# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 52ND STREET PROJECT FULL-COLOR WEB EDITION - VOLUME 64, OCTOBER 2011 - GEORGE BABIAK, EDITOR

THE WAREHAM. MASS. ONE-ON-ONES AUGUST, 2011



WAREHAM PHOTOS BY CARLO ALBAN AND LISA KERNER





### ◀ In Nick Jones' The Education of Bubbleface, Edelys Guerrero taught the Master Class in Clowning to newbie Tim Cain.

► Matthew Jellison was a zoologist charged with the safekeeping of baby cobra Alex Malan in Escape from the Bronx Zoo, which Matt wrote. The title expresses how effective he was in his job.

## HEADS OR TAILS: THE CHANCY PLAYS THE WAREHAM FLIP-SIDE

THE 2011 ONE-ON-ONES

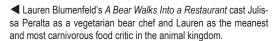
Each summer, we take 20 kids away for a week in the country to rehearse plays with adult partners. The August set of 10 teams enjoyed our 10th straight year in Wareham, Mass. from the 6th to the 13th. The shows were performed at our own Five Angels Theater the weekend of August 19-21.

### THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Greg MacPherson	Lights	
Kim D. Sherman		
Katherine Brown, Chloe Chapin, Kate Cusack,		
Kathleen Doyle, and Crystal Thomp	oson Costumes	
Maury Schott	Sultan of Sound	
Karen Munkel	Stage Manager	

### THE HOST FAMILIES

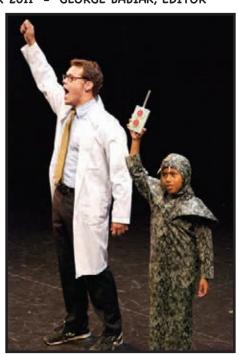
Greatest Project hosts of all time Peter, Helen & Christopher Randolph, Andrea & Emmanuel Daskalakis, Jamie & Cathy Herring; Joe McNay; Alice McNay, Beth Pfeiffer, Gray, Rosemary & Nancy Watson; Sherbie & Tom Worthen.



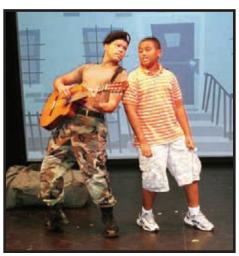
- ► Sanitation Engineer Amanda Rosa and Massage Therapist Amirah Vann tracked down the infamous Honey Badger in The Honey Badger Longs to Dance by Graeme Gillis.
- Swap Meet by George Babiak gave us George as a line-dancing. redneck who swapped bodies with Ruby Zamora, a 256 year-old alien Parasitoid from planet Zeta Reticuli.
- ▶ Jeremy Vasquez tugged at guitar strings and heartstrings as a boy saying farewell to his older brother (Carlo Alban) who was being deployed overseas in Beto O'Byrne's Don't Go to Dinner.
- ▼ Sheriff Snake-Eye Snedaker (Christopher Randolph) plotted to procure the lucky hat of title character Derek Tineo in Christopher's The Ballad of Lucky LaRue.











Rival Jet Ski champions Ashley Marie Ortiz and Siara Feliciano raced for first place and tangled with a giant red squid in *Ski to Win* by Emily Chadick Weiss.



The Lord of Order (Rene Paul Santiago) and Chaotica, Goddess of Chaos (Megan Cramer) battled, bewildered, and balanced each other in Megan's Controlled Chaos.



Turtle Derby, by Jihan Crowther, found Eliza Baldi and Kaitlin Feliciano as two sea turtles in a qualifying race for the great turtle migration.

# THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA - THE TEEN ENSEMBLE TOURS NEW YORK AND ALBERTA, CANADA

In William Shakespeare's "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," childhood pals go on long journeys, fight for love, test their honor, and forge bonds of friendship that cannot be broken. Sounds a lot like the Teen Ensemble's two-year program that culminated in a Canadian tour in late June and early July.

