

# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 52ND STREET PROJECT

FULL-COLOR WEB EDITION ● VOL. 83 - SEPTEMBER, 2019 ● GEORGE BABIAK, EDITOR



On a boat ride in SF Bay, seated L to R: Joshua Gomez, Bryan Lopez, Chyanne Peña, Tiffany Miller, Sabrina Caldona, Jade Diamond Cuevas, Co-director Ciana Proto, Executive Director Carol Ochs, Karen Tineo, Co-director Kat Almirañez, Stage Manager Caylyn Wan-Creager, Artistic Director Natalie Hirsch, Wilhelmina Ohene-Karikari, Lambert Havard-Whitney, Sofia Santoni. Center row: Nurse Jeniene Lilly, Genesis Hires, Co-director Garrett David Kim, Kayla Matos, Tiniah Powell. Foreground: Jayda Isabel Camacho, Justin Bannister, Director of Design and Production George Babiak.

For many years, The 52nd Street Project's Teen Ensemble has performed fulllength Shakespearean plays at the end of its two-year cycle. This year our artistic staff decided that the current Ensemble was up to a different sort of challenge: devising a full-length show all on their own. The result, after months of writing and rehearsing, was called Where the Knot Ends.

The show had its first performances on June 21 and 22 at our own Five Angels Theater. The Ensemble then packed up and flew to California for a performance at Z-Below in San Francisco on June 21, and then a final show in the small and scenic coastal town of Bolinas, CA on July 2nd.

The whole creative journey was exhausting and exhiliarating. The teens expressed themselves in their writing and performing to a degree not often seen at the Project. Our audiences saw the concerns of today's young people described in honest and raw terms. The ACTUAL journey across the country was a wonderfully tiring and terrific experience as well. The teens walked around Haight-Ashbury, Chinatown, and the Mission District, visited the California Academy of Science, saw the Gay Pride Parade, toured the Bay Area by boat, and ate at many fine restaurants, including In-N-Out, the renowned burger chain. As exciting as San Francisco was, the group was impressed by the charming surfing town of Bolinas, where they visited an artistic knot exhibition, bought t-shirts, and looked for shells and stones along the beach.

We couldn't have done this amazing expedition without our California friends and hosts: Commonweal, Jenepher Stowell, Paull Hejinian, Eric Karpeles & Mike Sell, Valerie Kay, Shauna Marshall & Bob Hirsch, Aenor Sawyer & Melinda Griffith, Wendy vanden Heuvel & Brad Coley, Tracy Wan & Carl Creager, and Zspace. **GRB** 



A prime spot for the Pride Parade!



"The Stage" in Bolinas, which was actually the home of Aenor Sawyer and Melinda Griffith. Our young actors could see the Pacific Ocean as they rehearsed.



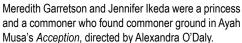
From the New York performances, a scene that was literally about finding "Where The Knot Ends."



Our old pal, Frances McDormand, came to see WTKE in Bolinas. Fran appeared in Genesis Hires's Playmaking show in 2012, and they had a nice reunion.

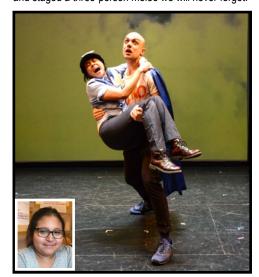
PHOTOS BY WINSTON RODNEY, GRB, AND KA







My Friend/Enemy, by Adolfo Sinchi, starred Jose-Maria Aguila and Ross Cowan as classmates who pray for, and receive, super powers. Austin Regan directed it and staged a three-person melee we will never forget.



Jai-Lyzz Rodriguez's *The Secret*, had Sam Dash as Zero-X, a superhero who kept the truth about his powers from his letter-carrier friend Angel Desai. George Babiak directed the powerful piece.



# OUT OF THE BLUE: THE UNPREDICTABLE PLAYS

THE SPRING, 2019 PLAYMAKING SHOWS

As most P.U. readers know, the first step at The 52nd Street Project is Playmaking, in which our newest members, aged 9-11, take a class in playwriting and have their work fully realized on our stage. On this page and the next are some glimpses of the performances March 22-24.

### THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Zonia Tsang	Composer
John Beltre, M.E. Guadalup	
Crystal Thompson	Costume Designers
Greg Macpherson	Lighting Designer
Kaylie Groff	Sound Designer
Margaret Gleberman	Stage Manager

## THE BRIDGEHAMPTON HOSTS

Alex Gersten-Vassilaros, Cathy Dantchik, and Leslie Dantchik.



The Two Sisters or Las Dos Hermanas, by Crismell Concepción, was set in the Dominican Republic and gave Flor De Liz Perez and Shirley Rumierk a chance to display their formidable bilingual skills. Colette Robert guided the play to the stage (and we had supertitles!).

Denisse Xolocotzi wrote *The Lies*, in which a chicken and a kangaroo (Olivia Gilliatt and Arlo Hill) conquered their fears and made a pizza. Leta Renée-Alan directed.



The Gambling Cat and the Crazy Lion, by Alex De La Rosa, cast Jose Duran and Leslie Fray as boastful milk-chugging contest rivals. Jose was caught cheating and his game was up. Lynnette Freeman directed.



Bully to Nerdy, by Loyal Jones, had the distinction of having a part played by three actors in one run. Nerdy Boy was played by Kat Almirañez (seen here at the dress rehearsal), Sullivan Jones, and Cody Wilson. Margaret Odette was Bully, and Cody directed.

# SPRING PLAYMAKING REPORT, CONTINUED



Greg Hildreth was a fighting skeleton and Nadia Quinn a gingerbread woman in John Muca's *Wacky Times*. The pair found themselves bewitched and drove around in a car until they found a cure. Kyle David directed the play, which fully lived up to its name.



In Jojo Perez's *Why Would You Do What The Dog Does?*, Jorge Chacón ignored the title question and did everything his dog (Biko Eisen-Martin) did, including drinking out of a toilet. The play, directed by Korey Jackson, ended in a cat murder and a court trial.



Antonella Suero Loyola penned *The Abused Child Turns to Princess* and cast Nick Mills as an orphan girl and Roma Maffia as Banana, an actual banana who helps Nick find his real mother, who happens to be the Queen. Rachel Lin directed.

# FIVEY'S HOUSE - THE NEW SET

Many years ago, before the 52nd Street Project had its own theater, the great Kevin Roach designed a set for us that was extremely portable and could be set up in any theater. It included a projection screen, two doors, and a small "Laugh-In" window (search "Laugh-In Joke Wall" on YouTube for clarification). The Instant Set served us for the last 25 years. Over time, we added a new screen and digital projector. We also covered the shiny flats with velcro-receptive material to accommodate foam-core props. (The original flats, inspired by Colorforms playsets, were designed for vinyl cutouts. Baffled? See "Colorforms toys" on Google).

Soon after moving into the Five Angels theater, we realized that it was time to replace our bedraggled old set. After much mulling, musing, and spitballing, we realized that the old set worked pretty well and that our new one was not going to be radically different. So, our friend Burke Brown drew up a new design that would take the old set a few small steps into the future. Thanks to The Jean and Louis Dreyfus Foundation and Neil Mazzella and his company Hudson Scenic Studios, we didn't have to pay a cent! (Hudson Scenic actually built the original set a quarter-century ago). We finally used Fivey's House, as Burke calls it, for the first time on the Block Island One-on-Ones.

What's different? The changes are subtle to the casual theater-goer but sweeping for those of us that put together our shows. Most obviously, there are more



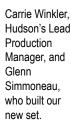
FIVEY'S HOUSE - 2019-?



small doors that can be used for scenic changes, prop deployment, or even character entrances (it is now possible for actors to climb in and out of the larger windows). The new flats stand in a flatter profile, allowing for better sightlines, and they are now 9 feet tall, matching the height of our screen. The flats can also be repositioned and even flipped vertically, making it possible to place doors and windows in a wide range of configurations. Best of all, Fivey's House is shiny and new.

