

PROJECT UPDATE

VOLUME 16 JUNE 1994

FOUR HUNDRED AND ONE PART HARMONY

This year's big bash benefit for The 52nd Street Project was entitled **Two Part Harmony**, and many people played a part in making this event the most successful Project fundraiser ever. On May 9th, 401 friends filled the ballroom in the Toy Building to partake in an evening of dinner, dancing to the hot sounds of Tim Ray and friends, and performances by Project kids and adults. Four composers, Michael John LaChiusa, Henry Krieger, Lyle Lovett and Robert Reale created original duets which were sung live by Laurie Beechman and Mary Vamvoukakis, Bernard Gersten and Victor Rojas, Audra Ann McDonald and Alex Bess, and Lisa Lisa and Jose Soto. Oh, and the hosts of the evening, who never sang, were Pamala Tyson and Samantha Soto. The whole thing was seamlessly directed by the Project's in-house benefit director, Kate Burton, stage managed by her spouse Michael Ritchie, the *son et lumière* were by Marc Salzberg and Greg MacPherson, and what would an issue of *PU* be without mentioning Bill Wrubel who, despite the tie he was wearing, ran around and looked important all evening. All of the duets truly suited the dynamic duos and we would like to thank all of the artists and kids for being so generous with their time and talent.

{continued on page 3}

FERRAGAMO DOUGH O RAMA

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOE BUSINESS

Allora, some of you may remember that on April 5th the Project was featured on the "Today" show. Well, that day will be remembered forever in Project history as *Scarpe Diem*. You see, on that day, a young man named Paul Lerner who works as a press representative at Jody Donohue Associates was a little late going to work and happened to catch the segment, and he thought the Project seemed like an interesting organization. So he called and suggested we send over some material to his office so he could show it to one of their clients, an Italian fashion designer. Three weeks and several faxes to Italy later, we were informed that we would receive a \$75,000 grant from the Ferragamo family in honor of their opening of two new stores in Trump Tower. The money will be used for capital expenses in the renovation of a new permanent home for The 52nd Street Project (hopefully on 52nd Street). This is one of the largest grants the Project has ever received, and we are all overwhelmed by Ferragamo's generosity. *PU* recommends that its readers go out and buy a pair of Ferragamo shoes or something chic from their new clothing line *prontissimo*. *Tanti grazie, Ferragamo.*

WE'RE NOT FAT CATS

The average Project donor (considered by the *PU* to be well above average) may just think to his or herself, "Oh ho, look at that little Project, they had that glitzy successful benefit, they've got that well-heeled Ferragamo clan sending all that *lire* over, and ever since he got the MacArthur I see Willie eating in restaurants that don't have pictures of the food on the menu. I think I'll ignore the pleas of the fat cats and find some underdog to support." *Au contraire*. Okay so we had a good year. Yippee! However, the Ferragamo money doesn't cover operating expenses, we stick that in our piggy bank and save up for our dream home. And the benefit is all part of what we count on for programming. As for the MacArthur dough, that's Willie's and he'll probably spend it all on porcini mushrooms. So at the beginning of the next fiscal year (July 1) we're back at square one. In other words, don't stop giving until we're selling limited edition fivey and twoey Miatas in the lobby.

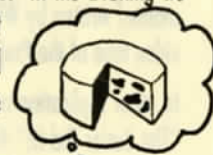
GENIUS IS A STATE OF MIND

In what may become known as the single largest IQ hike in the history of the human brain, the MacArthur foundation has named me a fellow. In other words, they gave me a "genius grant." It's a lot of money and I can spend it however I choose.

Now of course my detractors might say, "Genius? Pshaw!" and then go on to tell a "How many Willie's does it take to screw in a light bulb?" joke. To which I would say, "Oh yeah?" followed by a really long pause. If we look through history we can find any number of questionable geniuses. Take Thomas Edison, wizard of Menlo Park indeed! It's just inconceivable to me that he receive such high praise and accolades for the invention of the light bulb when the poor slob who invented the lamp wallows in historical obscurity. All Tom did as far as I can tell was screw in the bulb, giving us the mathematic equation $RTLL$ (rightie-tightie leftie-loosie). Speaking of simple minded equations, Albert Einstein has another one. People are so daunted by his famous equation $E=MC^2$. I can explain it in no time. In the Evening we have Milk and Cookies. The "2" is clearly a typo. See how it isn't even lined up properly? I mean, how hard is that? I'll knock out a couple of comparable equations right here in the *PU*.

