

# PROJECT UPDATE



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EDITOR: GEORGE R. BABIAK



**Harlo Ulloa and Craig Cox** play an updated *Jesus and Moses*, complete with laser weapons.

*Other Side* and Perry's *Tagalong*. The wrath of God was felt in both **Harlo Ulloa's** *The Bible In The Future* and in **Craig Cox's** *Sci-Fie*, as kid and adult gave us a couple of very entertaining and deeply edifying Bible stories.

After meeting Moses, the crowd parted for intermission (the new Special Dark Flyer Bar tempted them sorely). In Act II, **Stephanie Vamvoukakakis** and **Sarah Petersiel** treated the audience to a pair of plays about greed, Stephanie's *From Rags To Riches* and Sarah's *Gloria And Her Mom Find Themselves In The Same Room (In Iceland)*. Speaking of treats, **Azalea Rosario** and **Alex Barretto** served up a double helping of gluttony, with her *Lucky Number One* and his *Stranger In America*. Unambitiously, **Bryant Acosta** and **Drew Cortese** went last, with Bryant's aptly named *Sloth* and Drew's *Hardboiled*. Both were noir-ish journeys into seamy underworlds.

We are especially grateful to these generous volunteers, whose good deeds will not go unrewarded: costume designer **Ali Turns**; stage manager **Lanita Ward**; lighting designers **Greg MacPherson** and **Alex Gordon**; sound designer **Betsy Rhodes**; composers **Greg Pliska** and **Andrew Sherman**; and music director **Doug Nervik**. All thanks to thee. — GR

## POWER TO THE PUBLIC!

Back in November, ten highly charged kids and a galvanized force of adults headed to Stone Ridge, NY where they were welcomed into the home of **Steven Gorn**, **Barbara Bash** & their son **Wiley**. It was a weekend of great food, great fun, and lots of time in pursuit of that spark of inspiration. Upon returning to Manhattan, the youngsters, with the help of a star-powered cast, once again lit up the **Newman Theater at The Public** with *THE POWER OF 10: Plays That Count*.

**Ashley Smith's** *The Twins*, directed by **Michael Early**, was the story of fraternal twins (**Lizzy Cooper Davis** & **Paco Tolson**) who leave Ouch, Ohio, to pursue very different goals in life. One touching tale followed another with *Best Friends for Life* by **Wendell Joseph** -- the story of love in a very civilized animal kingdom. Under the direction of **Maria Goyanes** (and the dramaturgy of **Megan Cramer**), Wendell's play featured **Autumn Dornfeld** as Rose, the Hyena; **Andrew Kelsey** as John, the Lion; and **Gus Rogerson** as a not-so-tough tiger named Bully.

**Peter Dinklage** played football rookie Sam to **Lucas Caleb Rooney's** money-grubbing dad in the dramatic play *Like Father, Like Son* by **Ethan Maldonado**, directed by **Henry Wishcamper**. The father/son drama was followed suitably by a mother/daughter comedy, *The Weird Thing* by **Aleyni Aguilar** in which **Jeanine Serralles** plays a mother suffering from "the weirdness" that is finally cured through yoga prescribed by her daughter, played by **Adriana Gaviria**.

No act is complete without a show-stopping number and **Tim Cain** and **Ed Vassallo** delivered one worthy of a Las Vegas revue in *Steven and Tommy*, written by **Hashem Hamed** and directed by **John Sheehy**. In the play Tim and Ed, as the title characters, take on a rival basketball team headed by **Reg Flowers**, who brought an appropriate sense of height to the proceedings.

After a short **Flyer Bar** break, the audience returned for some delightfully scary fun, watching **Mercedes Herrero** battle the flu and the monster from her closet, *Squishy Gummy*, played by **Joaquin Torres** in *The Purple Scary House* by **Armando Cosme, Jr.** If monsters



**Fran McDormand** as Ranger Sophia.

in closets weren't scary enough, **Lizbeth Mackay** and **Nancy Giles** took to the woods to face their fears and one pragmatic Bear (**George Babiak**) in **Mari Ulloa's** *Camping at Florida*, directed by **Cynthia Kaplan**. The funny fright-fest continued when **Wendy vanden Heuvel**, as a ghost named Betty, haunted **Daniel Oreskes**, as Mr. MicGrumpy, in **Samantha Caldon's** *How Mr. MicGrumpy Became Mr. MicNiceNice*, directed by **Kate Marks**.