After two wildly successful performances in New York City, and after passport drama at the airport, our company of 7 teens and 6 adults finally arrived in full in Canada. Our international tour consisted of 4 days at the University of Calgary, and then 3 days at the Banff Centre, a rustic yet lush environment high up in the Rocky Mountains.

There were many memorable moments from the tour, mainly made because our teen group was so willing to learn about the local culture while bringing a sense of pride in their hometown and own traditions.

Throughout our week in Calgary and Banff, we watched a performance by the Wagonstage Theater at the University, joked and sang through an improv night with the Impro Depot, participated in a mask workshop with Kathleen Foreman, and created original scenes with Precipice Theater, an environmentally active youth theater company in Banff.

Other highlights include the Airdrie Rodeo, where we made friends with a finalist in the Miss Airdrie Rodeo contest and the rodeo clown himself, both of whom took a particular liking to us New York folk! We lounged around a Canada Day celebration on Prince's Island, walked through a historical town in Heritage Park, and hiked in the picturesque mountains up to the Lake Agnes Teahouse where we sipped tea with chipmunks. Throughout it all, we enjoyed spotting elk, attempting to hug black bears, or catch brown bunnies, and interacting with many other species of beautiful wildlife.

Our Canadian Ensemble: Teens: Hera Andre-Bergmann, Janiece Aponte, Erica Arce, Jenisse Bouret, Carlos Dume, Azalea Rosario, and A.J. Welsh. Adults: Director Nicole A. Watson, Teen Dean Chris Ceraso, Associate Artistic Director Megan Cramer, Production Manager George Babiak, Sound Designer Vanessa Valdes, Executive Director Carol Ochs, and cast member Matthew Jellison. Our New York crew included the toe-tapping compositions by Andrew Sherman, the illuminating light design by Burke Brown, and snazzy costumes by Lara de Bruijn.





A domesticated hamster lawyer (Daniel Martinez) defended the wild Marcelle (Jennifer Ikeda), last of the Great Hamsters of Alsace, in *Bon Chance* by Cynthia Kaplan.



Robert Askins' *Sperlock and Whitsun* had a desperate butler (Robert) and a wily detective (Enrique Caballero) solving a monkey murder. Naturally, there was a swordfish duel.



A Mountie foiled a diamond smuggler in Carly Mensch's Lost in the Borderlands. Luckily, Nehassaiu deGannes and Jade Cuevas got to meet Justin Bieber (Malik Velazquez).



John Sheehy and Eric Carrero were safecrackers turned security experts in John's *Stealing Basics*. That's a fake tattoo on John's neck. It says "Mom."

# HEADS OR TAILS: THE CHANCY PLAYS THE BLOCK ISLAND TOSS

THE 2011 ONE-ON-ONES

In July we took 10 kids and their grown-up partners to beautiful Block Island for a week to prepare the shows you see on this page. They were performed in NYC July 22-24, 2011 at the Five Angels Theater.

### THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Greg MacPherson	Lights
Eric March	Composer/Music Director
Viviane Galloway &	
Ciera Wells	Costumes
Chris Steele-Nicholson	Sound Designer
Liz Bell	Stage Manager

### **BLOCK ISLAND HOSTS**

Sue Black; Susan Bush; Socha Cohen; Mimi Leveille; Elliot & Amy Nerenberg; Leslie Parsons; Lisa Stipock & Allen McKay; George & Jean Taber; Ron & Judy Tierney; Joya Verde & Virginia Dare; and our head-quarters host Dr. Christina Biaggi.



Faisal Afridi and Dylan Dawson were ace frog detectives on the trail of a homicidal biology teacher in Dylan's *A Croak Before Dying*.



A beauty queen (Erin Mallon) and a dog show champion (Melody Cruz), both way past their primes, learned how to judge their personal worth in Erin's *In Dog Years*.



Meanwhile, over at the iTunes website, two apps (Valeria Oliva and Christina Robinson) vied for the most downloads in *Beeble and Chicken Forever* by Don Nguyen.



