THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 52ND STREET PROJECT

52 PROJECT UPDATE

ISSUE #97 • JUNE, 2026 • DIEGO CAOILI & JOHN SHEEHY, EDITORS

PLAYMAKING PHOTOS BY CARIN VAN DER DONK, POSTER ART BY CAYLYN WAN-CREAGER & DIEGO CAOILI

ONE TASTY PRODUCTION

Click the poster to see the video on YouTube!

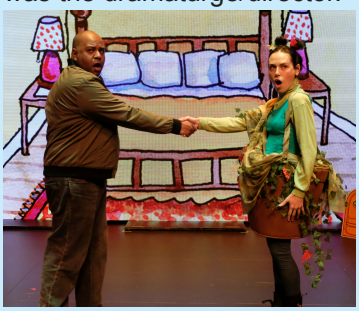


In a Playmaking production, the young people write their first plays guided by adult volunteers. The shows are then set to music, designed and performed by adult professionals. The December production, SUGAR & SPICE, *Plays to Savor*, featured 8 zesty shows with original music by Avi Amon, lighting design by **Finn Meyercord**, sound design by **Hannah Birch Carl**, and costume design by **Christianne Bakewell**. **Charlie Zuckerman** was our seasoned stage manager.



▲ The Playmakers: (front row) Dylan, Zaire, Kaylee, & Matthew; (back row) Pennelope, Kaylie, Lalune, & Chad.

Kelvyn Mitchell turned out to be Penelope G.'s *THE MAN IN THE BLUE SHIRT*, much to the dismay of poison ivy plant **Natalie Walker**, who only wanted her best friend returned to her. **Betsy Hogg** was the dramaturge/director.



A ballerina (**Keren Lugo**) runs into a car salesman (**Neil D'Astolfo**) on the street, and she instantly believes he's her long lost brother in Chad B.' *THE LOST FAMILY*, which was dramaturged and directed by **Marchánt Davis**.



Matt P.'s *THE DOJO* was set in a fridge, where an egg (**Yonatan Gebeyehu**) has a battle with a mustard container (**Nadia Quinn**), and only the least delicious survive. **Nolan Doran** was the dramaturge/ director.



The best puppy in the world (**Shaunette Renée Wilson**) and 11 year-old soccer star Bob (**Ross Cowan**) team up in Dylan L.'s *THE STORY OF LYLA & BOB*, with dramaturgy and direction by **Michael Propster**.





Kaylee G. brought us Cathren & Jake (**Stephanie Linas** & **JJ Wilks**) as *THE SISTER & THE BROTHER*, struggling to connect despite some birthday pranks that threaten to upend their relationship. **Kea Trevett** was the dramaturge/director.



In Kaylie M.'s *DIFFERENT WORLDS DIFFERENT DREAMS*, a pigeon and a deer (**Jackie Chung** & **Cecilia Arana**) meet in a forest and team up to take on the deer's abusive stepdad, who is not a deer at all. **Ka-Ling Cheung** was the dramaturge/director.



A trainer (**Arian Moayed**) claims to want to help basketball player (**Joe Holt**) do well enough to gain back his family, but the trainer turns out to be Zaire B.'s *THE PARENT THIEF*, dramaturgy and direction by **Christian DeMarais**.



Piper (**Adrienne C. Moore**) seems unable to get her mother Alena (**Celia Keenan-Bolger**) to be kind to her, but why? That's Lalune L.'s *THE MYSTERY*, with dramaturgy and direction by **Annabelle Cousins**.

HO-HO-HOLIDAY PARTY

As 2025 was coming to a close we threw a party in our clubhouse with:

▼ Ornaments crafted by Sophia, Tiffany, Garrett Kim, & Brigette Gendron.



▼ Working on their wish lists were Michael Propster, Ana Soto, Adaire Kamen and her SP Katty, before sending them on to Santa.



▶ To get everyone in the mood, Director of Education Liz Sweeney led those assembled in a sing-a-long of “All I Want for Christmas.”



▲ Hand decorated cookies by Liesl, Xavier, Melanie, Caylyn Wan-Creager, Charlie Zuckerman, Sophia and Danaya Esperanza.



▲ Cardboard stood in for gingerbread in creating these houses by Nancy Giles, Charlie Zuckerman, Caylyn Wan-Creager, and Jaaziel.



Putting Up the Take Down



Stage Combat introduces the Project members to the elements of safe stage fighting. **Kerry Warren** led the workshops with support from Program Director **Garrett Kim**. The young people then created original scenes with their adult partners to show off the skills they've learned. TAKE DOWN, Stage Combat 2026 presented 7 such scenes, with lighting design by **Stuart Green**, sound design by **Bri Weintraub**, and stage management by **Amy Tedeschi**.



