



PROJECT UPDATE

ISSUE #94 • NOVEMBER 2024 • GEORGE BABIAK, EDITOR



Let's start our rundown of the last few months with **The Place Play**, our newest, fastest program. First brought to us last year by Associate Artistic Director **Kat Almirañez**, it is an ensemble piece created by Project members and adult volunteers in six days from start to finish. It sounds chaotic, but it worked wonderfully in this year's edition, **Off the Map**, which took place on a cruise ship moored at our own **Five Angels Theater** on Saturday, July 13.

1. **Ashley Marie Ortiz** was an overbearing mom to a daughter (**Kat Chauca**) facing an unwanted quinceañera party.
2. **Kaileela Hobby** was a beleaguered assistant to celebrity model **Makiyah Gray**.
3. Dancer **Walter Rochez** was nearly undone by his sabotaging aide **JJ Wilks**.
4. **Echaka Agba** was a silly and spoiled princess being used by **Eliza Richardson**.
5. **Korey Jackson** was an influencer trying to get a piece of **Zion King Lamonge**.
6. **Kendal Hartse** and **Gloria Sanchez** were evil spies in chef's disguise.
7. At several points, EVERYONE was onstage, including our interns **Rhys Luke** and **Manny Jacobson** (center) who also did costumes and sound for the piece. The composer and pianist for OTM was the very talented **Adam LaPorte** ♦



OFF THE MAP PHOTOS BY ANA GONZALEZ, SOTO

ALL ABOUT THE LAST 6 MONTHS OF PROJECT HISTORY!

LOOK WHO'S TALKING: THE AUGUST ONE-ON-ONES!

CLICK
THEM
TO SEE
THEM!

In August, we went to **Carolyn DeSena's** home in Rumson, New Jersey to rehearse 8 plays that each featured a ProjMember and an adult. We showed them off at our theater the weekend of Aug. 16-18, 2024. They were really good and you can still see 'em, since each photo is a hyperlink to its own play!



In **Cynthia Kaplan's** *Ruffly Speaking*, **Atif Dowidar** and **Christian DeMarais** were a dog and his owner who discovered they could talk to each other with the aid of a British phone box.



Kyle Cameron was a ladybug who delivered singing telegrams and **Josiah Perez** was a lion inventor who was also very good at basketball in Kyle's play *Science X Friendship*.



More Than L4, by **Sean Kenealy**, cast **Kim Jinhyoung** and **Oliver Tanner** as canned beverages yearning for freedom from a vending machine.



Mirirai and **Shaddai Blake-Soden** were sisters who ran a ransom note company in **Kaaron Briscoe's** *The Call*. Oh, and Shaddai's character became a mermaid!



In **Molly Carden's** *Humans Are Tricky*, **Jaelannie Rodriguez** was a poorly-trained Golden Retriever who learned about proper housepet behavior from Agnes, an overworked messenger pigeon played by Molly.



Mamadou Diaw and **Marchánt Davis** were brothers who lost a toy hamster but found an immense griffin in Marchánt's *Go to Sleep or The Writing's On The Wall*.



Time Dog, by **Jiehae Park** featured **Cataleya Bernardo** as a smart, athletic animal lover and **Maryn Shaw** as a greedy adventurer who wanted to mess with time travel. **Rhys Luke** played the title character, and, yes, that is foamcore pee on the floor.



Betsy Hogg's *Best Friends...Forever?* told the story of a timid Guinea pig (**Evan Isabella**) and a bold bunny (**Samaria Alkandi**) who communicate an escape plan to each other with a pair of cups on a string. Their plan succeeded, and they relocated to a big field filled with hopping rabbits.

The production team for *Look Who's Talking: Plays That Speak to You* was **Avi A. Amon** as Composer/Music Director, **Greg MacPherson** as Lighting Designer, **Taylor Barnett** on Costumes, **Harrison Walsh** on Sound, and **Marty Gleberman** as our Stage Manager. Our stage crew were **Melanie Correa**, **Abby Dziura**, **Manny Jacobson**, **Rhys Luke**, and **Kass Sinchi** while our livestream team were director **George Kielty** and cameramen **Nikolai Alvarez** and **Christian Santoni**. ♦

PROJECT UPDATE 2 NOV 2024

COMING UP SOON!

The 52nd Street Project Presents

TO THE MOON! Plays That Blast Off

8 young playwrights
8 original plays
8 veteran directors
1 gifted composer
16 seasoned actors

Friday, Dec. 13 - 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 14 - 3:00 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 15 - 3:00 p.m.

Five Angels Theater
789 10th Ave. (between 52nd & 53rd)
Admission Free! Visit 52project.org
for information and reservations.