Aspiring shoe salesman Grant Harrison received some stern on-the-job training from crusty old store manager Edwin Rodriguez in Sean Kenealy's *The Perfect Fit.* 



In Jed Clarke's *Armored Truckers*, Justin Bannister and Jed were just that! They battled dumb Ninjas and grumpy subway riders and got the keys to the city for doing it.



Innovative dog designer Amber Ureña tried to make over dowdy Keira Naughton in Michael Bernard's *The Genius of Madame Frou-Frou*.



▲ Experiment 999 is Alive, written by Justin Bannister and directed by George Babiak, featured a mad scientist (Raul Castillo) and his willful mutant creation (Dominic Comperatore).

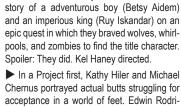


▲ Valeria Oliva's brother and sister dramedy *Together* presented Amirah Vann and Danyon Davis as the sparring siblings. Florencia Lozano directed.



Maxon Davis was a lonely beleaguered boy seeking enlightenment and samurai training from his holographic, geriatric grandfather (Greg Keller) in *Ready Or Not* by Daniel Martinez. James Yaegashi directed this action-packed play which featured the inaugural use of the Project fog machine.

▼ In Siara Feliciano's ghostly play, *The Haunted Mansion*, Catherine Mueller played a male ghost who wooed the reluctant Ashley Marie Ortiz. Gradually, Ashley's resistance was worn down and they honeymooned in Paris! Tasha Gordon-Solmon directed the spooky opus. Siara and Ashley were reunited this past summer in *Ski to Win* (see "Wareham" on page 2).



◆ The Dead Man by Alex Malan told the

▶ In a Project first, Kathy Hiler and Michael Chernus portrayed actual butts struggling for acceptance in a world of feet. Edwin Rodriguez (better known as "E-Rod") got to the bottom of matters as he wrote *Buttox Show*, which was directed by Michael Walkup (also known as "M-Dubs"). We also learned that butts and feets (sic) alike all love hot sauce.







# WHADDAYA NEED? PLAYS MADE TO ORDER

THE SPRING 2011 PLAYMAKING PLAYS

Way back in January, we started a Playmaking class for 10 brand new Project kids. Their final shows were performed April 1-3, 2011 at the Five Angels Theater.

### THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

### **BRIDGEHAMPTON HOSTS**

John Vassilaros, Alex Gersten-Vassilaros, Tonio, Luka, and Stefano Vassilaros, Laurie Becker, and Marie Rubin.



The title characters in Martin Sanchez's tragic play, *Alexander vs. The Phoenix* (Alexandra Metz and Debargo Sanyal) lived and died in conflict. Gus Rogerson directed this stirring saga.



Neal Bledsoe was the *Evil Puppet Dog* in Amber Ureña's play of the same name and Nikiya Mathis was the ventriloquist that he tormented. His bite was definitely worse than his bark, mainly because he packed a gun! As the director, Liz Tuccillo was the true puppet master of the play.



The Beginning by Julissa Peralta, gave us a peek into the lives of two sisters who happened to be a rose and a cactus (Susan Pourfar and Amelia Campbell). Lisa Rothe directed this memory play.



Two Wonderful Cops, written by Jade Cuevas and directed by Zachary Fine, was a parable about intolerance that featured Ezra Knight and Cecilia Arana.

# CARLOS COGITATES

This August, following his Canadian Project tour, Teen Ensemble member Carlos Dume participated in a 2-week long Summer Seminar at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon. Here are his before and after reactions:

**BEFORE:** "I am going as a sponge to Oregon, soaking up new experiences and knowledge to come back and pour it into Hell's Kitchen. Yes, this is a tough task I face, but I am up to it. In the end, I am pursuing a passion and diving into a new dimension of the theatre world. Now, I have been given the opportunity to explore this new place, like Lewis and Clark were given the opportunity to explore the Northwest."