So, come and see our new set in action! And thank you, **Kevin**, **The Dreyfus Foundation**, **Burke**, **Neil**, **Glenn**, **Carrie**, **Helen**, and everyone at **Hudson Scenic**! *GRB* 

Carol Ochs, our Executive Director, with Neil Mazzella, the Big Cheese at Hudson Scenic.







A H

DANCEMAKING PHOTOS BY DENEKA PENISTON

Over nine weeks of classes led by Elli Stovall Brown (who was assisted by Garrett David Kim), 9 young members learned how to create and choreograph dance pieces. On June 7, the kids showed their stuff at the Five Angels with their adult partners in a program called Step On It. These photos offer but a glimpse of the dynamism on display that night.



- 2. The entire company in Friendzy.
- 3. Cassidy Wingate and Rosneyri Rosario in La Vie Life.
- 4. Daniel Henk and Ashley Marie-Ortiz in One Longing Moment.
- 5. Love Jones and Maryn Pearl Shaw in Best Friends.
- 6. Leta Renée-Alan and Ivan Garcia in New Dimensions.
- 7. Betsy Hogg and Lanai Blake-Soden in New York, New York.
- 8. Xavier Espinal and Gardiner Comfort in Space Adventure Odyssey.
- 9. Sarah Lopez and Madalyn Baker in *Dancing + Fighting = Fencing*.
- 10. Quilvis Medina and Carrigan O'Brian in Cleaning It Out.

# Power in Numbers Benefit

















Each year, in the first week of May, The 52nd Street Project holds its annual benefit gala. An integral part of our fundraising operation, the gala brings in a big chunk of our annual budget. This year's event, featuring songs written by young Project members and entitled *Power In Numbers*, raised over \$400,000. We are super-grateful to all those who made it possible, including our guests of honor, "power couple" Eliza Baldi and David Costabile, the guest composers and artists Lilli Cooper, Brian d'Arcy James, Kim Jinhyoung, Jarrett Murray, Sean P. Pallatroni, Ronald Peet, Sharone Sayegh, David Andrés Trujillo-Tapias, Natalie Walker, and Richard C. Walter, our musicians, Doug Derryberry, Chris Schultz, Sam Weber, our hosts John Ellison Conlee and Joel de la Fuente, and our awesome music director Avi A. Amon. Last and definitely not least, we aim our highest praise at our youthful lyricists, Nyla Blake-Soden, Amari Dubose, Kiara Figueroa, Christian Santoni, and Jayleen Velez. There were too many great moments for one small sidebar, but we thought we'd show you some of the highlights.

- 1. The honorees, Eliza Baldi and David Costabile, at the podium.
- 2. Christian Santoni and Brian d'Arcy James take a bow.
- 3. **Kiara Figueroa** watches **Sharone Sayegh** do her song *City Life*.
- 4. Amari DuBose introduces his song.
- 5. **Ronald Peet** singing Amari's *Freedom*.

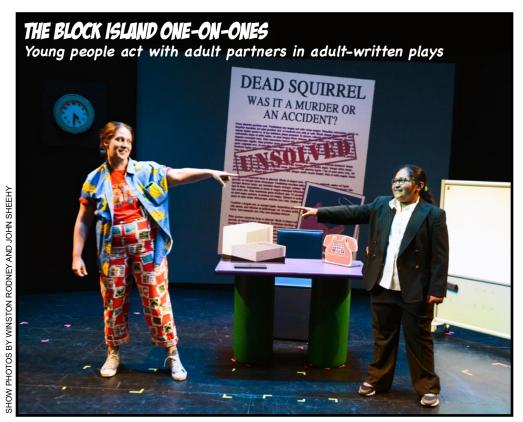
- 6. **Jayleen Velez** introduces Broadway star **Lilli Cooper** (once a Project kid herself!)
- 7. **Doris Alcantara**, a Project college graduate, brings the house down as she expresses her experience with her deafness.
- 8. **Nyla Blake-Soden** introduces her song, *Hollywood*.



Hi, P.U. Readers! The following foundations, corporations, and government agencies recently made generous grants to The 52nd Street 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.

