

PROJECT UPDATE

VOLUME 13 JUNE 1993

"SMALL THINGS CONSIDERED" NO SMALL AFFAIR

350 of our closest Project friends and supporters showed up at The Supper Club on Monday, May 10th for a 52nd Street Project benefit extravaganza, "Small Things Considered.." The dazzling evening of dinner, dancing, and a live radio performance, was made extra sparkling thanks to Carol Ochs' multi-colored multi-sequined jacket (supplied by Roma Maffia, who wore black). Late in the evening, Carol was hoisted to the ceiling and spun around creating a mirror-ball effect. All in all, the benefit raised \$40,00 for the Project, far exceeding our goals!

Two of the four honorary chairs honored us with their presence, Angela Bassett and Geena Davis. Super Mario stars John Leguizamo and Fisher Stevens also attended, which was a big thrill for Victor Rojas, "I really enjoyed meeting John ummm and that other guy and what's her name."

The radio show, a half hour on what we do on 52, was an event in itself. Five kids, led by Barnaby Harris and Michael Bernard, created all the live sound effects. Vince Giordano's Nighthawks, who kept everyone dancing between courses, accompanied the show. Peter Jay Fernandez and Fran McDormand were the hosts, with Alex Bess reporting live from a faux blimp. Glen Jenkins' play, "A Day Torn To Ruins" was performed by Mark Linn-Baker, Tim Meadows and Pam Tyson, and James McDaniel and Richard Myrie recreated their 1989 roles in Cindy Lou Johnson's One-on-One play, "The Idiot," with Angela Bassett as the Narrator. Also featured were the lovely and talented jingle singers, Barbara McCrane, Myra Taylor and Pam Tyson.

We got these great looking microphones from the fifties that made everyone sound like they were talking on a discount cordless phone. Whoops. Although plans to air the program on NPR were in the works, the quality of the recording is not good enough. However, you can catch excerpts of the radio show scattered throughout this newsletter so you can have that "as if you were there" sensation.

Of course, no summary of the gala would be complete without thanking Joseph E. Seagram & Sons for the beverages, Kiehl's for generously providing items for the gift bags which continue to make all of the guests' skin so silky soft, and John Paris for the Flyer Bars which give the consumer such a flawless, supreme sugar high. We were particularly proud of the dermatological-

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APPLAUSE! JUDITH AGOSTO, SHIRLEY RUMIERK, ANNETTE MYRIE, FERNANDO RAMIREZ, VICTOR ROJAS & MICHAEL BERNARD SOUND OFF AT THE SOUND FX TABLE AT THE PROJECT'S BENEFIT.

PETERKIN'S PLAY: "GENIUS OR JUST PLAIN LAZINESS" NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

The "play"



DAVID
(hands check to Willie) Here.

WILLIE
Thanks.

Yes, that's the grand prize winner of the Project's One-Page Play Contest and it is causing quite a stir in the art world. This minimalist work was chosen over many worthy (longer) entries and the reaction has been mixed and even bitter. One critic noted, "What a travesty! To encourage these self-serving, aesthetically bankrupt scrawlings is an insult to the theater community at large. What sort of example are we setting for these children?" In response, I will say that Mr. Peterkin's work is a treasure, a master work. Why in two words he has captured the very spirit of philanthropy. The character of David is as rich in subtext as he is in generosity. And Willie, ah, the Willie character symbolizes and conveys gratitude from its very core. Actors will fight for opportunities to invent and re-invent Willie for generations to come.

Willie

PU PREVIEW: SUMMER '93

RICHARD MYRIE

Oh man it's soo hot, I can't take it I gotta get outta here. I need to travel to a resort area in the Northeast Corridor and be in a play.

JIM McDANIEL

Excuse me young man, but did I just hear you express the desire to travel to a resort area in the Northeast Corridor and be in a play?

JINGLE SINGERS

LOOKING FOR SOME SUMMER FUN
WHY NOT TRY A ONE ON ONE

JIM

Yes, the One on One's where you will be paired with a fabulous professional playwright who will write a play just for you. You will rehearse in a chaise lounge every morning and play play play every afternoon for an unforgettable week. After that you will return to New York and perform the play to an adoring audience of family and friends.

BLAST'S OFF

The above is an excerpt from the "Small Things Considered" radio show performed at the benefit, and, we feel, an apt opener for this article. As most of you know, no summer would be complete without the annual One-on-Ones. This summer's shows, our seventh annual, will be called **Blast From The Past** - all the plays will take place sometime between yesterday and the Big Bang. In July, eleven children will be paired with eleven actor/writers and away they'll go to Tyler Hill, Pennsylvania to the home of Eric Karpeles and Mike Sell where each pair will spend the entire week playing and rehearsing a short play. The following week, July 22-25, we will perform all eleven Blast From The Past plays at the Ensemble Studio Theatre. In August, we take a whole new twenty-two to Block Island, Rhode Island and do it all over again, only different. The Block Island shows will be at EST August 26-29. A flyer should be arriving on your doorstep in the near future. For reservations for either show, call our Blast From The Past reservation line at (212) 332-0863 - the performances should be a *Blast* for all concerned.

