

PROJECT UPDATE

VOLUME 3 JULY 1990

As Karen Myrie said in Volume 2, "We've been busy, busy, busy, but that doesn't stop us!"

PLAYMAKING



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Brandy Minott watches
her play, "The Raise",
with Marcia Jean Kurtz
and Phyllis Somerville at
Lincoln Center
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Starting in March, our new group of Playmakers, Kulondi Frier, Mikey Lugo, Brandy Minott, Richard Myrie, Danny Noonan, Lori Quinones, Victor Rojas and Virginia Vargas, worked hard under the tutelage of Daniel Judah Sklar, with the help of volunteers, Michaela Murphy and Susan Willerman. After their eight weeks of classes, each child was paired with a director (Linda Atkinson, June Ballinger, Lee Costello, Michaela Murphy, Larry Nathanson, Willie Reale, Seret Scott and Daniel Sklar) who accompanied them on a weekend in the country where they were each charged to write a play about humans and nature. Walks in the woods, and an escorted trip around the lake at the Mohonk Mountain Lodge, helped the kids take a "trees-eye" view and have rocks, daisies, hurricanes, trees, bunnies, turtles, rats, cat/dogs and people share their thoughts and problems with us at the "HumanNature" production on Sunday, June 3rd at the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater at Lincoln Center. Because we were performing on the set of John Guare's play, "Six Degrees of Separation", we had to set up the set, tech. the shows, have two performances with a picnic benefit in between, and strike the set all on one day. It was hard, but well worth the effort, as everyone involved (kids, actors, crew and audience) enjoyed the atmosphere and hospitality of the Lincoln Center Theater.



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The Kids Take A
Bow At Lincoln
Center
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"The Today Show" decided to document this group of young writers from their first class to their weekend in the country right through the June 3rd performance at Lincoln Center and ending with the "post-mortem" meeting in late-June. "The Today Show" crew, most especially producer, Susan, and cameraman, John, became an important part of the experience, as the words "Don't look at the camera!" rang in each child's ears. Their patience was rewarded with a gift of an official "Today Show" baseball cap, and with the knowledge that their work will be featured when the piece is aired nationally sometime in the near future.

GRAHAM-WINDHAM

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In March, Project actor, Fracaswell Hyman, began traveling up to Hastings-on-Hudson, to teach a weekly acting workshop to 12 kids who live at Graham-Windham, a foster-care facility. This was done in preparation for a modified version of the Project's One-on-One program, where kids are paired with adult writer/actors who write a play for themselves to perform with a kid. In late-May, Cas was joined by Lewis Black, Carl Capotorto, Chris Ceraso, Leigh Curran, Roma Maffia, Willie Reale, Pam Tyson and Sandye Wilson who all met and spent time with their kids so that they could then write a play highlighting their particular kid's talents and interests. Under the title, "Zone 13", each one-act play had some kind of mysterious twist or surprise ending. The kids, Celeste Arthur, Jermel Bailey, Eli Bradford, Janet Cruz, Atia Glenn, Kasiem Johnson, Ayda Paolmino, Willie Pettitway, Arnexx Smith, Lydia Taylor, Kevin Williams and Shawndale Zeigler showed incredible enthusiasm, responsibility, courage and remarkable talent. The adults traveled up to Graham-Windham every day from June 6th until the performances on June 13th and 14th. The hardest part of the experience was leaving, as the kids asked if they would ever see us again. Since we had such a good time with them, we are already planning our return for the fall - perhaps with a writing program, or with a true one-on-one where we will take the kids away from the facility for a week and perform in a real theatre! Thank you kids for being so much fun.



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Graham-
Windham
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N.P.R.

On April 23rd, 13-year-old, Shamine Gibson's play, "The Lonely Trees" was read by Lois Smith and Arthur French on National Public Radio's live nationally syndicated show, "Heat". Shamine, Lois, Arthur and Project Artistic Director, Willie Reale, were all interviewed by Heat's host, John Hockenberry. Producer, Ellen Dennis, is eager to have other kids' plays read, and members of the Triple Play Club are currently working on scripts, based on the seven ages of man (with each kid taking a different "age" to write about). We will keep you posted!

TheatreSports

The 52nd Street Project "Projectors" took second place in the city-wide improvisational tournament on Saturday, May 19th. This tournament, at the Village Gate, turned out to provide the perfect example of one of the basic tenets of improvisation - "make your partner look good" - when the Projectors helped another team (short on team members) compete, by volunteering their services. We were extremely proud of team members, Felicia Allen, Fran-Marie Fargardo, Kulondi Frier, Shamine Gibson, Mikey Lugo, Karen Myrie, Richard Myrie, Jessica Soto and Virginia Vargas and are grateful to all of our TheatreSports coaches for making this opportunity available to our kids.

Night on the Town

Thanks to Joann Lamneck from the New York Giants, Amy Pahlka-Sellars from the National Dance Institute and board member, Stephen Graham, we've been keeping up on all of the sporting and cultural events New York City has to offer. Joann provided several pairs of box-seat tickets to Yankee games; Amy gave us 15 tickets to N.D.I.'s "Event of the Year" and Stephen donated 10 tickets to "Jerome Robbins' Broadway".

The summer has only just started - so please keep in mind that with all of the summer block-buster movies, the aquarium and zoo all located on subway lines that it's a great time to spend time with kids. If you have any ideas, or would just like to spend some time with a member of the younger set, please call Mina at (212) 245-1350.

