

PROJECT UPDATE



VOLUME 26

NOVEMBER, 1997



GRB
The Twelfth Night company (most of them, anyway) at Versailles.

LAST NIGHT OF TWELFTH NIGHT

I know you have heard us going on and on about the big Project trip to France and, frankly, I'm sure you are sick of us bragging "We went to France! We went to France!"

Well, we did and it's done and this is the last time you will hear us

harping on it. We went to France and here's some of the fun things we did: Went to Notre Dame, took a tour of Versailles, toured Tourtour, ate, played, and relaxed in glory thanks to the inestimable **Bill and Jane Muddyman** (our hosts), and performed **Bill Shakespeare's Twelfth Night** for two hundred adoring folks (some of whom spoke English) in the beauty of the **Chateau De Berne's** Jasmine Garden. Upon our return to NY the show was remounted at the **Ensemble Studio Theater** for one night only. Some of the accolades received at the New York performance were: "I can't believe you went to France!" and "My god, you actually went to France!"

MB

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE: THE REPORT

Summer is normally our busiest season and this year (thanks to *Twelfth Night*) we really "pushed the envelope" of Project production. It was, of course, entirely appropriate to do so since that was also the theme of this year's One-on-Ones. As usual, we did one series in July and another in August. Each of the two companies went out of town to rehearse for a week and then returned to NYC to perform the shows at the Ensemble Studio Theater.

The Block Island edition began with **George Babiak's** *The Singing Plumbers*, in which **Peter Ventura**, 12, and **Jose Soto** played a pair of tradesmen who use music to blaze new trails in their profession. *Pre-Teen Pusher*, by and with **Carl Capotorto**, featured **Lorraine Lopez**, 12, as a former child star driven to factory labor. In *The Doctor and The Devil Cat*, by **Chris Ceraso**, **Christina Ramirez**,

9, portrayed Dr. Brilliant, a "psychiatrist vet" who helps a troubled feline (**Wendy vanden Heuvel**) explore the roots of her psychosis. **Susan Kim's** *The Whole Tooth* saw **Isha Rodriguez**, 12, as a tooth fairy paying a nocturnal visit to a hapless diaper-service worker played by **Suzen Murakoshi**. **Frances McDormand** and **Gloria Trejo**, 10, were seen as **Weepy** and **Giggles**, two unemployed emotion-slingers who help each other retrain for new careers. The title of that one was *Blue In the Face*, and it was also written by Fran. **Michael Castro**, 13, played the last citizen in the country of a very indecisive King (**Michael Bernard**) in *This and That*. Our "Largest Cast of the Summer" award goes to **Rusty Magee** and **Alison Fraser's** wickedly satirical *Wild In The Sweeps*, in which **Natalie Musteata**,



SALLY BOCK

Are those Stage-Door Johnnies? Suzen Murakoshi and Isha Rodriguez.

11, helps her TV network executive aunt (**Alison**) plan a new child-oriented season (young **Nat Magee** put in his customary star turn as "Rune Boy"). **Mayleen Cancel**, 11, fared much better than the '97 Yankees in **Lili Taylor's** *Take Me ~~Out~~ Into the Ball Game*. Mayleen portrayed the first woman to enter the major leagues, and Lili was her coach. **William Brown**, 13, played a boy who learns a lesson in heroism from a homeless man in Central Park (**L. Trey Wilson**) in *The Secret Formula*, penned by **Eduardo Machado**. *Pushing The Envelope I* ended with the now very



He's a crumb, she's an ant. Noel Polanco and Camilia Sanes.

happily-married-and-honeymooning-in Italy Willie Reale's *Some Crumb*, a wistful tale of a crumb (Noel Polanco, 11) and an ant (Camilia Sanes) who forge a mutual destiny in the bottom of a toaster. There were one or more songs in each of the ten

plays, and every one of them had music composed by the incredible Rusty Magee.

So that was Block Island. Now for...(deep breath)...the Tyler Hill shows.

Jaya Rosado, 13, was Calliope, the willful princess daughter of an obnoxiously status-conscious Queen (Michaela Murphy) in *Martha, Queen of Stewarts, and the Perfect Princess*. Hakim Latimore, 11, played Count Andy, a guilt-ridden vampire who consults German or Mexican psychiatrist Jerry McGill (we didn't have a dialect coach) in Jerry's play *Session With a Vampire*. Diana Son's *The Most Kid* paired carnival barker Barbara McCrane with mechanical boy Matthew Jellison, 11. As if Space Station Mir didn't have enough problems this summer, it was also the subject of Evan Handler's knockabout farce *Lunacy*. Alex Cooper, 10, played a fastidious American astronaut forced to share orbital quarters with a slovenly Russian or Mexican cosmonaut (Robert Sean Leonard with another