AFTER: "I got to meet great actors and directors like Danforth Comins, Rene Millan, David Kelly, Terri McMahon, Christopher Liam Moore, and Bill Rauch. I had the chance to become part of a 65 member family where everyone was passionate and caring about theatre and the arts as well as each other. I was introduced to an oasis of theatre like I have never experienced before."



Carlos Dume, on the right, rides the Ferris Wheel in Heritage Park in Calgary with his fellow "Gentleman" A.J. Welsh. For more about their journey in the Great North, see page 2.

# FETING AND FEASTING

The Project has been busy celebrating and raising money to keep doing what we do – which we then celebrate. In May, the Project had one of its most successful benefits ever: HE STARTED IT, The 52nd Street Project's 30th Anniversary Gala Celebrating Founder Willie Reale. The evening featured five original songs with lyrics composed by Project members Nicholas Carrero, Edelys Tiana Guerrero, Genesis Hires, Haley Zoe Martinez, and Malik Velazquez, assisted by the amazing musical talents of Lisa Benavides, Christopher Fitzgerald, Bela Fleck, J. Michael Friedman, Renee Elise Goldsberry, Henry Krieger, Tim Blake Nelson, Rob Reale, Duncan Sheik and Abigail Washburn. The party was hosted by Lewis Black and included reminiscences from Frances McDormand and José Soto, as well as the man of the hour—our Founder.

One of the highlights of our summer is the annual Scholarship party. The Project's scholarship fund gives out small grants to all Project kids who pursue education past high school, and to all returning students who have maintained at least a "B" average in the previous year. Every August, through the amazing generosity of our hosts of the past twelve years Jenny and Jon Steingart, we throw a little fete with soul food and schmoozing, during which we recognize the scholars. This year we honored eighteen teens.



On Charity Day, Brandon Leon got to schmooze with model Selita Ebanks.

This past month, the Project was very honored to participate in two Charity Day remembrances of September 11th. It was our second year participating with BGC Partners and our first at Cantor Fitzgerald. The Charity Day events are in honor of those lost at the World Trade Center ten years ago, and these brokerages take the proceeds from this day from their offices around the world and donate them to charity. The repre-

sentatives for The 52nd Street Project this year were Lewis Black, Billy Crudup and Edie Falco, Edelys Tiana

Guerrero and Brandon Leon. – JS



This year's annual benefit, better known as *He Started It*, celebrated our 30th Anniversary. Nick Carrero was transported by Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn's rendition of his song "Problem Blues."



Genesis Hires introduced her song "Starting from Scratch" which was performed by Renee Elise Goldsberry. Both the song and the speech moved the audience.



Founder Willie Reale, the "he" in *He Started It*, came with his wife Jenny Gersten (left). New Tony-winner (for *Good People*) and boardmember Frances McDormand was delighted to wear Willie's face on her lapel.

The following foundations and corporations 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.

Bloomberg	
The Brenner Family Foundation	
The Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund Administration	
CBS Corporation	
The Community Foundation of New Jersey	\$1,250
ConEdison	\$10,000
The Dawkins Family Foundation	\$5,000
The Educational Foundation of America	\$30,000
The Fund for the City of New York	\$90,000
Goldman Sachs	\$5,000
The Heisman Trophy Trust	\$3,000
The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation	\$25,000
Morse & Company CPAs, LLC	\$5,000
The Rona & Randolph Nelson Foundation	

The Ruth K. Nelson Revocable Trust Newman's Own Foundation	
NYFA	
The Provident Foundation	\$10,000
Sesame Workshop	\$5,000
The Shubert Foundation	\$10,000
SIG	\$15,000
The Starker Family Foundation	\$2,500
Sterling Foundation Management	\$33,200
The Sydney E. Frank Foundation	\$25,000
Tiger Baron Foundation	
The Towerbrook Foundation	\$1,000
John A. Vassilaros & Son, Inc	\$5,000
William Morris Endeavor Foundation	