Dangerous faux-ninja **Robert Sella** presented a three-minute history of dance to a belting (and black belted) **Johanna Day** in **Kevin Kulego's** *I Messed Up*, directed by **Evan Cabnet**. Finally, love triumphed in *Autumn's Nest*, an operetta by **Doris Alcantara**, directed by **Jessica Bauman**, in which **Ned Eisenberg** (a poet) and **Frances McDormand** (a park ranger) fall in love while rescuing baby birds (brought to life by stage crew chief **Nikki Phillips**).

Composer **Patrick Barnes** provided the electrifying music. **Greg MacPherson** on lights, **Maury Schott** on sound and **Viviane Galloway** on costumes made for a powerhouse design team, all overseen by dynamic stage manager **Carol Sullivan**. — RF

## 2007 TWO ON TWO'S: THE VERGE OF GREATNESS




**Merlaine Mendez and Mathew Ortiz** use fancy footwork to defuse a bomb.

a little bit of rehearsing. Thanks to **Maria Tucci**, **Robert Gottlieb**, **Frances McDormand**, **Joel Coen**, and **Fisher Stevens** for providing us with warm, cozy houses. Upon returning to NYC, we put on the show at the **Women's Interart Annex** for our city friends, clad in smashing costumes by **Summer Lee Jack**, surrounded by stellar sound design by **Mayleen Cancel**, and singing soaring songs by **Andrew Sherman**.

*DESPERATE MEASURES* launched with **Kayelani Silva** and **Hera Andre-Bergmann** in *Destiny's Calling* written by **Erin Quinn Purcell** and directed by **Claudia Zelevansky**. In this adventure, one young woman's call to superheroism was another young woman's chance to become the smartest and most scientific sidekick in history. Next up was *Movie Stars* written by **Daniel Goldfarb** and directed by **Josh Lewis**. In this zany jaunt, **Muhammad Cunningham** and **Dale Fetterman** played an action movie star and an Aussie actor who remake *Saving Private Ryan* as a musical and learn some Australian slang along the way.

**Steven Castellanos & Jennifer Ramirez** closed out the first act in *Knife to Meet You* by **George Babiak**, directed by **Megan Cramer**. With razor sharp wit, a vaudevillian knife thrower and

The start of the new year brought a nail-biting Two-on-Two production: *DESPERATE MEASURES: Plays on the Verge*. Twelve kids worked in pairs with an adult writer and an adult director to create six brand new plays. On Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, we all trekked to **Clinton Corners, NY**, for three days of roller skating, bowling, playing *Celebrity* and *Capture The Flag*, and



THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS RECENTLY MADE GENEROUS GRANTS TO THE 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.

BLOOMBERG .....	5,000
MELLON BANK .....	1,000
SAUL HOROWITZ, JR. FUND .....	5,000
INTEGRA REALTY RESOURCES, INC. ....	5,000
JANE & TAD SHEPARD FAMILY FOUNDATION .....	10,000
JONATHAN ROSE COMPANIES .....	1,000
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL FOUNDATION .....	5,000
THE BIG WOOD FOUNDATION .....	10,000
THE VERVANE FOUNDATION .....	15,000

his steely assistant formed a partnership based on trust, and just a sliver of risk. The audience then filed into the lobby for refreshing and sinfully tasty **Boylan's Root Beer** floats with ice cream from **D'Agostino's**.

If we felt a bit bloated after that intermission, never fear, because **Merlaine Mendez** and **Mathew Ortiz** danced it off for us in *Will the Terrific Two Strike Again?* written by **Megan Mostyn-Brown** and directed by **Nicole Watson**. As Freeze Boy and Molecule Girl, they executed a fierce dance-off in a race against a ticking bomb. In *World Premiere* written by **Zakiyyah Alexander** and directed by **Reg Flowers**, **Carla Olivia** was a playwright so allergic to failure that she'd resort to murder, and **Jenisse Bouret** was an actress who learns the importance of reading the script.

We finished off the evening with **Jonathan Rosario** and **Andrew John (A.J.) Welsh** in *The Adventures Of Glack And Zorn Of The Intergalactic Space Patrol* written by **Michael Bernard** and directed by **Erica Schmidt**. These two sci-fi guys high-fived their way through space battling scary green-faced Mepnords—AND anti-robot discrimination, to save the universe. The audience left the theater desperate to see more from these kids. — MC