STAGE COMBAT PHOTOS BY JOAQUIN CAOILI, POSTER ART BY SMART PARTNERS HANNAH & KENDAL

1. Wings (**Aishling Pembroke**), a plus-one at the Grammy's, tried to rob pop diva Ayla (Jaelannie R.) of her award and her spotlight in *AWARD THIEF*.

2. Music's highest honor got another shout-out in *WAIT? HOW DOES A KID HAVE A GRAMMY* with LJ W. as a 7 year-old who awakens one night to find a burglar (**Mat Hostetler**) trying to boost his award.

3. A neighbor (**Kristin Louie**) turns sour when she finds a teenager (Grace G.) is operating a *LEMONADE STAND* on her lawn, one of them gets beaten to a pulp.

4. There's really nothing cheerful about a couple of pep squad members (Khloe C. & **Anna Telfer**) battling over the best place to stand on the sidelines in *THE COMPETITION*.

5. A super privileged kid hoping to get improved wifi (Milo P.) plans to take the last seat on a space mission from Captain Sparkles (**Tommy McDowell**) in *SPACE BRAT, OR ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR WIFI*.

6. In *UNTITLED*, a pro basketballer (Nezai D.) has a disagreement with his coach (**Matt Provenza**) that could get them both suspended.

7. A pair of pastry chefs (Darius B. & **Ronald Peet**) are whipped into a frenzy over the ownership of a stunning dessert in *THAT'S MY CAKE*.

Special thanks to in-class volunteers **Raquel Chavez** and **Sharmarke Yusuf**.



REPLAY PHOTOS BY ANA SOTO; POSTER ART BY LYNNE MARIE ROSENBERG



Replaying Their Parts

Our Replay program was held over the mid-winter school break, February 16 - 20, and culminated in a reading of the newest plays from Project members building on their past Playmaking experiences. The presentation include the four new plays:

EVEN THE BEST NEED TO REST, by Project member Hannah, with director/dramaturge **Adaire Kamen**, centered on an obsessive on-line gamer (**Major Curda**) who becomes estranged from their mom (**Angel Desai**) and pals (**Elli Brown**, **Jeremy Rishe**, and **Sophie Zukowski**), until they realize that they just need to go outside and get back to what matters.



PANDA'S JOURNEY FOR A CROWBAR, by Project member Naseem, with director/dramaturge **Jose Gamo**, told the tale of Poma the Panda (**Jon-Michael Reese**) and Hard Elephant (**Gardiner Comfort**) who need to find an enchanted crowbar in order to defeat the evil No, a dinosaur (**Anna Crivelli**).





THE SURPRISE, by Project member Loyal, with director/dramaturge **Alicia Moeller**, explored the relationship between LEET (**Alaina Kai Chester**) and pals BEEP (**Sarah Quigley**) and MEEP (**Rachel Lin**) who seem to be acting shady on LEET's birthday for some reason.



THE TAIL LIGHT, by Project member Adolfo, with director/dramaturge **Olivia Gilliatt**, was an epic tale of espionage, political double-dealing, hidden identity, and rising authoritarianism featuring **Joanna Parson**, **Sophia Zukowski**, **RJ Brown**, **Jeremy Rishe**, **Elli Brown**, & **Anna Crivelli**. There was even a choose-your-own-adventure ending presented by Adolfo himself.

Giving Voice



Songmaking is the process by which the young people learn about creating songs and collaborate with graduate students and alumni of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts Musical Theater Writing Program, and BerkleeNYC's Power Station, to create original works that are presented in a free concert each fall. This year, RAISE YOUR VOICE was presented Friday, October 24, in our Five Angels Theater, led by Program Director **Garrett Kim**, Music Director **Avi A. Amon**, Stage Manager & Lighting Designer **Bri Weintraub**, and Sound Designer **Elisabeth Weidner**. The amazing band was **Stephen Stocking**, guitars; **Danny Ursetti**, drums; and **Sam Weber,** bass.



The first set of three songs had lyrics by Atif, with music by **Ben Page** [1].
In "The Deep Blue of the Birds," **Yonatan Gebeyehu** [2] was a bird who had lost his family to the ocean.

Gaven Trinidad [3] was "The Master of RPS," about a young man cautiously confident in his Rock, Paper, Scissors skills.



In "The Fight for the Height," **Andy Ingalls** [4] was a building hoping to become taller and more powerful than a mean skyscraper.



Next up, Jaaziel presented two song with composer **Jacinth Greywoode** [5].

Reminiscing about "Coney Island," **Neil Tyrone Pritchard** [6] described a day at the beach.



Christian DeMarais [7] sang of his dream of being a fast car in "Race Tesla."



The next pair of songs were from BreeAnna & composer **Cassidy O'Connell** [8].

Meeting a "Little Birdie," turned out to be traumatizing for **Ali Ewoldt** [9].



Lennox T. Duong [10], as a flower who has been bullied by the mean girls, offered this advice: "Never Trust A Daisy."