GRAHAM-WINDHAM RETURNS AGAIN...AND AGAIN

June Ballinger, artistic director of the Graham-Windham program with The 52nd Street Project, announced that this summer's season would consist of not one, folks, but two programs culminating in not one but two productions. The first show will be a Playmaking with eight kids aged 11 - 16 from the Graham-Windham foster care facility in Hastings, NY. After eight weeks, the kids will go away for a weekend to Lexington, NY where they will write their final play, and then July 17 - 19, the plays will be performed by a company of adult actors at E.S.T. And if that weren't enough, June is then leading a troupe of six Graham-Windhammers who have participated the past two or three years in Playmaking for their first One-on-One in the Hamptons (hopefully - anybody got a big empty house out there?) in late August. These shows will be at EST the first week of September.

FUNDING NEWS

The following organizations recently gave their support to the Project's programs and we are truly grateful.

New York Community Trust	
Lila Acheson Wallace Fund	\$15,000
Department of Youth Services	\$13,000
William and Mary Greve Foundation	\$5,000
MCJ Foundation	\$5,000
New World Foundation	\$5,000
The Pumpkin Foundation	\$5,000
Department of Cultural Affairs	\$3,000
Friar's Foundation	\$1,000
Holland Lodge Foundation	\$1,000
Eugene & Rose Kleiner Family Foundation	\$1,000
The Sulzberger Foundation	\$1,000
The Gambino Crime Family (only kidding)	Undisclosed Amount

Also, warm thanks to the First Parish in Concord, Massachusetts, who recently mounted an all-kid production of "Godspell," the company of which voted to give the proceeds of the show to the Project. Now, is that swell or what?

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Spring is in the air, and The 52nd Street Project's Board of Directors and friends have had a flurry of activity to prove it:

- The Project proudly announces the arrival of Cooper Prentice McLane, born April 5, 1993, a beautiful boy produced by Project Prez Wendy Ettinger and her husband Derek McLane. Cooper is a genius and can already speak French and ride a two-wheeler.
- On April Fools Day, 1993, Board member Frances McDormand and Joel Coen said their "I do's" — no foolin'.
- The Board of Directors welcomes the exciting addition of a new member, Larry Jones. Larry is a big cheese at the Swiss Bank Corporation.
- Board member Louis Friedman announced his engagement to sweetheart Patrice Smith, which will leave Ben Barenholtz the bachelor on board. Ben is accepting resumes.
- Other recent marriages were Project volunteers Susan Bruce & Peter Hedges on June 5 and Project award-winning author David Peterkin & Nancy Jacobs. The Project answering machine's message now requires name, number and place of registry.
- Also welcome Peter Sullivan O'Rourke, the second boy in the Project volunteer family of Kevin O'Rourke and Edith Thurber. Peter is of Irish descent.
- Brook Allen and Peter Aaron had a baby. Brook Allen and Peter Aaron had a baby. (Yup, twins). Congratulations! Congratulations!
- Thanks to everybody who donated or arranged for tickets to our Night On The Town program. This past season Project kids and adults were able to see Jelly's Last Jam, My Favorite Year, Fool Moon, and Buy Africa!

SECOND ANNUAL REPIC PLAYNIC

Actually, the Replay Picnic, now a regular part of the Replay class (sorry, no jingle for this one), is a program in which the graduates of Playmaking try their hand at more advanced writing techniques. The class culminates in a picnic where the kids' plays are read by a group of Project volunteer actors.

Amy Barbosa, Claudia Vasquez, Jennifer Soccaros, Desmond Robertson, Darthula Harvey, Jeffrey Zambrano, Raymond Harold, Erica Borrero, Jed Clark, Natasha Soto, Elisa Mohammed, and Joseph Jackson finished eight weeks of classes and wrote some spectaculariffic plays. On May 15th, a bunch of Project volunteers, some grillables, and way too many brownies headed up north to the pastoral-type home of Wendy Etinger and Derek McLane for a day of playreadin' and picnicin' in order to celebrate.

The highlight of the picnic was a reading of the plays by Project actors. A few of the many spectacular moments were: Suzen Murakoshi's sensitive portrayal of a tree coming to terms with her bigotry in Claudia's play; Natasha's feminist play took a look at the dating rituals of a t-shirt and a pair of pants portrayed by Lisa Gay Hamilton and Kevin Geer respectively; Christopher Dansby Fisher's portrayal of a piano overcoming the social stigma of having its keys colored over by a magic marker as written by Darthula; Raymond's Dragnet-like look at a table and a pair of pants who form a police squad to prosecute careless owners with no sense of cleanliness, just the facts-ually rendered by Larry Nathanson and Michael Potts; and none of us there will soon forget Derek "Pops" McLane's frighteningly accurate portrayal of Phillip the teenage party animal in Jennifer's play. Intrigued? All of these plays will be produced by the Replay Ensemble (an all-kid company) in batches next fall.

