designer
Greg MacPherson .......................... Lighting Designer
Jason Cawley ................................... Sound Designer
Michelle Nguyen ...................... Soundboard Operator
Lisa Iacucci........................................ Stage Manager

nyACk hosts
Susanna Styron, Deborah Adamy, Polly King & John-Paul Newport, and Wendy vanden Heuvel, Brad Col-ey, Brian Mertes & Melissa Kievman.

Leah Macuilt and Kamil Kuzminski were a pair of private eyes on the trail of arch-villain Adam Levine (yes, the guy from Maroon 5 and The Voice) in Stake Out, written by Ra- chel Bonds and directed by Yusef Miller.

Craig Cox’s The Spy Who Neglected Me, directed by Matthew Jellison, revealed how sensitive Agent Q (Nathan- iel Butler) is about the many slights he suffers from super-spy James Bond (Carlos Breton).

In Former Wives of Reggie, by Max Posner, Rene Paul Santiago played, believe it or not, a middle-aged British lady. Samantha Paduani was equally outlandish as the American woman that Rene Paul came to visit. Together they took tea, applied facial masques, and discussed the ne’er-do-well to whom they had both been married. Natalie Martin directed.

Miguelangel Vazquez and Derek Tineo were a couple of gunslingers who confronted each other in a Wild West Side pizza joint in The Showdown, written by Sung Rno and directed by Tim J. Lord.

Tatiana Goode was a telepathic teen who told her best friend Asia Rosado exactly what she should be thinking. The play was The Buzz, the writer was Chisa Hutchinson, and the director was January LaVoy.

Melody Cruz and Venecia Escamilla were paranormal investigators pursuing the ghost in the machine in a com- puter lab in Ghost Stoppers, written by Jiehae Park and directed by Eliza Baldi.

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**JONATHAN GROFF, PLEASE “GET BACK” TO THE PROJECT!**

On Sunday, November 24, the Five Angels Theater hosted “Get Back,” a special event starring Jonathan Groff ("Spring Awakening," "Glee," "Frozen," and more). It was our first "mini-benefit" concert, and it was such a success that we hope to present many more. Jonathan, who is amazingly nice on and off the stage, was joined by guests Mary-Mitchell Campbell (who served as music director), Laura Osnes ("Cinderella"), Hunter Bell, Susan Blackwell, Heidi Blickenstaff, & Jeff Bowen (of "Now. Here. This"), and musicians Jim Hershman, Jay Mack, and Larry Pressgrove. Mr. Groff and his pals presented a wonderful evening that celebrated the wild imagination of childhood. Songs were interspersed with stories and footage of Jonathan’s early life on the family farm in Pennsylvania. We loved Jonathan’s encore of Weird Al Yankovic’s “Amish Paradise,” but our favorite moment was when our own Imani Lewis joined him onstage for a duet that put tears in everyone’s eyes. Josh Langman did the lights while Anne Lowrie stage-managed.

--GRB

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**Host James Naughton & the Board of Directors of The 52nd Street Project invite you to**

**SAVE THE DATE FOR**

**Zootopia**

The (alphabetically) Ultimate Project Benefit

Songs written by a flock of wild Project kids and performed by a rampaging herd of special guests.

**Monday, May 12, 2014 - The Tribeca Rooftop**

The following foundations, corporations, and government agencies recently made generous grants to the Project. We are grateful to them for their support as well as to the many individuals who help sustain the Project’s programs year-round.

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The 14th Annual Smart Partners Ping-Pong Tournament

Here at the Project, the Ping Pong Tournament has been a constant since the turn of the century. This year’s Feb. 7th event saw some hard-fighting teams claw their way ever higher.

The Champions: The Wild Riders - Smart Partners Jason Hare & Michael Bannister have been pursuing their Ping Pong dream since 2009. This was clearly their year.

2nd Place: The Troublemakers - Kai Ceniza and his S.P. Joel Perez practiced long and hard this year. The hard work paid off for them.

3rd Place: No Mercy - Adnan Ahmed and Lisa Kerner came in 5th last year as Smiling People. The aggressive new name seems to have worked.

4th Place: Smash Broccoli - Josh Moody left the staff, but he’s still tearing up the Ping Pong table with Ahmed Musa.

5th Place: Team Hair - Ray Harold and Natalia Caballero were an “instant team.” Ray has so much hair that he couldn’t fit his medal over his head.

The Officials: Liz and George
The Scorekeeper: Intern Hanna Allen
The Cheerleaders: Stephanie, Sasha, and Tiffany

5th Annual Foosball Mini-Tournament

It is pure madness to host two world-class sporting competitions in the same space at the same time, but we are NOTHING if not mad! Here are the teams that took top honors on the tiny tabletop soccer field.

Champions: Smash Broccoli - Josh Moody and Ahmed Musa played good ping-pong, but SENSATIONAL foosball.

2nd Place: Earthbound - This is Justin Bannister’s third time as #2. This time he played with S.P. Eric March.

3rd Place: The Wild Riders, who were on fire, were not satisfied with merely being Ping Pong champs.