$L = PB+J$ Lunch is Peanut Butter and (+) Jelly
 $LA=C+C$ Late Afternoon we have Cheese and (+) Crackers

Little do people realize that while giving the curtain speech Willie mentally reviews the cheeses of the world.



KUDOS FOR DUOS

"Eureka! The Discovery Plays" was the Project's revival of its 1987 program, the "Two-on-Two's."

The Concept: two kids are assigned two adults. One adult writes a play for the distinguished kid duo and the other adult directs them. The result was a little madness, a lotta hilarity and a whole lotta root beer floats. The root beer was courtesy of Dr. Brown's (who did much better in medical school than did Dr. Pepper) and the ice cream (the float part) courtesy of D'Agostino's.



Danny Noonan discovers the glory of glue guns.

Photo: Michael Bernard

The Set: Project kids and a bevy of volunteers, under the impeccable guidance of set sensai, Kevin Joseph Roach, painted an utterly fantastic scrolling background giving each play its own vivid and distinct locale.

The Place: also new this time around was our venue, The West Bank Downstairs Theatre. We must give a shout out to Steve Olsen, Patricia Miller, Rand Forester and Hank Meiman for being such excellent hosts. This proved

to be an exceptional space for this series and we look forward to working there again real soon especially cause the food upstairs is so good.

The Participants: kids who have done just about every Project show there is to do. Twelve in all, Eureka featured two Myries (Karen and Annette), two Barbosas (Jill and Eli) two Rojas' (Diana and Victor, in his trademark scene-hogging cameo), Kristen Bess, Wendell Borrero, Nyita Hanley, Danny Noonan, Andre Parks, Joanne Ramirez, and Shirley Rumierk. The plays were penned by Susan Kim, Donald Margulies, Tim Meadows & Jennifer Unter, John Ford Noonan, Adriana Trigiani and Willie.

The Plays: can we talk about diversity, please!? Mad scientists, grumpy senior citizens, stumped songwriters, gondaliers, driving school marms, these plays had everything but a helicopter.

A special welcome to all those newcomers who jumped on board behind the scenes (the crew was FIERCE!) and helped make this series the success it was. JMcG

REPLICATION UPDATE

As reported in the last issue of the *PU*, Dramatists Play Service will be distributing the replication materials this fall. No, really, we mean it, everything should be printed and ready to be sent out this fall to organizations and individual interested in reproducing the Project's programs. Volumes will be sold separately or are available as a package, coined the Kid Theater Kit, which includes a lengthy "how to" manual written by Willie Reale, Daniel Judah Sklar and Kevin Joseph Roach, and a video tape of the Project documentary, "Three Minutes From Broadway."

In other replication news, Patty Saraniero will be producing the 1990 One-on-Ones "The Butler Did It!" this summer as part of the programming at Rainbow Days with at-risk youth in Dallas, Texas. Tom Carey's Bushwick Play Project in Brooklyn is three years old. Tom just got a \$3,000 grant from Mega Cities towards his production of One-on-Ones this summer. What's Mega Cities? You may well ask. It's an organization which has recognized the Project and 60 NYC other non-profits as programs worth replicating, and helps spread the word to other cities worldwide.

ALL MIXED UP

Right on the heels of spring the Project stumbled in to the Ensemble Studio Theatre with the 1994 Winter Playmaking Plays, "All Mixed Up." This crop consisted of eight brand new kids from Hartley House and Rheedlen Place who, after a scintillating eight-week course in the basics of playwriting, journeyed upstate to the home of Project Hostess, Barbara Ettinger.

While there, Sandra Fernandez, Chris Hansen, David Harold, Eric Hooper, Sara Lambo, Zsuzsa Mysak, Raymond Ocasio, and Janice Santiago went sledding, ate Suzy Kitman's Hebraic Cajun meatloaf and wrote some wild and wacky one-acts. And if it wasn't enough to have dramaturgs Kent Alexander, Juliette Carrillo, Delroy Lindo, Suzen Murakoshi, Jocelyn Rappaport, Seret Scott, and Joe White on their backs, the "Today" show kept a close eye on their playwriting progress.