\$50,000	The Pinkerton Foundation
\$50,000	Seller-Lehrer Family Foundation
\$25,000	Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund
\$25,000	The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation,
	General Operating Support
\$25,000	The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, for
the Fun	nd for Future Campaign support over 3 years
\$25,000 T	he Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust
\$20,000	The Shubert Foundation
\$10,000	The Educational Foundation of America
\$10,000	Lilah Hilliard Fisher Foundation

\$10,000	The Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund
\$8,000	The Lotos Foundation
\$7,500	Showtime Networks
\$7,000	Heisman Trophy Trust
\$5,000 Ca	arol M. & Stephen E. Canter Family Foundation
\$5,000	Tiger Baron Foundation
\$2,500	Goldman Sachs
\$2,500	Signature Bank
\$2,400	Carnegie Corporation of New York
\$2,000	The Rona & Randolph M. Nelson Foundation
\$1,000	The Dubin Family Foundation



Detectives Anne Troup and Jai-Lizz Rodriguez took on three separate unsolved cases in one work day in Anne's play *Quitting Time*.



How Odd, by John Sheehy, featured John as Rick, an ancient seer, and Frankie Suero Loyola as Dr. Howard Odd, a washed-up surgeon in search of new identity.



Molly Carden's *The Cartoonist and the Zoo-Creep's Daughter* featured Laila Suero Loyola as a young animator and Molly as the daughter of a mental patient.

# WATCH THIS! 10 TIME PIECES

THE 2019 BLOCK ISLAND ONE-ON-ONES AUG. 2-4, 2019, FIVE ANGELS THEATER

# THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

1115 0531014	MIND IECH IEAM
Kim D. Sherman	. Music Director/Composer
Carisa Kelly	Costume Designer
Greg MacPherson	Lighting Designer
Alicia Moeller	Sound Designer
Caylyn Wan-Creager	Stage Manager

# THE BLOCK ISLAND HOSTS

Socha Cohen; Cathy Joyce and Nigel Grindley, Katy Homans and Patterson Sims; Sam & Kate Bird; Josie Merck; Virginia Dare; Susan Hagedorn; Susan & Keith Stover, and Carl Kaufmann.



Kaytie Gil and Paton Ashbrook traveled through time and space and sang about it, gobbled pancakes and sang about *that*, and then competed in the Art Olympics. It all happened in Alicia Moeller's *Rita and Starbot*.



Oscar A.L. Cabrera was a homemade robot and John Muca his lonely creator in Oscar's *Blue Marble*.



Sam Dash's *Free and Wilde* cast Sam and his partner Naseem Abdul-Majeed as brothers who leave home to explore the night sky and overcome new-school fears.



Angelica Toledo and Denisse Xolocotzi are seen here in the cliffhanger sequence of *Sammy the Sumatran Tiger*, by Caylyn Wan-Creager. Angelica kept hunting Denisse until she saw the error of her ways.

# BLOCK ISLAND ONE-ON-ONE REPORT, CONTINUED



In Nina Braddock's Siri, Listen Up, Tiffany Yam was a young dancer whose helpful app (Sarah Quigley) took them both back to cave-dweller (and cave BEAR) times.

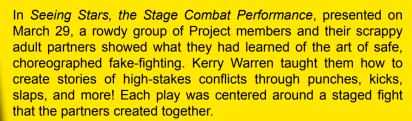


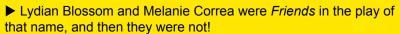
Ivan Garcia was a crotchety old wizard beset by forest litterbugs and Cody Wilson was a bumbling German Shepherd puppy in Cody's Trash Day.



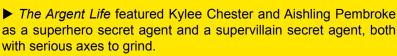
Maria Alcides and Marielle Young played rival tyrants (and their right-hand women, as well!) in George Babiak's Reign of Errors.

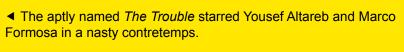
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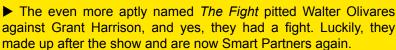


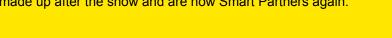


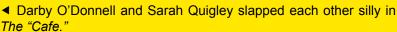














- ▶ The audience got to see Kassandra Sinchi do some pretty impressive hair-pulling in The Final Battle, which featured Rachel Skalka as the victim of the lock-yanking.
- Even Harvard students lose their cool and start swinging, as we

saw in Crybaby. Molly Carden was the Australian student who was

the recipient of Amirah Hancock's blows.