"TO THE MOON" DESIGN BY CAYLYN WAN-CREAGER AND GRB

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE 52ND STREET PROJECT INVITE YOU TO
CELEBRATE ART AND DESIGN AT THE PROJECT
AT OUR ANNUAL BENEFIT GALA

DRAWING THE LINE

HONORING
IRIS A. BROWN AND GEORGE BABIAK'S
CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGH THE DECADES

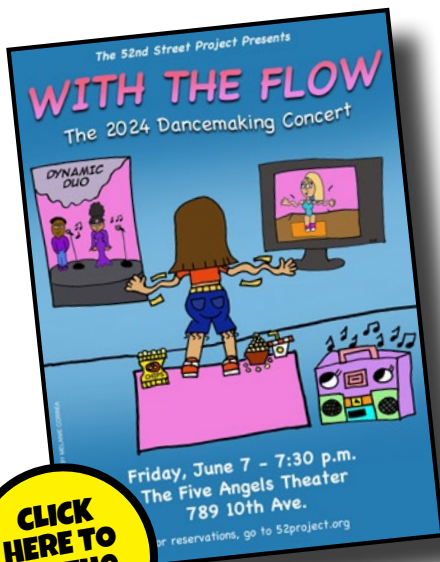
Hosted by
**Hank
Azaria**

SAVE THE DATE ► MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025

6:30pm, Tribeca Rooftop, 2 Desbrosses Street, New York City

For details, contact Ana "The Ruler" Soto at (212) 333-5252 or asoto@52project.org

"DRAWING THE LINE" DESIGN BY IRIS A. BROWN



**CLICK
HERE TO
SEE THE
SHOW!**

Right: the Dancemaking company performs *Smooth Moves (and Grooves)*.



On June 7, six Project members presented the latest installment of **Dancemaking**. As in many of our programs, each young choreographer was paired with an adult who was there to help them realize and perform their creation. The production team for *With The Flow* was Program Director **Garrett Kim**, Dance Instructor **Elli Stovall Brown**, Lighting Designer **Finn Meyercord**, and Sound Designer/Dance Captain **Diego Caoili**. ♦



John Maddaloni and **Adolfo Sinchi** were macho military brothers in *Where Are We?!?!?* which explored the theme of "finding oneself."



Friends Going Through Life featured **Aishling Pembroke** and **Samaria Alkandi** as, well, the title tells you what they were!



Nico Grelli and **Ethan Cruz** gave us *The Battle of Insecurity* which showed how two people face insecurity... by dancing!



The Reopened Circus, with **Khloe Castillo** and **Stephanie Lane**, was a wildly physical piece that included pretty cool jester outfits.



A Goofy Brother Summer, with **Major Curda** and **Logan Centeno**, lived up to the promise of its wacky title and theme, which was "Goofball."

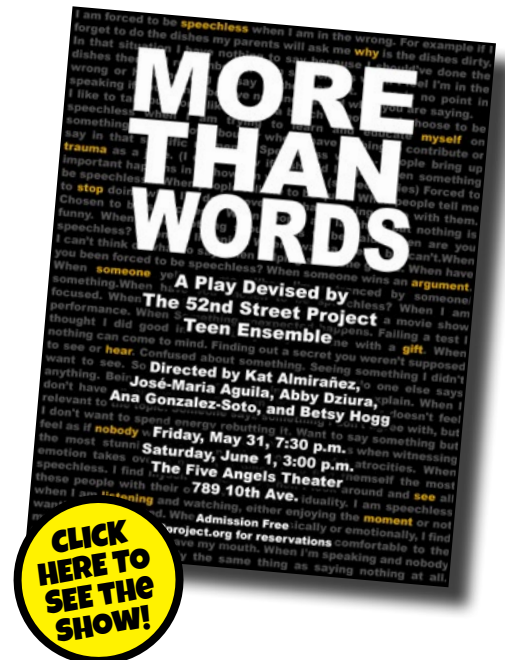


Olive Moayed's *Growing Pains*, with **Rachel Skalka** was a more serious take on the ups and downs that siblings experience.

DANCEMAKING PHOTOS BY ANA GONZALEZ-SOTO

THE LESS SAID, THE BETTER!

GROUP PHOTO BY ANA GONZALEZ-SOTO



The Teen Ensemble's latest show, presented at the Five Angels on May 31 and June 1, was radically different for us. For starters, *More Than Words* had NO WORDS! (Well, one word was shouted by the whole group, but we can't print it.)

Secondly, we used our new video wall with a live camera that made the show rather avant-garde in style.