And what of those mixed-up plays? They were hystresical! I mean hystresical. I mean, hysterical. There was "My Son, The Hero" by Janice Santiago featuring Taro Alexander and Alexandra Gersten as a son and mother caught in the evil clutches of their television set. There was the eerie "Caught Dead In Philadelphia" by Zsuzsa Mysak, in a twisted tale of ghosts, obsession, broccoli and boogers (featuring Will Badgett, Kit Flanagan, and Cammie Sanes). The epic continued on page 3

BRAIN TEASER

Come up with an anagram for "All Mixed Up."...A real dilemma, isn't it? Oh! We got one: *PU LIX D LEMA*

ONE-ON-ONES "ALL OVER" AGAIN

Summertime summertime sum sum summertime. Yes boys and girls it's that time of year again, time for annoying songs by the Beach Boys about summer, blondness, and catching a wave! (Whee! I'm inspired, last one to the Hudson is....well, probably quite intelligent really) But most important, summer means it's time for the way fun One-on-Ones. The One-on-Ones pair a Project kid with an adult playwright. The adult writes a play for the kid and the two of them perform it together, unless, of course, a playwright is in fact traveling all over the map and can't join us, in which case we get an actor to fill in. For the first round, ten kids will head up to Tyler Hill, Pennsylvania to the home of Project Pally-o's Eric Karpeles and Mike Sell, two painters who every summer tempt the fates by allowing ten kids access to their beautiful farmhouse for a week. These guys live on the edge. This year's PA Co. includes Jed Clarke, Kevin Hartwick, Freddy Matos, Joseph Mohamed, Desmond Robertson, Janice Santiago, Jennifer Soccaros, Jonsi Smith, Josie Torres and Sahara Walsh. Jose Soto and LaTanya Godfrey will be coming along as junior counselors to keep an eye on all of us. (See enclosed flyer for show dates and times — if you didn't get a flyer, call the office and we'll send you one). The second group of ten will be breaking (well hopefully not breaking) in a new HQ at the all new home of Project goddess Virginia Dare on Block Island (flyer to be mailed later — you know it's not easy printing up all this stuff man!). The BI crew will be Ahmed Attia, Tessa Connor, Chris Hansen, David Harold, Cordell Horsford, Anthony Maldonado, Elisa Mohamed, Zsuzsa Mysak, Raymond Ocasio, Samantha Soto. Our ever watchful junior counselors will be Fran-Marie Fargardo and Shamine Gibson. This year's theme is "All Over The Map," which means each play gets set in some exotic locale or includes some type of journey (or at least has some joke about spilling something all over the map). So slap on your traveling boa and prepare for the trip of your life, or the summer, well at least the evening you attend, anyway don't delay, make your reservations for "All Over the Map" today! MB

Two Part Harmony -- continued from Page 1 Of course, no benefit could be a success without patrons. Hundreds of you *PU* readers contributed, and all in all you all raised over \$65,000 for the Project's programs this year. We have neither sufficient space nor vocabulary to adequately thank all of the donors. Nevertheless, thanks a lot. Especially thanks to the splendid benefit committee of Two Part Harmony; Stephanie Berger, Iris Brown, Kiehl's, Masque Sound, Paris Chocolates, The Printing Store, Production Arts, Scholastic, Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, and Vassilaros Coffee for their in kind donation of goods and services; and to The 52nd Street Project's phenomenal board of directors.

TID BITS

👤 Long time Project kids Paula Myrie (since 1983) LaTanya Godfrey (1984) and Jose Soto (1984) are graduating high school. Paula is slated to attend Wesleyan University in Connecticut while LaTanya will attend Queens College and Jose, Hunter College. Having been with the Project for so long they are certain to excel in their academic pursuits particularly if the curriculum requires that they perform a slow burn or a double-take.

👤 Check out 20 Project kids in the Yankee Stadium scene in "It Could Happen To You," the summer flic starring Nick Cage, Project pal Bridget Fonda, and featuring Victor Rojas.