▶ Al's Canned Soup was a knock-down, drag-out fight about soup. As you can see here, Nikolai Alvarez knocked Mat Hostetler down and then literally dragged him out.











# SMART PARTNER PICNIC PICS - JUNE 3, 2019

During the school year, adult vols do all kinds of interesting things with a young pal at least once a week in a program we call Smart Partners. We finished off the SP year in high style at the P.S. 111 playground just across the street from us. Here are some shots from the event.



ΔΙ<sub>Φ</sub>χ & Brianna



Faith & Annabelle



Josh & Ethan



Sathya & Stevens



Javleen & Daiva



Ruffin & Ahmed



Valeria & Mikayla



Lovely & Therese



Love & Molly



# GIMME FIVEY!

Hey, Projectiles! The 21st annual issue of *Fivey*, The 52nd Street Project's magazine, is here! Most of it was created by Smart Partner pairs like the ones at left. You could come and see a show and pick up a free hard copy, but why wait? Download the full-color web edition at our website: www.52project.org. Do it as soon as you finish this newsletter!



# HELP THE PROJECT BY PLAYING GOLF?

You sure can! And you can do it at a very nice course, indeed: the **Quaker Ridge Golf Club** in Scarsdale has been a world-class links for over a century. The event is on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 and we've got a few more foursomes to fill. Lunch and drinks are included! All you have to do is contact Kali Crandall at crandall@52project.org

# THE 52ND STREET PROJECT'S ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF OUTING

# **SPONSORED BY**

Evercore

Flexis Capital

Susquehanna International Group Zubatkin Owner Representation

# **HONORARY CHAIRS**

Louis P. Friedman, Bob Goldberg, Mark Whatley & Jason Zubatkin

# **EVENT CHAIRS**

Cathy Dantchik & Carolyn DeSena



Remember this guy? It's Willie Reale, the founder of The 52nd Street Project. He and Jené LeBlanc tied the knot in a very quiet ceremony on June the 4th. We think they make a nice couple!



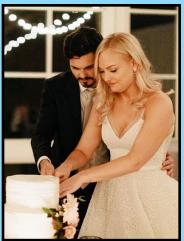
Project Volunteer actor Joél Peréz and Adrian Ferbeyre got married (in some pretty snappy suits, we must say) on April 14th at the Housing Works Bookstore on Crosby St. It was a very joyful event, by all accounts.



Long-time Proj actor, director, writer, and host Christopher Randolph married Audrey Matson in Wareham, Mass., an old Project destination. Nice to see good times still happening on that



Former Project kid Azalea Rosario is now Azalea Rosario-Jackson. This happened when she married her beau, Jon Jackson, in the first weekend in August.



Alex Tissiere was a wonderful intern for us in the summer of 2013. He married Eva Heiberg way back in February.



We love it when vols marry each other! Ruffin Prentiss III and Carra Patterson, BOTH ProjActors, tied the knot in Atlanta on May 18.



Sean Kenealy, a buddy since 2006, just had a baby with Leah Tacha Kenealy. His name is Ellis Adam Kenealy and he arrived April 8.



# BEN BARENHOLTZ

OCTOBER 5, 1935 - June 27, 2019

The Project mourns the death of long time board member Ben Barenholtz. Ben was born in Poland, escaped the Nazis as a child and made his way to America. Perhaps the hardships that he endured as a child were the source of the soft spot in his heart for the kids of the 52nd Street Project. It was Ben who arranged that we meet the Muddyman family and he accompanied us on two teen trips to the Chateau De Berne in the south of France. He had at least as much fun as the kids. Ben's last project was to direct (at the age of 82) an indie film called Alina, a feature length movie that he shot in 15 days with the energy of a twenty-five year old. Ben was thoughtful, suave, handsome and the coolest cucumber in town.