Sophia and composer **Cybèle Fasquelle** [11] offered a couple of related songs.



In "A World Away," **Lora Lee Gayer** [12] sang as a woman who only wanted to be with her love on Mount Olympus, but feared that the other gods would not accept this human.

Sam Gravitte [13] was "Ghost Boy," the son of Lora Lee's character, who only wanted to be like the other boys, but had to cope with being a demigod.





The evening closed with two songs from Zion and composer **Kennen Butler** [14].

Jenelle Chue [15] dealt with the anger of the wind with air pollution and global warming in "Breezy Twists."



Sunrise (**Evan Isabella**) and Sunset (**Belén Moyano**) begged each other for a bit of grace in "Open Up To Me." [16]

SONGMAKING PHOTOS BY DENEKA PENISTON, POSTER ART BY SMART PARTNERS MATILDA & ANNA



Holding All Of The Cards

Our Spring Playmaking production had the young people write their first plays guided by adult volunteers. As with the show described on page 1, UP THE ANTE, *Plays That Go All In*, featured 8 shows, this time with original music by **James Powers**, lighting design by **Greg MacPherson**, sound design by **Chyanne Peña**, and costume design by **Lara de Bruijn**. And we stacked the deck with stage manager **Aaron Conover**.

PLAYMAKING PHOTOS BY ANA SOTO; POSTER ART BY LYNNE MARIE ROSENBERG



A pair of apparitions (**Princess Jacob** & **Stephen Stocking**) go on quests and side-quests in pursuit of a fulfilling afterlife in Liam C.'s *GHOST ARRIVAL*, dramaturgy and direction by **Nico Grelli**. ▶



◀ The Playmakers: (front row l. to r.) Berniece, Valentina, Isabella, & Theo; (back row l. to r.) Matthew, Maddox, Liam, & Victoria.



▼ Twin sisters, (**Jessica Kahler** & **Krystel Lucas**, center) about to be separated by going to different schools, crash out in at a movie screening, but learn to appreciate the time that they get together through Victoria V.'s *CRAZY TWIN DREAMS*, with dramaturgy and direction by **Tasha Gordon-Solomon**.



Lily (**Kendal Hartse**) and pal Luke (**Jose Duran**) are hoping for a fun sleepover, but end up fleeing from a murderer in Valentina V.'s *SLEEPOVER GONE WRONG*. **Danaya Esperanza** was the dramaturge/director. ▶



◀ Orca (**Stephen O'Reilly**) loses his chance become a basketball player when his tiger friend (**Raúl Castillo**) destroys his contract before he can sign it, in Matthew G.'s *THE DEEP, DEEP OCEAN*. Ahmed Attia was the dramaturge and **James Yaegashi** directed.



Inventors/entrepreneurs (**Sharmarke Yusef** & **Sophie von Haselberg**) have to get over their differences or risk being crushed by a meteor in Theo B.'s *FRENEMIES WITH BENEFITS*. **Jose-Maria Aguila** was the dramaturge/director. ▶



◀ Erick, a vulture (**Echaka Agba**), uses their healing powers on an injured dragon (**Belén Moyano**), who in turn teaches the whole vulture family about vegetarianism, in Maddox S.'s *ERICK'S DAY OUT*, with dramaturgy and direction by **Kyle Cameron**.



BEST RESTAURANT IN TOWN (ONLY ONE) by Berniece W. had a fashion designer (**Bree Elrod**) trying to get a decent meal from an elderly chef who may have lost all of his senses (**Ryan Spahn**). **Evan Isabella** was the dramaturge/director. ▶



◀ A posh peacock (**Leta Levy**) learns some harsh truths from a rat stuffie (**Naomi Lorrain**) in Isabella A.'s *LIFE'S HARD, GET OVER IT*. **Ashley-Marie Ortiz** was the dramaturge/director.

REEL EXPERIENCE FILMMAKING



In Filmmaking, Project members create original short, live-action films with the assistance of adult professionals. Under the guidance of Program Director Garrett Kim, the young people create the scripts, they act, they co-direct, etc. This year, two new production companies created their first efforts, which were screened at our Film Festival and Award Ceremony in May.



Studio Coraline, with Filmmakers Bella, Katty, and Mateo, created a film noir thriller *PSYCHOLOGICAL INSANITY*, assisted by director Gracie Fojtik, actors Maryn Shaw & Lynne Marie Rosenberg, producer Liz Sweeney, and composer Tess Edwards.



Pirates Treasure Productions, with Filmmakers Hannah & Logan, created a wacky comedy *MEOW*, with director Grace Rex, actors Jennifer Mogbock & Jacob Presson, producer/actor Charlie Zuckerman, and composer Fouad Dakwar.

Both films were edited by Taina Carrion-Perez.