speech impediment to Julie Dretzin's snotty society dame with a speech impediment in Michael angel Johnson's *A Dark and Stormy Night*. Tanika Parson, 12, was a confident surgeon and Larry Nathanson her bumbling nurse in Adam Felber's slapstick doctor sketch *What's My Spine*. In David Schwab's *The Flea's Lament*, Osage Lewis, 10, taught his trainer Jack Gwaltney that "fleas are people too." In her play *Jill Forgets Jack*, Adrienne Shelly had a really hard time getting it through her head that Jayme Rosado, 10, was her best friend. Finally, Willie closed the show once again with *Helmuts Hope*. In it, Jonathan Brown, 11, took on the role of Dr. Helmut Zwiftenfleugen, a new-age quack (without a cheesy accent, thank heaven) who takes a man with a problem (Reg E. Cathey) on a paranormal journey to find the solution. All the music in PTE II was composed by the unflappable Tim Ray. And that was our summer! GB



Knightly and Hallie Gibson

WHAT'S COMING UP

The Project fall and winter productions are gearing up! Here's what you have to look forward to:

THE DOMINO EFFECT

PLAYS WITH SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS

In November you may want to take in this season's *Playback* production. Seven Project teens are teamed with seven Project writers. Each kid writes a play and then their adult partner writes an answer play. The pairs then perform the two plays together. This year's theme is *The Domino Effect: Plays with Serious Repercussions*, so we'll be sure to see many plays about the consequences of political actions in Korea and Vietnam. Featured in the show will be Tessa John-Connor, Evelyn Maldonado, Freddie Matos, Zsuzsa Mysak, Ray Ocasio, Jonsi Smith and the legendary Eddie Zambrano. See the enclosed flyer for all the details about performance dates and times.

WILD LIFE

THE UNINHIBITED PLAYS

Also on the docket for December is the 1997 *Playmaking* show, entitled *Wild Life: The Uninhibited Plays*. Ten brand new Project kids have signed up and started the rigorous training that is *Playmaking*. For the next eight weeks these brave souls will have their souls stripped bare



Serious artists: Jerry McGill and Hakim Latimore

questionable accent). Hallie Gibson, 9, and Marissa Chibas played a pair of jealous showbiz sisters embroiled in a backstage feud in Donald Rothchild's *Just A Number*. Michael Bernard cast himself as a bloodthirsty bruiser in *Boxer Shorts*, wherein Jaysunn Rosado, 12, played an opponent who was, alas, far too nice to pummel. After intermission, Aisha Jabour, 11, portrayed a hard-nosed detective with a

as they walk that barbed-wire tightrope that is the life of the playwright. The lucky few who come out alive at the end of this exhaustive journey will taste the sweet bounty that only a seasoned playwright can know: milk and cookies!! Stay tuned for more news of their exploits. *MB*

KULONDI AT SCHOOL



STEPHANIE BERGER

Project ex-kid **Kulondi Frier** recently graduated from high school and is now a freshman at Shaw College in North Carolina. Our usual formula is to dump kids like a hot potato as soon as they leave the nest, but we decided just this once to call Kulondi and find out what college life is like nowadays.

WHAT'S FUN— Meeting new people and joining different clubs and performing groups. For Kulondi's homecoming she will ride in a convertible and do African modern hip-hop dance. We're concerned about the dangers of dancing hip-hop in an open convertible but the college must know what it's doing.

WHAT'S HARD— Getting used to the environment of a small town in the south. "Coming from the city I am always used to doing something 24/7 (that's hep city talk for "all the time"). Down here it is a much slower pace. Plus the school has a curfew: weekdays 12:30, weekends 2:30." Kulondi does not agree with this policy. "In college there should be no curfews." (We think a school that has a curfew but encourages hip-hop dancing in open moving cars is sending mixed messages, but what do we know?)

WHAT ARE CLASSES LIKE?— "They are relatively easy. Social Science is challenging because it is a broad field and has a lot of different terminology".

Now for some REALLY important issues!

THE FOOD— "Terrible." Kulondi doesn't eat beef or pork and "there is no creativity in the vegetarian dishes. And I don't have a car so shopping for food or going to restaurants is difficult." (Anyone have an extra car?)

THE BOYS— "A lot of handsome boys are interested in me because I'm a little exotic (i.e. "from the city")." Kulondi, however, is only interested in one guy.

WHAT'S IN?— Most kids are still into wearing holes in their jeans "like in the 80's." When asked if swallowing goldfish or wearing raccoon coats remains popular, Kulondi ridiculed our distinguished and not-that-old interviewer.