Thirdly, the show set a new Project record for quantity of props. On this page are some glimpses of the piece:

1. The company, as seen after their first performance. L to R: **Amirah Hancock**, **Melanie Correa**, **Sarah Lopez**, **Xavier Espinal**, **Aengus O'Donnell**, **Kylee Chester**, **Kaytie Gil**, and **Maria Alcides**.

2. Aengus plays a violin (that he later smashed) for the dancing Amirah.

3. Melanie howls along with her screen image.

4. Kylee, Maria, Aengus, and Sarah experience a mighty lurch on the subway.

5. **Naseem Abdul-Majeed** makes his feelings known.

6. Maria and Kylee played a couple with some relationship issues.

7. Xavier removes his makeup after his unicycle and balloon-animal act.

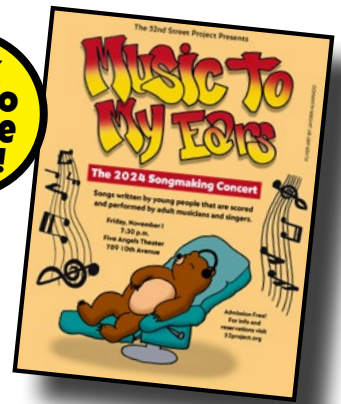
Two Ensemble members did their part for the show offstage: **Evaluna Santoni** did sound, and **Kass Sinchi** worked on costumes. ♦



SHOW PHOTOS BY CARIN VAN DER DONK

MUSIC TO MY EARS (AND EVERYONE ELSE'S)

On November 1, we presented our annual **Songmaking** show, a full-blown concert with a panoply of performers that turned the hand-written songs of our young members into a musical extravaganza. **Garrett Kim** led the writing workshops and **Avi A. Amon** was the musical director. Our songwriters were **Diana Abrajan**, **Makiyah Gray**, **Grace V. Guity-Reyes**, and **Julian Wilder IV**. The amazing composers were **Tess Edwards**, **Erika Ji**, **James Powers**, and **Sarah Slipp**. They were also the band, along with **Kat Cartusciello** and **Jonja Leon Merck**. The singers, who were no less amazing, are listed and seen below. Boy, it was a great show! Check it out online! ♦



Angel Desai performed Makiyah's *Hot Tub to Roller Coaster*.



Jenelle Chu sang *Sad Days to Happy Days to Sad Days* by Makiyah.



Tommy McDowell rocked out Grace's *Left Sock Protest*.



Belén Moyano delivered *An Actual Emotional Song* by Grace.



Neil D'Astolfo purred out Grace's *The Rise of the Cats*.



Betsy Hogg made us feel every moment of *This Is My Life*, by Diana.



Sahar Milani honored all mothers with Diana's *Only My Mom*.



Greg Hildreth was inspiring in Julian's *Motivation*.



Kendal Hartse sang about a small plant in Julian's *Just Leave Him*.



Kirstin Louie and **Major Curda** belted *True Potential*, by Julian.



And here are the songmakers, taking their bow in front of the band. From left to right: **Grace**, **Julian**, **Makiyah**, and **Diana**.

THE SPORTS PAGE

Results of the 22nd edition of the Project Ping-Pong Tournament, held on May 10, 2024



The Champions

Penguins on Vacay
Diego Caoili
and Oliver Tanner



2nd Place

The Hi-Fives
Jai-Lyzz Rodriguez
and Sam Dash



3rd Place

Lefties in Protest
Edgar Sinchi
and Michael Propster



4th Place

Chicken Ice Cream
Ahmed Attia
and Giovanni Benedicto



Honorable Mention

Armani Exchange
Xavier Valentin
and Andy Ingalls



Wackiest Team

The Cookie Crumblers
Jason "JJ" Wilks
and Mateo Santoni



Most Improved

The Pongerz
Atif Dowidar
and Fouad Dakwar



Best New Players

Rebeca Vanterpool
and
Bella Galindo



Best Dressed

Serving Sass
Katty Lopez
and Adaire Kamen



Good Sports

Adolfo Sinchi
and
Hansel Benedicto

PUTT 'ER THERE, PAL

Every year we have an exciting Golf Tournament! "Gee, the kids must love that," you say. Well, actually it's for grown-ups. But it raises a bundle of cash for the kids!

On May 16, a couple of dozen duffers journeyed to the swanky and beautifully manicured **Quaker Ridge Golf Club** to see if they could use oddly-shaped sticks to sink little white dimpled spheres into 18 holes spread out over a vast, sylvan greensward.

All the blokes had a great time and **Ana Soto** took photos of the teams, a few of which are seen here. ♦



Henrik Hammarlund, Carmine Sprio, Jr., Arthur Pearsall, Russell Dodson.