4th Place: The Filmmakers - Enrique poses with the medals, since his partner Dylan’s wackiness was needed elsewhere.

Good Sports: The S’mores - Mikhaela Mahony and Valeria Oliva are as sweet as the treats they are named for.

Best New Players: The Hawks’ Joshua Gomez and The Ping Pong Masters’ Dariana Lugo-Vargas displayed great promise in their first tourney.

Best Teamwork: The Terminators - Chamel Rodney and Lee Rosen did not play with the cold brutality of their namesakes but they were every bit as precise.

Best Dressed: The Ultimate Warriors - Mussa Ahmed and Jamal Malloy-McCree dressed sharp AND showed up with a cake bearing their team name.

Good Sports: Cunundus - Their name was mystifying, but not a jeer, boo, or hiss escaped the lips of Brandon Shaffer and Michael Propster.

Wackiest Team: The Filmmakers - This nutty photo doesn’t even begin to show how wacky Dylan Dawson and Enrique Caballero actually are.

Most Improved: Elena Caballero of Pink Pong Panthers and Justin Bannister (Michael’s brother) of Earthbound are playing a LOT better this year.

Best Team: The Wild Riders, who were on fire, were not satisfied with merely being Ping Pong champs.
The Spring 2014 Playmaking Plays
10 new plays written by kids and performed by adult actors.
Friday, April 4 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 5 at 3:00 and 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 6 at 3:00 p.m.
The 52nd Street Project’s
Five Angels Theater
789 10th Avenue, between 52nd & 53rd St.
Admission is free, but we urge you to reserve seats by visiting www.52project.org or calling (212) 642-5052.

The Kid Playwrights
Sevan Asencio ★ Duaa Alkindi ★ Jayla Alvarez
Kiara Nicole Figueroa ★ Nathaniel Ortiz ★ Marlon Sebastian Lopez
Sofia Santoni ★ Daniel Tineo ★ Karen Tineo ★ Milen Tokarev

The Adult Directors and Actors
Marinda Anderson ★ George Babiak ★ Dan Butler ★ Molly Carden
Matt Citron ★ Nehassaiu DeGannes ★ Edie Falco
Sekou Laidlow ★ Rebecca Martinez ★ Adrienne C. Moore
Christina Roussos ★ Mauricio Salgado ★ Wrenn Schmidt
Felix Solis ★ Kerry Whigham ★ James Yaegashi
and more!
Music Director Andrew Sherman
MEET THE NEW TEEN ENSEMBLE... AND THEIR SECRET IDENTITIES!

Our latest Teen Ensemble has hit the ground running. They started the first year of their conservatory-style training program in October with a new component led by the innovative Broken Box Mime Theater. In November, they plunged into the unpredictable world of improvisation with George Babiak and Eric March.

In late December, our teens prepared for the most recent chapter in the Ensemble curriculum by creating strange, beautiful, and (sometimes) hilarious plaster face masks. Throughout January, Sarah Petersiel, Master Mask Teacher (at right), led the 18 kids and 4 adults through an intensive character workshop. On February 13th, the original characters introduced themselves to an audience with a plethora of bizarre and charming characters. We met Corky, a gravitationally challenged fellow from an alternate reality; Alexander, the illegitimate son of Zeus; Dr. Julian, a surfer who moonlights as a psychotherapist; and Harry Jhoe, an aging Lothario with a predilection for facial hair. And there were more!

But the Teen Ensemble is just getting warmed up...

On May 30th and 31st, come see 6 original ten-minute plays by adult playwrights custom-made for our intrepid and big-hearted teenagers.

Get Yourself Together! The 2014 52nd Street Teen Ensemble One-Act Play Festival will feature brand-new plays by Jihan Crowther, Patrick Link, Matthew Paul Olmos, Liz Tuccillo, and more. -MC
THE 2013 GOLF TOURNAMENT

Way back on October 7th, long before the snows of January and February, we mounted our fourth Annual Charity Golf Outing. No, it wasn’t a bunch of kids on a miniature golf course. It was a bunch of grown-ups who donated big bucks to benefit the Project and play serious golf at the beautiful Scottish-style links of the Bayonne Golf Club.

The course was beautiful, but the day was not! About halfway through the event, a gigantic bank of dark and ominous clouds swept upon us and brought a sizable rainstorm. Everyone came in and ate an early dinner, assuming that the day’s golfing was done. When the clouds parted, though, our intrepid players, one and all, decided to race back out to the greens to complete their game. In the end, everyone enjoyed a good round of duff-ery.

We are most grateful to the event’s chairs Nikki Brown, Cathy Dantchik, and Carolyn DeSena for working very hard to make the Outing the successful event that it was. Thanks must also go to our emcees, David Costabile and John Ellison Conlee, for their eloquence as well as their unparalleled mastery of the game of golf.

—GRB

PHOTO CORNER

For the last few weeks, a few Smart Partner teams have been roaming around and taking some cool snaps. Here are a couple of samples.

▲ “Hero Trouble” by Bryan Lopez.