ADVICE FOR OTHER KIDS?— "Go to college"

WHAT DO YOU MISS THE MOST?— "My nephew, taking the trains, going to the movies at midnight, seeing diverse people everyday."

While Kulondi neglected to place the Project on the list of things she misses, we all miss her. *MB*

PROJECT MOURNS RON BLACK

Ron Black, Project supporter, bon vivant and **Lewie's** little brother, passed away tragically young but mercifully quickly over the summer. Ron also leaves behind his wife, the artist **Susan Black**, his parents **Sam** and **Jeannette** and scores of loving friends.

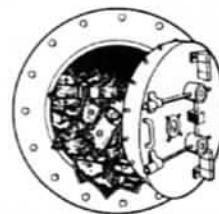
Ron often put together a table from **Lloyd's Bank** for our annual benefit. Lloyd's Bank and its president, **Peter Phillips** have made a \$5,000

contribution to the Project to initiate "**The Ron Black Memorial Fund.**" Others have added to the pot and there is a plan afoot to name the Clubhouse kitchen for Ron.

It is impossibly difficult to understand why fate would select such an excellent individual for the quick hook but there is one good theory: Ron inherently understood that we are all to end up together again in the great unknown and wanted to get there early to make the necessary arrangements for the rest of us. As I'm moving toward the white light, I, for one, fully expect to be greeted by Ronnie with a plate of foie gras and a tee time. *WR*



LEW BLACK



Sally's Funding Update

The following foundations and corporations recently made generous grants to the Project:

Anonymous	\$10,000
The Chase Manhattan Foundation	\$2,000
Educational Foundation of America (for Smart Partners)	\$40,000
Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation	\$5,000
Holland Lodge Foundation	\$1,000
Lloyds Bank (In memory of Ron Black)	\$5,000
James A. Macdonald Foundation	\$700
Laura Pels Foundation	\$2,500
Sultzberger Foundation	\$200
Travelers Foundation	\$3,000
Wiener Family Foundation*	\$10,000

We are grateful to these organizations for their support as well as to the many individuals who help sustain Project's programs year-round.

* The Project deeply regrets its error and omission of this generous grant in the June 1997 issue of PU.

Osage Lewis, Tyler Hill



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PROJECT P.U. UPDATE



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KEVIN JOSEPH ROACH

Occupation: Designer/Fabricator **Age:** 42 **Place of Birth:** Alton, Illinois
Most Recent Accomplishments: Installed rigging systems for the Williamsburg Theatre Festival, the Hammerstein Opera House, and the driving range at the Chelsea Piers.
Credo: "If you can't fix it with gaffer's tape or a Skilsaw, it will take too long or cost too much."
Claims to Fame: Designed last season's Twelfth Night set to fit in luggage. He also created our "Instant Set."
Last Book Read: "Amy's Eyes" by Richard Kennedy
Favorite Project Memory: Arlen Collier in flight as a Pterodactyl in "The Dinosaur Musical (1986)." Referring to the steel beam from which the brave young Arlen dangled: "Now that was a Flyer Bar."
Advice to the Kids: "Study hard, stay in school, and let Mazzella build it." (Neal Mazzella and his firm Hudson Scenic have executed most of Kevin's designs for the Project.)
On Flyer Bars: "Incredyble!"



We're not sure why these people are rubbing Kevin's head. Could be he's a genie.

There are two ways to get a box of your favorite Flyer bars: 1) Get Profiled 2) Call 1-800-CANDYBAR. The #1 method is free, but why wait?

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 1-1-88-02-5



Last Shot as a Free Agent: Willie, Jaya Rosado, and Reg E. Cathey at Tyler Hill.

In September, **Jenny Gersten** made **Willie** the fourth **Reale** boy to find a bride at the Project. **Jimmy**, the last remaining Reale boy, is afraid to come to the clubhouse.

Also on the layer cake circuit, **Jane Perlmutter** and Project lighting designer/heart-throb **Greg MacPherson** swore true and **Neil Pepe** and **Mary McCann**, after years of courtship, stepped up to the nuptial plate. **Jane Muddyman** and **Jonathan Heine** tied the knot this summer as well.

Project volunteer **Robin Morse** saw other Project volunteer **Gus Rogerson** on bended knee and came back with an affirmative.

The Stork Club has no births to report but there are more buns in the oven than at Amy's Bread. See future issues for names, dates, weights and sexes.

Apartment news: P.U. readers will sigh with relief to know that **Sally Bock** has found one at last. If you need one, well, Project Board member **Pat Murphy** is seeking a replacement tenant for her Tribeca two-bedroom duplex because she's moving to the 'burbs. Call her at (212) 686-2900.