Erich Jungwirth, Bob Goldberg, Seth Marx, Michael DeCandia.



Irwin Stockel, Bob Stockel, David Costabile, ProjFounder Willie Reale.



Jan-Willem van den Dorpel, Jon Gay, Bruce Graham.

ANA SOTO

HALLOWEEN AT THE 52ND SCREECH BOO-JECT!



Ciana & Bella



Edgar & Michael



Danaya & Kaytie



Josiah & Kyle



Love & Molly



Ronald & Xavier



Ally & Rebeca

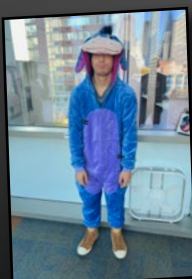


Lynne & Sarah

PHOTOS BY THE STAFF



Josiah was Tobi Obito, **Kyle** was Kyle-Hulk, **Aiden** was, um, a skeleton soldier, **Caylyn** was a squirrel, **Grace** was Strawberry Shortcake, **Atif** was Charzard (a Pokemon character), and **Carol**, was, well, you know how mean our boss is! ♦



Most of the staff went with a **Winnie-the-Pooh** theme. **Ana** was the Bear of Very Little Brain, **Caylyn** was Piglet, **Diego** was Eeyore, **Kat** was Tigger, **Abby** was Roo, **Garrett** was Rabbit, and **George** was author A.A. Milne. ♦

MEET LIZ SWEENEY

We are sad to report that our beloved **Johanna Vidal** has moved to Texas, but happy to report that **Liz Sweeney** is our brand new Education Director. Liz is a native of the Bronx, an educator, facilitator, performer, and theater director. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in acting from **Marymount Manhattan College** and a Master of Arts in Applied Theater from the **City University of New York**. Early in her career, Liz concentrated on developing youth theater productions in New York City while serving as the Associate Program Director for the **Creative Arts Team**. In 2012, she founded the **Park Avenue Youth Theater Company**, and produced and directed over 20 original shows. Liz is passionate about serving young people and their families and looks forward to doing it at The Project.

When Liz is not doing all of the above, she produces and directs independent short films. Liz is a runner, a cook, and a lover of hawks, falcons, eagles, and all raptors! Last but not least, she is the proud mother of eleven-year-old **Nelli**. ♦



Want to know more about the rest of our motley crew? [Visit the staff page on our website.](#)



Hi, P.U. Readers! I'm Ahmed, and I am the Sultan of this Sidebar! The following foundations, corporations, and government agencies recently made generous grants to The 52nd Street Project. We are grateful to them for their support as well as to the many individuals who help sustain the Project's programs. ♦

Anonymous.....	\$10,000	The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation	\$30,000
Claneil Foundation	\$7,500	Maginley Family Trust	\$19,770
Consolidated Edison	\$5,000	The Pinkerton Foundation.....	\$50,000
Education Foundation		The Shubert Foundation.....	\$20,000
of America	\$5,000	Stephen & Carol Canter	
The Estee Lauder Companies,		Family Foundation	\$7,500
Writing Change	\$200,000	West Side Community Fund.....	\$5,000

(Gifts received May 1, 2024 to November 18, 2024)



ESTÉE LAUDER

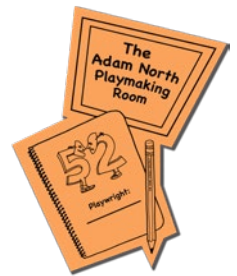
LET US LAUD LAUDER

We are thrilled to be able to tell you that the **Estée Lauder Companies**, the renowned maker of make-up, has awarded The 52nd Street Project a grant of \$200,000. Not only is that a huge bundle of cash, but it is earmarked for arts programming. In these financially pinched times, that is a remarkably generous gift. Many thanks to this fine company! ♦



**WANT TO DONATE
TO THE 52ND
STREET PROJECT ?**

It's as easy as 5 + 2!
Just click [HERE](#) to get to
our donation page.



IN HONOR OF ADAM

The Orange Room in our Clubhouse, birthplace of a thousand plays, will be named the **Adam North Playmaking Room** in a special ceremony to take place during our December Playmaking show weekend. The **North** and **Stockel** families are donating over \$100,000 to the Project in the name of Adam, a young playwright who died in 2023. ♦

MEGABITS • MEGABITS • MEGABITS



Project Volunteer **Kaileela Hobby** and **Dan Wilson** tied the knot on July 1 in Haydenville, Mass. at **Valley View Farms**. The cutie in the middle is **Ari**, Dan and Kaileela's dog-child.