▲ “Dressing Room Dream” by Christin Tetteh.

BE A DESIGNER!

During the Feb. 17-21 school break, George Babiak taught the 6th edition of his “Be A Designer” course to seven budding theatrical visionaries. The kids learned to draw plans and elevations, build set models, and design costumes. Now all we have to do is train some other kids to be producers and directors to hire ‘em!

—GRB

1. Makice Pacheco shows off her design for Lucky Number One, which included a functioning turntable for switching scenes. A first for our kid designers!

2. Tiniah Powell and Leah Henoch with Tiniah’s model of a TV talk show set for The Cupcake Master Interview.

3. Joshua Gomez with his elaborate model of The Friendship of Life, which featured a heart-shaped bedroom with a heart-shaped bed.

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3. Joshua Gomez with his elaborate model of The Friendship of Life, which featured a heart-shaped bedroom with a heart-shaped bed.
IN MEMORIAM

Christopher Evan Welch

Christopher Evan Welch, whom we lost due to complications of cancer on Dec. 2, 2013, was well known for a myriad of roles in theater and film. He was Silvestre in “Scapin” in 1999, Mercutio in “Romeo and Juliet” and Pompey in “Measure for Measure” at the Delacorte, and won an Obie as Mitch in “A Streetcar Named Desire.” In films, he worked with Woody Allen and the recently departed Philip Seymour Hoffman.

We at the Project, however, remember him best for his many turns in plays written by Project playwrights. He was a louche tourist in “A Vacation in Miami” by Margarita Gueorgueva, an obsessive ghost hunter in Carlos Breton’s “Spooky,” and most memorably, a neurasthenic bee in “The Solution Between Bees and Flies” by Ricardo Currin (see photo at left). Chris also did quite a few unforgettable Replay readings and always brought the same craft and vitality to his kid-written performances that he employed in his professional work. We miss him dearly.

—GRB

Poetry in Performance

On Monday, Nov. 18, 8 young Proj Poets gathered in the Five Angels Theater to read 26 new works as part of the Lorraine Cohen Poetry in Performance Program. They were led by volunteer theater artist and poet Nic Grelli. Guest poet Nehassaiu DeGaines visited our classroom to share a couple of her poems with the kids, and to talk about her own inspiration and creative process. The performance coaches were Steven Hajar, Ginny Lee, Irene Lucio, Zoey Martinson, John Evans Reese, Christina Roussos, and Lindsay Torrey while the Teen Class Assistant was Samantha Paduani. All the work will appear in the next Fifty Magazine, coming in June, 2014. While you’re waiting, check out these snaps of the poets!

—Liz Bell
Sekou Laidlow, who made his Project debut as a detective/transit worker in last Spring’s Playmaking show, married Melinda Weekes in a beautiful wedding on Sept. 21, 2013.

IN MEMORIAM

CARLOS DUME

The 52nd Street Project mourns the loss of Project Member Carlos Dume. He joined us in 2004, at the age of 10, with the production of his play “The Miracle of Music,” and went on to act and sing, to write and recite poetry, and to make the most of all the opportunities that he was given. He subsequently attended the University of Michigan as a recipient of the Henry and Gloria Jacobs Scholarship, offered every two years to a Project teen. His death has shocked and saddened all of us, all the more for the great promise his young life held. We grieve not only for the end of that glorious possibility, but for what he gave to us through his prodigious artistry, his constant integrity, his tenacity and fierce appetite, and the sweetness and beauty of his spirit.

-GR
The volunteer directors of the 2014 Two-on-Two's (see page 4) at the Bear Mountain skating rink. L to R: Robert Cowie (our music director), Natalie Martin, Tim J. Lord, Yusef Miller, Matthew Jellison, staffer Megan Cramer, January LaVoy, and Eliza Baldi.

What they do for us - Louis has been a member of the Project's Board of Directors since March, 1992. He and Cathy Dantchik have been co-chairs of the Board since 2013.


Why they do what they do - Louis: “It’s exciting to bring relationships, strategic insight and capital together to build businesses.” Patrice: “I love being creative, working with color, space and objects.”


Most recent accomplishment - Louis: “Getting Cooper (their dog) to wear boots to avoid salt in his paws.” Patrice: “Getting Cooper to actually keep his boots on!”


Credo - Louis: “Go big or go home.” Patrice: “Live every day like it’s your last.”

Advice to kids - Louis: “You can accomplish anything you set your mind to.” Patrice: “Believe in yourself; don’t get intimidated by others.”

Place of birth - Louis: “Dallas, Texas.” Patrice: “Minneapolis, Minnesota.”

Habitat - New York City and Water Mill, Long Island.

Favorite thing about the Project - Louis: “Outstanding team of professionals and volunteers, helping to change kids’ lives and enrich the community.” Patrice: “The phenomenal kids and their incredible plays.”

On Flyer Bars - Louis: “Getting the caramel stuck in my teeth.” Patrice: “A close second to my enjoyment of the kids’ plays!”

Project Founder Willie Reale with Louis and Patrice.