# THE KID ACTOR/PLAYWRIGHTS

Nathaniel Butler Nicholas Carrero Venecia Escamilla Ashley Melon Lucas Ruedel Tiara Varela Joseph Vasquez Alizette Zapata

# THE ADULT ACTOR/DIRECTORS

Jeremy Beck Raul Castillo Matt Citron Emily Dorsch Michael Propster Brielle Silvestri Charise Smith Donya Washington



The 52nd Street Project is a non-profit organization that brings children from the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood together with professional theater artists to create original theater. "NO STRINGS ATTACHED: THE INDEPENDENT PLAYS" is a production of our Playback program, in which a child pens a play to perform with an adult partner. The Kid/Adult teams rehearse their shows during a long weekend in Bridgehampton, NY to prepare for the production in New York. All of the kids are established playwrights; they are veterans of the "Playmaking" classes, adapted for the Project by Daniel Judah Sklar from his book Playmaking: Children Writing and Performing Their Own Plays.

Playback is made possible by funds from corporations; foundations; individuals; the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The 52nd Street Project is supported by the Open Society Foundations and the Fund for the City of New York. The 52nd Street Project is a member of ART/NY.











# PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS

Our endless array of shows gets a lot of attention, but our big new Clubhouse has enabled us to radically expand our after-school, holiday, and vacation programming for our kids. Here are the extracurricular activities we've offered our kids in the last six months.



# SMART PARTNERS RETURN IN FORCE

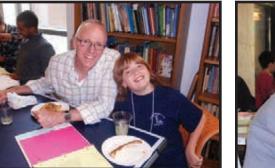
On Monday, September 19th, the Project held its annual pizza party to kick off the Smart Partners season! Almost all of the mentoring program's 53 pairs, 17 of which are new matches, gathered in the Clubhouse. They reconnected after a summer apart, noshed on pizza, planned their meeting times and creative goals for the year, and learned of several exciting group events in store for them. This October, longtime Project friend Carlo Alban (see his photo on page 1) will teach 8 lucky kid/adult pairs the fine art of juggling. At Halloween, we'll host our annual pumpkin-carving and costume party. And then, in December, there will be an Open Mic Night in the Five Angels Theater that will showcase any number of Smartner team talents. And we're just talking about the Fall semester! Some of the new match-ups are shown below. - LB



Brandon Draude demanded that Michael Propster be his SP during the Replay program. Every now and then we say "yes" to the kids. Luckily, Michael went along with it.



Rachel Rusch and Genesis Hires also hit it off during the Replay program and just discovered a mutual love of pizza. What are the odds?!?!



Maury Schott received his first mission from his little partner Lambert Whitney: a quest to Ricky's for a Halloween wig, which will be spiky and blonde.

SP PHOTOS BY GRB



Jordana De La Cruz (R) was our intern for Amber Ureña's summer One-on-One trip. When informed they would now be Smartners, Amber's only comment was "YESSSS!!!"



By the end of the Pizza Party, Enrique Caballero and Dylan Dawson decided on "The Filmmakers" as their team name and even designed this parody poster for their SP binder cover (the two of them actually collaborated earlier this year on YEAH! The Movie, co-written by Enrique and his chum Eric Carrero).



# IN MEMORIAM ISAYAH MULLER

This past June, The 52nd Street Project lost one of its alumni. Isayah Muller was a high school graduate on his way to becoming a college freshman after an extraordinary career as a high school athlete. We knew him as a playwright and a performer, and as a lively kid full of high spirits. We are as saddened and stunned by this loss as we are grateful for all that Isayah gave to the Project.

—GR

Top right: Isayah with his Wareham 2003 One-on-One partner Matt Saldivar in *Two Men In a Boat.* Bottom right: Isayah opposite John Sheehy in his own 2004 Playback play *When Wendy Meets Will.* 





# MEGABITS





▲The thoughtful little dude in the jaunty green polo shirt is Mr. James Tilney Kaden. He was born to board member Merritt Tilney and her husband Doug Kaden on May 12 at 6 lb., 11 oz. Amelia, his big sister, is very excited by his arrival.