## JOSHUA MOODY 101

**Joshua Allen Moody**, newest Project staff member, was born in Framingham, MA on January 27, 1984 at 1:24 a.m. on the kind of night that makes your nose run and your ears ring. Josh has the same effect on people, but this did not stop him from growing into a happy young man. He had a wonderful childhood in Cranston, Rhode Island, with two brothers, a sister, a dog named Belle and a ferret named Frodo (natch). He attended **Vassar College** in Poughkeepsie, NY, where he was President of the comedy group **Happily Ever Laughter**. He didn't name the group, he swears. After graduating in 2006 with a BA in English Literature, he immediately moved to New York City, brimming with excitement and lightly bubbling with fear. His worries were quickly forgotten when he was hired as **John Sheehy's** brand, shiny-new Development Assistant. He now spends his days trying to control that shine while helping John; hanging out with the kids; and playing ping-pong. — JAM



## REALLY WELL DONE

The Project's annual benefit this year will be an evening of scorching comedy, as **Stephen Colbert**, **Wilmer Valderrama**, and **Robin Williams** host *CHARRED BLACK, The 52nd Street Project Roasts Lewis Black*. The party will be held **Monday, May 7** at Gotham Hall, and will feature good-natured ribbing from the hosts (schedules permitting), a musical tribute from some Project kids; and a blistering response from the honoree. For information or reservations contact John "Shish-Kebab" Sheehy at the Project, sheehy@52project.org — JS

### IN MEMORIAM



The Project mourns the passing of its old friend **Curt Dempster**, the founder of **The Ensemble Studio Theater**, which has hosted the Project from the very beginning. Without Curt and his theater, there would be no 52nd Street Project, and we are ever grateful.

— Willie Reale

# THE ANNUAL SMART PARTNERS PING-PONG TOURNAMENT & NOK-HOCKEY FACE-OFF

For the 7th year in a row, adult/kid teams clashed mightily in a titanic struggle for supremacy on the smooth, green surface of the table tennis court. Over the course of 3 hours on February 9, twenty teams mercilessly pounded a small, white globe until the champions wearily emerged, paddles unbowed, from the carnage. With an unquenchable thirst for glory, many also pursued victory within the piney walls of the Nok-Hockey Arena. Presented for your awe and adulation are the heroes of that fateful afternoon. — GB



**The Champs:** Newbies Laron "Paddlepaw" Holt & Josh Moody.



**2nd Place:** Erik Bowie & A.J. Welsh for the 2nd year running.



**3rd Place:** Andrew Kelsey & Andy Reyes. These two bear watching.



**4th Place:** Mordecai Santiago and Liz Bell (That's a wig... on Mordecai).



**Honorable Mention:** Hashem Hamed and the not-fully-awake Gus Rogerson.



**Best Teamwork:** Mathew Ortiz and Kim "The Ruiner" Sherman.



**Most Improved:** Zebulun Santiago and Moira Macdonald. Better 'n ever.



**Best New Players:** Maximo Jimenez & Kyle Fargardo. Beware in 2008!

ALL TOURNEY PHOTOS BY GRB



**Best Dressed:** Megan Cramer & Kayelani Silva honored Boylans.



**Good Sports:** None were more gracious than Terrence Mack & Tim Cain.



**Nok-Hockey Champ:** Past medalist Jason Gil.



**Nok-Hockey Medalists:** Chris Tineo, Terrence Mack, and Carlos Muentes.



**Da Refs:** Diana "Hawkeye" Rojas and Doug "Zebra-shirt" Nervik.

2007-03-01



◀ The sweet face at left belongs to the marvelously and campily named **Silas Marvel Camp**. **Bill Camp** and **Elizabeth Marvel** became his parents on June 28th, 2006. He was a whopping 10 lbs., 10 oz. and we're told he has his mother's eyes and his dad's double chin.

▶ And here we have **Sofia Clementina Handler**, born to Project Pal **Evan Handler** and **Elisa Atti** on January 17, 2007 at 12:42 p.m. In contrast to Big Si above, she weighed in at a feather-weight 5 pounds, 6 ounces.



▲ *Baby animals are cute, too.* **Erica Schmidt** and **Peter Dinklage** adopted a puppy named **Kevin**. He's now one of the Project's many mascots.

▶ Over on the West Coast, former Prop Meister **Kim Chandler** and Proj Vol **Saverio Guerra** had a baby, too. Her name is **Sofia Maria** and she was born on Nov. 26, 2006. As far as we can tell from this photo, Sofia is not made of foamcore.



▶ Old-timers may remember that **Henry Krieger** and Proj Founder **Willie Reale** often collaborated during the 1-on-1's of the early 90's. Well, they got together again to pen a new song for *Dreamgirls*, the movie, and snagged an Oscar nomination for Best Song for *Patience*, sung by **Eddie Murphy & Anika Noni Rose**. By the time you read this, you'll know if they took the little gold man home.



◀ We're proud of **Patricia McGregor**, one of our favorite directors and stage managers. She was just awarded the **Soros Fellowship for New Americans**. It'll cover the costs of a master's degree from **Yale University**, and she's real happy about that.