FILMMAKING PHOTOS BY JOAQUIN CAOILI, POSTER ART BY CAYLYN WAN-CREAGER & DIEGO CAOILI





1. FILMMAKING 2026 at the screening, (front row l. to r.) Grace Rex, Maryn Shaw, Taina Carrion-Perez, Charlie Zuckerman, Jennifer Mogbock, & Garrett Kim; (back row l. to r.) Bella, Mateo, Katty, Hannah, Logan, & Tess Edwards.
2. Studio Coraline: Mateo, Katty, & Bella, with Cinematurge/Actor Maryn Shaw.
3. Pirate's Treasure Productions: Hannah & Logan.
4. Program Director Garrett Kim introducing the screening.
5. Post movie Q & A with the Filmmakers of *PSYCHOLOGICAL INSANITY,* Mateo, Katty, & Bella.
6. Post movie Q & A with the Filmmakers of *MEOW*, Logan & Hannah.
7. *PSYCHOLOGICAL INSANITY* was honored with the "Best Drama" award. Accepting were (l. to r.) Mateo, Katty, Bella, Taina Carrion-Perez, Tess Edwards, & Maryn Shaw.
8. MEOW was honored with the "Best Comedy" award. Accepting were (l. to r.) Charlie Zuckerman, Logan, Hannah, Taina Carrion-Perez, Jennifer Mogbock, & Grace Rex.









Click the poster above to watch the short films on our YouTube channel.

So Very Sweet

The Project held its annual gala on April 13, entitled HOW SWEET IT IS, *Sixteen Years in Our Clubhouse and Theater*, honoring our board member, and the man who built our home, Bob Goldberg and Yorke Construction Corporation. It was a joyous evening, with original songs with lyrics by Project members, music and performances by adults, as well as tributes to Bob and Yorke. It was also our most successful fundraiser in many years bringing in over $435K. Here are some highlights.



GALA PHOTOS BY DENEKA PENISTON



Board Chairs **Louis Friedman** and **Cathy Dantchik** kicked off the event welcoming the guests. [1]

The first song "*Master of RPS*" with music by **Ben Page**, was introduced by lyricist Atif [2], and was sung by **Jon-Michael Reese** [3].





Our leaders, **Carol Ochs** and **Natalie Hirsch**, thanked the guests for supporting the Project and raffled off some prizes. [4]

Our Hosts for the evening **Tim Blake Nelson** and **Elizabeth Marvel** shared what the Project, and especially our home on Tenth Avenue, means to them. [5]





The song, "*Race Tesla*" with music by **Jacinth Greywoode**, was introduced by lyricist Jaaziel [6], and was sung by **Jason Veasey** [7].

Sophia [8] and her Songmaking partner **Cybelle Fasquelle**, introduced their song "*Ghost Boy*," sung by **Sam Gravitte** [9].





Former Project member, and recent Oscar winner for her live-action, short film *TWO PEOPLE EXCHANGING SALIVA*, **Natalie Musteata** talked about what her experiences at the Project have meant for her career. [10]

BreeAnna [11], and her Songmaker partner **Cassidy O'Connell** introduced their operatic song, "*Little Birdie*," which was sung by **Amanda Seyfried** [12].





Our honoree, **Bob Goldberg**. [13]

Closing out the night was the duet, "*Open Up to Me*," with lyrics by Zion and music by **Kennen Butler**, which was performed by **Bonnie Milligan** & **Natalie Walker**. [14]

Putting A Spin On It

Our Annual Ping Pong Bonanza took on a slightly different structure this year. Rather than a tournament with rounds, it was a free form celebration of the sport with singles and doubles games, wacky costumes, DJ sets, color-commentary, and lots and lots of sportsmanship. But don't worry, there were still awards to be handed out at the end of the event.

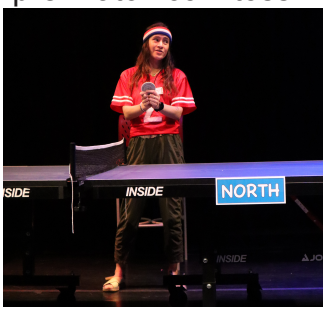
Ref Charlie Zuckerman. ▼



Project members Atif and Chad getting into the action. ▼



Caylyn Wan Creager overseeing a pre-match coin toss. ▼



PING PONG PHOTOS BY BRIDGET DELANEY

Jaaziel & Chyanne Peña. ▼



Smart Partners Khloe & Belèn Moyano. ▼



Smart Partners Oliver & Kim Jinhyoung. ▼



DJ DC kept the crowd hyped. ▼



Smart Partners Rebeca & Ally Thomas. ▼



Lalune & Ana Soto were ultimately named best dressed. It may be a little hard to tell in this shot, but Ana was dressed as Marty Supreme. ▼





Garrett Kim and Kat Almirañez distributing the awards. ▼