■ On the left, Miranda Anne O'Brien, born on March 12 to Erica Sullivan. Erica directed one of our Two-on-Two's this year while visibly expecting Miranda.

▶ And on the right, Gracie Eloise Lee-Goldstein, born to Proj Director Danny Goldstein and Melissa Lee, whose marriage we heralded on this page in October, 2009.



▼ You've gotta respect someone who weighs 7 lbs., 8 oz. and goes by the moniker "Maximus." That's right, this is Maximus Rhys Claburn, seen here leaving the hospital with Project Volunteer Jessica Provenz and his dad Jeff Claburn. He was born on May 9, 2011 at 9:23 a.m. and plans to live in Princeton with his folks.

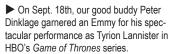


▲ Seen above are Joanne and Catalina Arango-Ramirez with their brand-new baby Caelnne (pronounced Kay-Linn) who was born on February 11 of this year. Joanne is a former Project Kid and we're looking forward to welcoming her little one in, oh, 2021 or so. 

Long-time Project volunteer Laura Konsin married her beau Brian Shortt. The ceremony was in the neighborhood at St. Paul the Apostle Church on May 28th, 2011. Laura, who is now known as Laura Shortt, asked her Smart Partner Samantha Caldona (seen in the inset) to be a bridesmaid and Sam brought her parents.



■ January LaVoy, last seen on the Project stage as a tropical fish in an aquarium, married fellow actor Mat Hostetler in Astoria Park in Queens on September 4. The best part for us was Mat's proposal, in which he said, "You are compared to me. And I'm compared to you... will you marry me?" The first part of the line was from Project kid Ahmed Nasser's December 2010 Playmaking show!



▼ Emily Grishman (left), a musical copyist and Project friend from way back, married Susan Sampliner, company manager of Wicked on Sunday, Sept. 18 at the Brasserie. We suspect Susan arranged the sunset behind the couple.









# THE 52ND STREET PROJECT 789 10th Ave. NEW YORK, NY 10019

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Josh Moody was the malevolent title character of The Honey Badger Longs to Dance, one of the Wareham One-on-Ones this past August.



**Occupation:** Superintendent of Construction for Yorke Construction in NYC in charge of project site, labor, and safety. **What he did for us:** Guided us through two excruciating and exhiliarating years of building our brand-new clubhouse and theater.

Why you do what you do: "Love the challenge of building unique construction projects with quality and developing a team atmosphere on projects to accomplish those goals. Also like meeting all the very different types of people you encounter while engaged in a project."

**Hobbies:** "Read, anything I can, from newspapers, to comics, to bedtime stories for my son. Listen to music. Baseball fan, particularly the Yankees."

Last book read: Old Yeller

Most recent accomplishment: "Becoming a Scout leader of our local Cub Scout Pack."

**Best Proj. Memory:** "During the new theater construction when Carol Ochs jumped on to 'ride' the lighting grid up to it's position at the ceiling while being hoisted up by rigging motors from the ground. It was very spontaneous, and very dangerous at that moment, but very funny!!!"

Credo: Do the right thing.

Advice to kids: "Don't give up on anything the first time you try it. Though it may not go as well or turn out the way you thought it should, more often than not we learn more from an experience because it was not as easy, than if it was too simple. Have faith in and believe in yourself, you are better than you give yourself credit for."

Place of birth: Chicago, Illinois.

Habitat: "A comfortable house on Long Island, that has a nice yard, a fig tree, great neighbors, where I live with my wife and son."

Favorite thing about the Project: "When the kids put on the short plays that they have written themselves."

On Flyer Bars:"The Flyer Gold Plane No.1 and No.2 candy bars make my taste buds soar."



Gus, Sean, and Carol at Sean's latest project, the new Lincoln Center theater atop the current complex.