ONE-ON-ONES

On Saturday, August 4th, and again on Saturday, August 25th, we will be packing up and taking off for one-week stays on Block Island and in Tannersville, New York. Joining us on Block Island will be Leigh Curran, Charles Dumas, Cas Hyman, Mary Kane, Henry Krieger, Nancy Levin, Peter MacNicol, Arleigh Richards, Hugh Sinclair, Pamala Tyson, Jeff Williams and Bill Wise. And in Tannersville - Lewis Black, Kate Burton, Bill Elverman, Greg Grove, Katharine Long, Craig Lucas, Kathryn Rossetter and Sandye Wilson. The theme this year is "The Butler Did It!" and performances will be at E.S.T. on August 18th and 19th, and September 6th - 8th.

Funding

New Foundation and Corporate Donors include:

The Altman Foundation	\$17,750.00
The Lew Black Scholarship Fund	\$ 100.00
Consolidated Edison	\$ 1,000.00
The Hennessy Foundation	\$ 1,500.00
The Manhattan Community Arts Fund	\$ 2,500.00
The Guy Mansfield Trust	\$ 200.00
Samuel and May Rudin Foundation	\$ 5,000.00
Spunk Fund, Inc.	\$ 5,000.00
Village Voice OBIES	\$ 500.00
Westport Young Woman's League	\$ 500.00

We also want to thank everyone who attended our "HumanNature" benefit or sent in a donation. Between that money, the donations made at the door and T-shirt sales, we made over \$4,000.00!

Help

Does anyone out there have an idea on how to solve the problem of people making reservations to a show and then not showing up? We still find ourselves with empty seats even with a fully-reserved house and 50-75 people on a waiting list. We do not want to have to charge for tickets, nor do we want to make people pick up tickets days in advance, but we don't want to continue turning potential audience members away. HELP!!

FROM THE KIDS

Things have been going well at The 52nd Street Project. The TheatreSports group has been doing great. Our competitions have been very close and we also have won some. In the Project we have been doing some creative things like getting plays written. On June 20th, a group of children, Fran-Marie, Felicia, Shirley and Karen, and two adults, Mina and Marsue, were invited to have dinner with author, Ann M. Martin, at Popsies Restaurant in Greenwich Village. We interviewed the author of "The Babysitters Club" and "The Babysister's" series. She was very open with her answers.

Q: Ann, where did you go to college?

A: I went to college at Smith College.

Q: How long have you been writing?

A: I've been writing for ten years.

Q: Where did you get your characters?

A: Well, MaryAnne is based on me - very shy. Christy is based on my best friend.

Q: What did you do before writing?

A: I was an editor.

Those are a taste of the questions we asked the talented author. "The Babysitters Club" is about a couple of girls who started a babysitting club, where they each get a job. Sounds easy, but they get into trouble - like they get lost, hurt. This is good for people who have brothers and sisters. You can relate to these stories.

- Felicia Allen and Fran-Marie Fargardo



FROM WILLIE

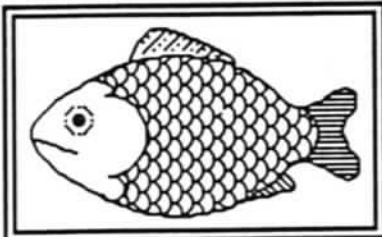
A certain stage manager, who asked that his name not be mentioned in this newsletter, is unable to work on the One-on-Ones this summer. He's busy playing golf in the Berkshires. Here are some reactions:

- "He'll come back. He'll come crawling back..." - *Marsue Cumming*
- "He should stick to what he knows." - *Curtis Strange*
- "It's nice to know that at the end of the 20th century, he has gotten his priorities together along with all the other Republicans." - *Lew Black*
- "I thought he...sob, sob, sniff, sniff...liked me" - *Annette Myrie*

We're wondering if we should try to get some of those winter jackets with the Project logo on the back and an embroidered name on the front ("Mike", for instance). They go for about \$100.00. If you think you want one, call the office at (212) 245-1350 and let Mina know.

OBIES AND OBITUARIES

No, we didn't win an OBIE, though all the mystery surrounding the various phone calls from the Committee, made us wonder. However, we did receive a \$500.00 donation from the Village Voice OBIE Committee, and we plan to frame the official OBIE check stub and hang it on the wall. Before we were given the check at the OBIE ceremony, though, Project volunteers, Karen Evans-Kandel, Marcia Jean Kurtz, Isabel Monk and Pamela Tyson each won OBIES for their past season's work, showing us and everyone else, how rich we really are. The Project was also honored at E.S.T.'s May 14th Benefit when Willie received an award for his work with the Project. Being recognized by E.S.T., the OBIES and The Today Show and working with such talented and giving adults and kids makes it exciting to be a part of a Project that adds such new life to the theatre. But, sometimes life eludes even the most immortal of us and reminds us how important it is to look at every day and never take anything for granted. On June 18, 1990, Sparky, the office goldfish, was found dead. We are sure that there was no foul play involved. Sparky will be missed. If you missed his memorial flushing, and would like to visit the "Sparky Memorial Shrine", please stop by the office anytime between 10 and 6, Monday through Friday. Sparky - may your tank always be clean and the flake food in abundance. Goodbye.



SPARKY
Oct, 1989 - June, 1990
R.J.P.

ADDRESS CHANGE

One more time - we have a new address:
The 52nd Street Project
552 West 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019

HUMANNature PHOTOS



Greg Grove and Fracaswell Hyman in "The Woodsman and The Dancing Tree" by Victor Rojas



Virginia Vargas and Jack Gilpin center stage at The Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater. Ann McDonough was stage right.



Daniel Judah Sklar with a reclining Mikey Lugo hard at work on "Hurricane"



Evan Handler and John Fiedler play rocks in Danny Noonan's "Problems"

From all of us to all of you - Have a great summer!