Wendy vanden Heuvel

What she does for us- Wendy has been a volunteer actor and director since 1993 and a member of our board of directors since 1997. She has also been a host for the last two Teen Ensemble trips (2017 and 2019) to San Francisco and Bolinas, California.

**Occupation-** Actress/Teacher/Producer

Why she does what she does- "It's fun and a great way to be with humans."

**Hobbies-** "Creating artist retreats and possibilities, Meditating, Karaoke, Salsa Dancing, Long walks."

Last book read- "White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo."

Most recent accomplishment- "Being asked to do a Flyer Bar profile! It's an honor!"

**Best Project Memory-** "From *The Baby* by Judith Agosto, age 8 (in 1993) - The lines after the doctor in the hospital interrupted his patient:

Patient: You stopped my words!

Doctor: Sorry. Yes.

Patient: No sorry. Just don't."

**Credo-** "'Find a place and put down roots'- Pete Seeger / What's left if you take everything

away from an artist? Restlessness."

Advice to kids- "Listen to your heART."

Place of birth- "California."

Habitat- "The Earth."

Favorite thing about the Project- "Community."

On Flyer Bars- "How do they fit that much gooey caramel in a chocolate bar?!?!"

# DENEKA RETURNS

As legend has it, when founder Willie Reale (see p. 9) did his very first show with the children at the Police Athletic League back in the early '80's, one little girl approached him after the last performance and said "When's the next one?" It was a question that eventually led to the formation of our organization. That little girl was **Deneka Peniston**.

Deneka is now a terrific photographer, specializing in portraits and events. If you look through this newsletter, you will see some of her work in the Dancemaking article and in the Benefit sidebar (pgs. 4 and 5). We're thrilled to have her hanging around again, and if you're in need of a skilled shutterbug, check out her impressive portfolio at www.penistonphotography.com. *GRB* 





At left, Deneka and George Hynes in *The Further Adventures of Nick T. Maker*. At right, Deneka today.

# LISTEN TO US!



In February, **Garrett David Kim** ran another installment of his excellent **Radiomaking** class for young people at the Project. You can hear the results for yourself as they are gradually released on the **PROJcast**.

Go to the podcast section of the iTunes Store and search for "The 52nd Street Project" or even just "PROJcast."

When you see the bold, orange **Shel Silverstein/Iris Brown** logo above, hit "SUBSCRIBE" and start enjoying stories, plays, interviews and more on a monthly basis. See you on the Net, Yvette! *GRB* 



# THE 52ND STREET PROJECT EVENTS CALENDAR

2019-2020

We recently decided to go out on a limb and assign a theme and a title to every one of our productions in the year to come! The following is a list of the shows and events that the public is welcome to attend. Post it on your fridge, but be sure to consult our website (www.52project.org) closer to the dates below to get more details and make reservations.

# SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

FRAME X FRAME
Filmmaking Week Screening

# OCTOBER 18-20, 2019

HEARD IT THROUGH
THE GRAPEVINE:
The Surprising Plays
The Annual Playback Show

# **OCTOBER 25, 2019**

TAKE IT FROM THE TOP!
The Songmaking Concert

# NOVEMBER 22-24, 2019

UPSIDE-DOWN:

The Topsy-Turvy Plays

The Fall Playmaking Show

# **DECEMBER 13, 2019**

PUSH YOUR LUCK
The Wordplay Presentation

# JANUARY 24-26, 2020

ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM;

Plays You Can't Ignore

The Annual Two-on-Twos Show

# MARCH 20-22, 2020

SMOKE AND MIRRORS: *The Tricky Plays*The Spring Playmaking Show

# MARCH 27, 2020

WITH THE FLOW Dancemaking 2020

# MAY 29-30, 2020

SOMETHING MORE:

The Extra Plays

The Teen Ensemble's

Festival of One-Act Plays

# **JUNE, 2020**

KNUCKLE SANDWICH
The Annual Stage Combat Plays

# **SUMMER, 2020**

WHAT A FEELING: The Emotional Plays The One-on-Ones

# SEPTEMBER, 2020

REAL TO REEL Filmmaking Week Screening