◀ 'Round about Valentine's Day, our volunteers started waxing romantic. While walking home after an embarrassingly low scoring game of bowling, **Jeff Cox** (brother of **Craig** on p. 1) spontaneously stopped on the corner of University Place and Washington Square North and proposed to our pal and playwright **Liz Flahive**. Here's their photo at left... Along similar lines, groovy composer **Andrew Sherman** proposed to his lady **Jody** while on a hike on Vieques Island in Puerto Rico... Also pitching woo was Proj director **Sascha Paladino**, who popped the question to his girlfriend **Erin**. We are delighted to report that none of the offers have been declined.— CO and GB

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Jennifer Ramirez as The Great Stabinella in the 2-on-2's. See page 2.

GRB



RON & JUDY TIERNEY

**Occupation:** Judy: "A reporter for the Block Island Times." Ron: "An investor and semi-retired carpenter. Will bang nails for lobsters."

**Why they do what they do:** Judy: "I'm naturally curious..." Ron: "Gravity is sometimes stronger than ambition."

**What they do for the Project:** They have hosted kids on Block Island every summer for the last 15 years.

**Habitat:** Judy: "Sand dunes." Ron: "The clam flats near the bridge and Andy's Way." (All on Block Island.)

**Place of birth:** Judy: "Bridgeport." Ron: "New Haven, CT."

**Hobbies:** Judy: "Writing mediocre fiction, going to the beach, boogie-boarding, and seeing as much of Europe as I can." Ron: "Riding my ancient Honda 360, weight training, and clamming."

**Most recent accomplishment:** Judy "Baking a seeded rye bread." Ron: "Repaired my wireless Internet connection without calling my son."

**Last book read:** Judy: "*Nature Girl*." Ron: "A biography of Pablo Neruda. I prefer non-fiction such as *The Botany of Desire*, *Salt*, *Cod*, *The Secret Lives of Lobsters*, etc."

**Credo:** Judy: "Enjoy what's around you." Ron: "Do it now before you forget."

**Advice to kids:** Judy: "Act well, not up." Ron: "Enjoy being a kid, you will be a grown-up for a long time."

**Best 52nd Street Project Memory:** Judy: "Ron teaching the staff to boogie board way back when." Ron: "The conga line dance after the plays a few years ago."

**Favorite thing about the Project:** Judy: "The kids." Ron: "Watching the progress the kids make from arriving on the boat up to the performances, not only with the Project, but how they adjust to Block Island and us."

**On Flyer bars:** Judy: "I can't wait!" Ron: "There are no empty calories, bring them on!"

## SMART PARTICLES

THE SMART PARTNER REPORT BY LIZ BELL



Maximo and Barnett

Maximo Jimenez is an impressive kid. Who else could walk into the Project Clubhouse and convince John Sheehy to let him write a movie based on an afternoon in his life? As John rapidly typed up a proposal, Maximo wrote a play-by-play of the action, while simultaneously directing the scene:

"John, faster. Cut. Josh, you walked through my shot."

"Maximo, sorry. I just needed to give John something. Where's the camera?"

"(Rolling his eyes.) Ok, everybody. Take it from the top."

Who was taping the movie, you wonder? No one. Remember what it was like being 12? The imaginative Barnett Cohen does, and the two immediately clicked on their first introduction. Barnett was unfazed by Maximo's subtle attempts to get out of doing his assignment.

"Will you just do the problem for me?"

"No, Maximo."

"Aw, man."

Since then, they have broken a Smart Partners record for the number of field trips taken. Their first adventure was a stroll through Hell's Kitchen, touring motorcycle and car showrooms on 11th Avenue. On Halloween, Maximo turned his hoodie inside out to reveal the furry lining, declared himself a werewolf, and went Trick or Treating with Barnett. They've also gone to the Performing Arts Library, been to a Playmaking show, and a screening of the holiday movie, *Unaccompanied Minors* (starring Project friend, Lew Black). They've been to Barnes and Noble twice, buying books on magic and the basics of piano. They've "chilled" at Clinton Park and, most recently, gone to Dave and Busters, a huge arcade, for Maximo's birthday. Barnett explains: "Maximo planned the entire outing. He arrived for our meeting raring to go, complete with directions and a Dave and Busters card with credit already on it."

If you want a Smart Partner like Maximo... well, too bad. There's only one, and he's taken. If you would like to mentor another cool kid, call or email Liz Bell, Director of Education, at The 52nd Street Project (212-333-5252, bell@52project.org). — LB

JLS