After the reading, our chef's extraordinaire Jim McDaniel and Christopher Dansby Fisher, assisted by Jose Soto, Sr., fired up the grill and began churning out a glorious array of bar-b-qu'd items all char-grilled to perfection. The post-lunch activities were taking Bruce MacVittie's Miata for test drives, talking philosophy with Jerry McGill, annoying Leo the dog, and a heavy duty game of volleyball, which featured Desmond's anytime, anywhere serve, Jeffrey's "position, what position?" all over the field offense, and Susie Willerman's unique strategy of ducking whenever the ball came her way.

As the day drew to a close and we all got ready to say our good-byes to each other, the heartwarming cries of "I ain't ridin in no van!" echoed through the fields. It was certainly a picnic to remember. MB

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ly symbiotic gift bag relationships between Kiehl's and the Flyer Bars. PU would also like to announce that Laura Valeroso won the Project Board Benefit Derby. Laura, having brought in the most bodies to the benefit (we think she may have traded tickets on the floor of the American Stock Exchange) and her special guest will be spending a glorious night on Block Island with 22 kids and adults for a sumptuous lobster dinner. Of course, heartfelt thanks would not be complete without mentioning the entire brilliant Board of Directors: Ben Barenholtz, Rachel Chanoff, Wendy Etinger, Louis Friedman, Stephen Graham, Heidi Landesman, Jim McDaniel, Fran McDormand, Patrica Murphy, and Pam Tyson. Also, lofty praise to Richard Schwartz, and Koffee Cowboy Johnny Vassilaros who singlehandedly (with Alexandra Gersten) sold over thirty tickets!

VOLUNTARILY COMMITTED A PU Tribute to Project Volunteers

Many a great performance has come and gone and so often actors, kids, directors and writers are praised for their work, and rightfully so. But what of the tech crew? Those unsung heroes who devote their time, sometimes from noon to night, making sure that the show runs smoothly so all those artsy folk can receive their accolades. This column aspires to give those dependable doers their fifteen minutes.

Let's send a shot out to **Cindy Tolan** and **Samona Squire** who put up larger-than-life signs and diffsides during "Fish Out of Water." Every night you could see these two scurrying around with their untrustworthy flashlights looking for the next Colorforms. Then there's **Karen "Joo-Joo-Bee" Cooper**, **Traci "Tre-Fay-Ray" Johnson**, and **Orli Auslander** (we're still working on her nickname, suggestions welcome), the makers of the aforementioned Colorforms. What audience member didn't marvel at the colorful jukebox in "Sensitive and Silly" or feel the gooseflesh of patriotism from the international flags in "The Election." Little known fact: a tree was made for "Jenny and Pat." It was beautiful, green, leafy and unfortunately the size of an actual New York tree. It was cut by a heartless artistic director, who shall remain nameless, but it was deeply missed. Then there's the master of light **Greg MacPherson** who brought us such disturbing effects as the plane crash in "Momma Rose..." and the cool, haunting lighting of "Batsy and Stinky." Go on, Greg! Let's not forget the "On The Job" crew from December's Playmaking series. Audiences gasped at **Mike Kelleher** and **Wendell Borrero** who moved furniture with machine-like precision. Their system created a new philosophy amongst running crews across the country: when in doubt, put it anywhere - the actor will fix it. Just kidding guys, you're great. Then we had the formidable duet of **Dawn Jackson** and **Shirley Rumierk** at the props table. These fly Project teens were to be led by Traci Johnson but Traci, snowed in in Hoboken, missed opening night. Your average crew member would have freaked and left town (the airports were shut down) but these tough sisters Thelma & Louise'd their way through the show. Let us not forget that both of these shows featured props by the Bernini of Foam Core, **Katherine Lumb**.

Special shots go out to supercalifragilistic stage manager **Simma Gershenson** who ran the shows expialadociously well, and was always good for homemade cookies. Also, no kudo would be complete without mentioning the lovely **Mina Hammer** whose slide rule for slides is, "If you can dream it I can draw it." Lastly we need to say a word about **Sheila Kehoe** who took on the arduous task of designing costumes for "Fish Out of Water," from Frenchmen to cats to bats to cowgirls to roses to clowns. Maybe only God can make a tree, but only Sheila Kehoe can make a daisy out of a paper plate.