👤 Here's news for all the volunteers who generously loan the use of their cars on trips away: the IRS will let you deduct 12 cents a mile for people who use their cars for charity work. Hey, it could add up...if anyone would like to know the mileage for any trips taken this year, the office would be happy to oblige. You may also deduct the cost of a rental car, if you rented it for a Project trip. Also anyone who wants to lend us a car for a weekend or a week can get on this tax saving gravy train.

👤 New Project volunteers Tim Blake Nelson and Lisa Benavides just tied the knot, so did Candido Tirado and Carmyn Rivera. And Project actor Oliver "Droopy" Platt and his wife Camilla Cambell gave birth to Lily Doolittle Platt on April 16th. More Project newborns on the way...wait for *PU* Issue #17.

👤 *PU* readers may recall when it was revealed that Carol Ochs ate Hostess Snowballs as a kid. Project sources tell us that Project actor Christopher Dansby Fisher still eats them and, brace yourself, we're talking the pink ones.

All Mixed Up -- continued from Page 2 Neanderthal-Man-meets-Speech-Therapist play by Eric Hooper starring Danny Johnson and Jane Muddyman. Cat met dog, cat fought dog and they happily ever after in Chris Hansen's "Asia Fight" starring the rapping canine-feline duo, Alvin Alexis and Tom Schall. In David Harold's "The Far Out Tree" Daniel Jenkins was a nasty hunter who kills poor Al (Melissa Murray), the tree, because he wants to use her for home decor. Michael Dolan and Denise Mickelbury found friendship via saliva on a Westbound flight to L.A. in Sara Lambo's "Friends Forever." Marty New helped Alex Draper go from bull to man in Sandra Fernandez's dark and creepy "The Tale Of An Unwanted Bird Named Prudence" starring Christopher Fisher as the tyrannical bird. And finally Michael Imperiali as a streetwise snake helped an all-mixed up Arthur French get food and a conscience in Raymond Ocasio's "No Place Like Home."

P.S. "All Mixed Up" does have a sad note. Super Stage Manager, Simma Gershenson was relocated to Washington D.C. shortly after the performances ended. We'll miss her cookies and her smile. They got some nerve that D.C.! What'll they want next, the Knicks? Come back soon, Simma. JMcG

RE: PLAY

Once again some of 52nd Street's finest gathered to take part in the Replay class: the advanced writings class for graduates of Playmaking. For eight weeks these deliriously dedicated dependables Judy Agosto, Ahmed Attia, Tessa Connor, Kevin Hartwick, Cordell Horsford, Yolanda and Anthony Maldonado, Lakisha May, Alex Metzler, Joseph Mohammed, Diana Rojas, Jonsi Smith, Mary Vamvoukakis and Sahara Walsh toiled in the bowels of New Dramatists, going over the finer points of playwriting, and playing a lot of tag. The writers were ably assisted by some fantabulous adult helpers: Tom Carrozza, Judy Minor, Adam Felber, Peggy Adler, Tim Sutton, Taro Alexander, Kathy Yates, Jerry McGill, Julia Whitworth, Mike "Pippin" Kelleher and Laura Sametz. We wrote plays that came out of dreams, baffling moments of our lives and, well, whatever the heck we wanted to write about. At the end of the class we grabbed about fifty of our best friends and high-tailed it up to the home of Wendy Ettinger and Derek McLane where we tossed some plays on the barbie, some meat on the stage, and had ourselves a grand olde time.

At the picnic there were readings of everybody's plays and we experienced quite a journey through the psyches of tomorrow's leaders. Some of the many highlights of the afternoon were Ahmed's sensitive treatment of the struggle between Ouch, the cranky floor of a department store and Kevin, a customer who wanted to purchase a Fireman Award played by Bill Christian and Danny Johnson respectively.



Photo: Jenny Gersten

Jim McDaniel crooning his lines as Terrence, a teenage boy who almost slips into the world of drug use but is saved by his love for the swooning Sabrina as portrayed by

Jerry McGill, Alvin Alexis and Lakisha May ponder a play at the picnic.