ProjVol **Christy Escobar** and **Mat Hamula** brought **Sebastián Escobar Hamula** into the world in New York City on May 3. That's older sib **Amaia** in Christy's arms.



Here's proud dad **Carl Hendrick Louis** and his wife **Rachel** with **Amari Josephine Louis**, born on Jan. 15th. She loves beans and giggling with her brother **Lincoln**.



Paton Ashbrook and **Sathya Sridharan** were married in June, 2024 in Escondido, CA at the **San Diego Zoo Safari Park** among wildlife, family, friends, and other ProjVols.



Here are **Dara Silverman**, **Doug Seldin**, and their new son **Edison** (born July 28, 2024) who is getting along very well with **Bo the Dog** (note the inset).



Lilli Cooper and **Paul McLoughlin** welcomed **Desi McLoughlin** on April 8, 2024. Lilli is seen here with little Des and his big brother **Bodie**.

URSULA BABIAK

DECEMBER 17, 1927 – JULY 18, 2024



Ursula, a retired Nurse's Aide and lifelong visual artist, was born in Zurich, Switzerland and moved to America in the 1950's with her husband **Vladimir**. In 2012, when she was 85, Hurricane Sandy forced her to leave her ruined home in Staten Island and take up residence in Hell's Kitchen. For the next 12 years, Ursula and her mobility scooter were a constant and joyful presence at Project shows. She even occasionally contributed artwork for props and projections. Our Playmaking shows were always her favorites. She leaves three immediate family members behind: longtime Project staffer **George**, his younger brother **Roi**, and their brother-from-another-mother **Peter Torino**. ♦

Ursula, seen here enjoying the sun in her beloved Hudson River Park.

FLYER BAR PROFILE



LYNNE MARIE ROSENBERG

What she does for us- Lynne first volunteered with us in 2011 and has worked for us over the years as an actor, a director, an improv teacher, an artist, a coach for Teen Ensemble and Storytelling, and a stellar long-time Smart Partner to **Sarah Lopez**.

Occupation- "I wear a lot of hats professionally: I'm the creator and host of a TV show called *Famous Cast Words*, a teacher at **NYU Tisch/Playwrights Horizons Theater School**, currently a research fellow at **Maynooth University** in Ireland, a visual artist, writer, and an occasional co-facilitator of anti-bias and anti-oppression trainings. Oh, and in theory I'm still an actor, but mostly only at The Project these days."

Why she does what she does- "I like to think about being an oyster in everything I do. Oysters can live in toxic water and filter it. Not only do they make the water better for everyone else, they're actually served by the act of filtration, they get nutrients from it. There's a lot in the world that is toxic, but by filtering my tiny patch of the oyster bed, I am nourished."

Place of birth- Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Newton, Massachusetts.

Habitat- "Reality: Brooklyn. What I wish: the forest."

Hobbies- "I like to take long walks, especially in nature, whether that's the **Prospect Park Woodlands** or **Green-Wood Cemetery** or on hikes outside of the city. Birding. Drawing. Eating. Journaling. And I have an addiction to a kind of logic puzzle called **Nonograms**, for which I blame Sarah."

Last book read- "Miriam Margolyes' memoir, *Oh, Miriam!*"

Most recent accomplishment- "Getting cast in the December 2024 Playmaking shows."

Best Project Memory- "In October of 2017 when a 10-year-old girl named Sarah burst through the double doors of the Clubhouse, ran straight to me, ambush-hugged me, and changed my life forever."

Credo- "I'm just here to make friends."

Advice to kids- "Be an oyster."

Favorite thing about the Project- "The sense of belonging I feel here".

On Flyer Bars- "Chocolate With Almonds, all day every day." ♦

SUMMER SNAPZ!

Stuff we did when it was warm!



Edgar Sinchi tries out the mini-golf course that brother **Adolfo** built for the Smart Partner picnic.



Melanie, Samaria, and Betsy prepare for a thrilling tube ride in Rumson. Not a trace of fear here!



Caylyn teaches **Oliver, Atif, Mamadou, and Samaria** how to remove the husks from corn.



The Teen Ensemble roasts marshmallows while on a weekend rehearsal trip at **Fairview Camp**.



We like teaching kids how to ride bicycles! That's **Jai-Lyzz Rodriguez** on the left. At right are **Logan Centeno** and his Smart Partner **John Manolis**. Both of these young people have now ridden the **Empire State Trail** (better known here as the Hudson River bike path).



Carol just loooooooves to shop for 30 hungry Projectiles!



Take it easy, **Kat!** **Carol** will be back any minute with the food!