P.S. To our dependable load-in crew, **Tom Nahrwold**, **Frank Wood** and **David Pence, Jr.** Tanx a bunch, fellas. JMcG

THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST PU

Due to budget constraints, the Project can only send newsletters to volunteers and contributors of over \$50. If you have not contributed in the past fiscal year and yet you can't stand the thought of going on without PU in your life (or in your bathroom), give us a call or send us a check, okay?

Hey, did we spell your name correctly? Do we have the right apartment number? These and other questions plague us as we convert to our new mailing list. If we are amiss, please call us at (212) 764-1379 and we'll correct it immediately.

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FISH OUT OF WATER... and on to the pages of the *PU*

In reporting on this spring's Playmaking class, the *PU* editorial staff has been able to yet again recycle material from the benefit's radio show in order to enlighten you, the *PU* reader.

PAM TYSON

Kids? Are you bored? Tired of stickball, annoyed with your toys, bored with board games? My child was the same way, ten years old and yet to have a play produced....and then we found The 52nd Street Project's Playmaking program.

JINGLE: FIRST YOU HAVE TO TAKE A CLASS

The latest round of Playmaking marked many firsts for the Project. It was the **FIRST** class to be held at the Ensemble Studio Theater which generously lent us the studio and a hallway in which to conduct our business. It was also the **FIRST** class in which kids from Rheedlen Place participated, as we begin partnerships with various community centers in the hood to recruit new kids. Patricia Miller, Cordell Horsford, Mary Vamvoukakis, Judith Agosto, Luis Anthony Maldonado, Joseph Mohammed, Stephanie Tejada, Freddie Matos and Kristen Bess spent the next eight weeks writing, improvising, and running to Sonny's for Charms Blow Pops.

JUST SHOW UP YOU'RE BOUND TO PASS

Well, not really, but it rhymes.

THEN YOU GET TO GO AWAY AND IN A WEEKEND WRITE A PLAY

For our winter wonderland weekend we were blessed with an astoundingly beautiful snowfall and equally astounding generosity on the part of Wendy Eitinger and Derek McLane, Barbara Eitinger, Brook Allen and Peter Aaron who lent us their homes. Some of the highlights of the weekend (aside from writing the plays) were visiting the Coach Goat Farm where we got to watch the goats on the milking-go-round, as well as hold a two-hour old kid who confused the fingers of many Project kids for mama goat's udder; the sled-train, which consisted of seven sleds, seven adults, nine kids and hurtled down the slopes at fractions of a mile per hour; and the never ending snow-

ball fights and snowmen massacres that seemed to spring up at every opportunity. On Sunday we read the plays and bade a fond farewell as we headed home for the next phase of the show.

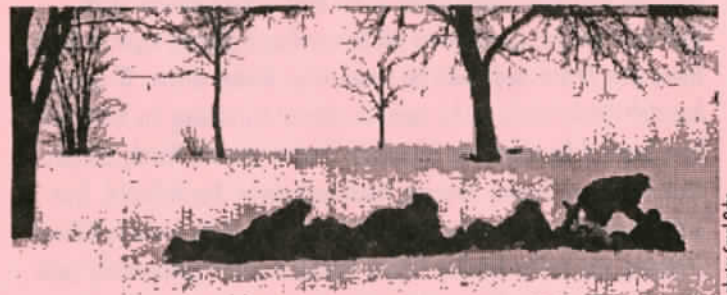
THEN YOU GET TO SEE THE FINE RESULTS ACTED OUT BY FUN ADULTS

The show, titled "Fish out of Water" featured characters caught in unfamiliar situations. After two weeks of rehearsals we performed them at E.S.T. on March 26th through March 28th. Some of the fishier and more out-of-water moments were Wendy vanden Heuvel and José Soto sharing a country duet in "Friends Forever" by Cordell, Suzen Murakoshi as George Washington and Alex Draper as Martha in Joseph's play "The Election," sharing one of the longest, most passionate kisses in Project history (as directed by newlywed Peter Hedges), and this bit of dialogue from Judith Agosto's "The Baby." Myra Taylor, as Mattie, the new mother with a four-fingered child, interrupts the Doctor, Frank Wood, who says, "You stopped my word." "I'm sorry." "No sorry. But be careful." Words to live by. MB

FISH ON THE AIR

On Sunday, March 21st, 9 year-old Playwright Stephanie Tejada led Project volunteers Kevin Geer and Carmyn Rivera and Willie to the WNYC studios. Stephanie and her cast went live on "NY Kids," New York's only kid radio show. Her play, "Mamma Rose in The North Pole" was performed, and after an interview Stephanie took some calls from listeners. Charity from Manhattan asked Carmyn "How do you like acting in a 9 year-old's play?" and Louis from Patterson, NJ wanted to know, "How [she] got such a big imagination?"

PLAYMAKING...It's keen!



THE SLED TRAIN IN GERMANTOWN, NY

Photo: Carol Dohs