Melissa Murray and penned by Yolanda. Kevin's probe into the psyche of a hockey player, brought to life by Tim Nelson, afraid to play due to being plagued by nightmares of sinking into the ice (this seems somewhat timely now that the Rangers have won the Stanley Cup!). Anthony turned in a play concerning the friendship between a man, a dog, and a piece of ice, embodied in the forms of Greg MacPherson, Alvin Alexis and Don Berman, that ended with this inspirational song: "I feel like to you, and fly in the sky, but I am I guy, but I see a bluebird and I can be your friend, mend you up and the brain gets happy."

These were but a few moments of true theater. Kudos go to the great grillwork provided by Eric Karpeles and Mike Sell, with an able assist by Grill Boy Willie Reale. Post-performance activities included swinging on the hammock and screaming, a furious rendition of the cup game (thanks Noël!), wiffle ball and bouncing up and down on the tractor seat. All in all it was a peach o' a picnic with everyone havin' a swell time. Mend you up and the brain gets happy! MB

Come and see our upcoming production, "ALL OVER THE MAP" at the Ensemble Studio Theatre July 28th - 31st. Check out the flyer inside.

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The 52nd Street Project would like to thank all of the following foundations, corporations and government agencies which made grants towards our programming.

Barker Welfare Foundation	\$5000
Chase Bank	\$1000
Con Edison	\$1000
Dept. of Cultural Affairs	\$5000
Dept. of Youth Services	\$9639
Fan Fox Leslie R. Samuels Foundation	\$2500
New World Foundation	\$5000
Primerica	\$3000
Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust	\$15000
Lila Acheson Wallace Theater Fund	\$15000

And again our thanks to the hundreds of generous individuals and corporations too numerous to mention for their contributions to **Two Part Harmony**. Our thanks are also too numerous to mention.

Also a special thanks to Neil Mazzella, John "Whitey" Cunningham, Mike Marchese, Ken Philmus, Lietenant Alban and the Port Authority for hooking us up with free parking.

NIGHT ON THE TOWN

Project kids and volunteers were treated to a number of shows this Broadway and Off Broadway season and we'd just like to give a little thanks to those persones genorosos who provided us with the opportunities.

Manny Azenberg	Laughter on the 23rd Floor
Wendy Ettinger	The Red Shoes
Tom Cott, Lincoln Center Theater	Carousel
Ian Hersey, Playwrights Horizons	Avenue X
Delroy Lindo	Crooklyn
Jim Nicola, New York Theatre Workshop	Beauty & The Beast & Stomp
Margaret Wilcox	Bring In The Morning

Thanks again, everyone.

JERRY'S MOOVING FAMILY STORY

From time to time we here at *PU* like to focus on a particular member of the staff and some of their family. This edition's focus is the exciting and somewhat eccentric McGill family. Yep, that Jerry has some crazy cousins. This sultry temptress is one Jerrylina McGill. While no one truly knows Jerrylina's story, she is a world traveler who has been rumored to have some CIA dealings. She has been seen smoking cigars with Castro, running guns through El Salvador and is said to be on Dan Rostenkowski's payroll. She graced us with her presence recently to present the Project with six boxes of contraband Blow-Pops for the kids. After a heated debate we decided it would be best not to give stolen merchandise to the children so the staff ate them all. This other cousin is a



rather somewhat sad story, Jerrymiah McGill was lost as an infant by his family when they were traveling through the midwest on a "stations of Elvis" pilgrimage and a big pothole bumped the Winnebago and baby Jerrymiah went bouncing out an open window into a cornfield. The story would end here if not for the kindness of Elsie, a renegade cow who lived on the edge of the cornfield and was a link in the udder ground railroad, a loosely connected pipeline of rebellious bovines who refused to be milked by the man and would not succumb to the tyrannical rule of the Iron milking Hand. These cows took poor Jerrymiah in and raised him as their own. Having plenty of milk, Jerrymiah's strong bones helped him to overcome the elements and he was found at age fifteen mooing in an open field. Five years, fifteen therapists and three veterinarians later Jerrymiah has found a home as the spokesperson for Ben and Jerry's in Times Square. He has helped Project vets Shamine Gibson and Virginia Vargas get jobs there and seems to be living a "normal" life. MB



Photo Credits:
 Jerrylina: Sheila Kehoe
 Jerrymiah: Michael Bernard