



PROJECT UPDATE

VOLUME 60 - OCTOBER, 2009 GEORGE BABIAK, EDITOR

TEENS PERFORM "LEAR" IN NEW YORK AND TEXAS

Sibling rivalry, bad parenting, banished children, stormy weather, and lots of dancing with umbrellas. These are the images and themes that Four Project teens grappled with onstage at the 13th St. Theater in New York City and at the Crowley Theater in Marfa, TX.

After a smashingly successful run in NYC, the teens traveled to the Wild West for the first week of July. They spent their days riding horses, eating huevos rancheros, browsing a rattlesnake museum, eating huge burgers, gazing at Saturn through a telescope, eating BBQ, designing and painting their own set backdrop, eating watermelon, watching fireworks, and of course, rehearsing and performing "Project Lear" for our Texas friends.

They also hosted a Community Day, where they led kids and teens from the neighborhood in theater and Shakespeare games. The games were so effective that one young Texan boy named Zach said that he had learned from "Lear" that, "With power comes pain. You gotta say, 'Take it from me, Devil. I got no use for it no more.'"

SO WHAT'S WITH THE NEW SPACE?

Many of you heard that we were scheduled to move into the new 52 HQ at the end of the summer. Alas, it will take just a bit longer.



Although our great new space is virtually complete, the plumbing for the heating and cooling system needs further work that will take a few weeks. We're hoping to be in by the end of the year, but keep an eye on your e-mail box or our website (www.52project.org) for updates.

PROJECT LEAR - JUNE, 2009 THE TEEN ENSEMBLE DOES SHAKESPEARE



A scene from the New York show: Chris Ceraso as the ailing Lear; Kayelani Almonte Silva as Regan, and Caitlin McWethy as Goneril.

ROB WHITE



Standing, L to R: Megan Cramer (Gloucester), Victor Cortes (Edmund), Chris Ceraso (Lear), Kimani Lewis-Ashley (Edgar), and Merlaine Mendez (Cordelia/Fool). Seated, L to R: Olivia Harris (Stage Manager), Megan Sandberg-Zakian (Director), and Caitlin Mc Wethy (Goneril). Lying down: Kayelani Almonte Silva (Regan).



PLAYMAKING - APRIL, 2009
BRAND-NEW KIDS WRITE PLAYS
FOR GROWN-UP ACTORS



▲ Lucas Ruedel's *The Exchange* featured Ezra Knight and Nitya Vidyasagar as two grains of sand grappling with an identity crisis. It was dramaturged and directed by Kathleen Foreman, who was visiting us from Calgary, Alberta, way up in Canada.

▲ *Crystal and Manny Forever*, written by Ashley Melon and directed by Becky White, told the tale of a boy (Donnetta Grays) and a girl (Jackie Chung) who find love while working in a pet shop.



▲ Steven Goldstein and Emily Dorsch were a brother and sister coming to terms with their parents' break-up in Daquan Nelson's *The Big Argument*, directed by Niegel Smith.



▲ In Venecia Escamilla's *Out of the Woods*, Jordan Mahome played both the abusive dad and the friend of Patrice Johnson. Alex Gersten-Vassilaros dramaturged; Reg Flowers directed.



▲ Seen here in Naomi Welch's *Best Daughter Ever* are Elizabeth Marvel and Eliza Baldi as a hard-working mom and the daughter who wants to ease her load.



▲ In *Two Wishes*, by Francis Rivera, Billy Crudup and Elliott Villar played two Centurions who battle a Cyclops and a giant snake and dance a polka with a Fairy. George Babiak directed.



▲ *PB & J Go Sour*, by Eliza Munoz, revealed the true story behind the famous spreads. Jeremy Beck and Cynthia Vance were directed by Liz Flahive.

ALL PLAYMAKING PHOTOS BY DAVID FURR

Can Do! Plays on the Bright Side was performed in the Anspacher Hall at the Public Theater the weekend of April 3-5, 2009. Greg MacPherson did the lights, Andrew Sherman composed the original songs, Vanessa Valdes was the sound designer, Casey Keeler was the stage manager, and Chloe Chapin and Kathleen Doyle designed the costumes.

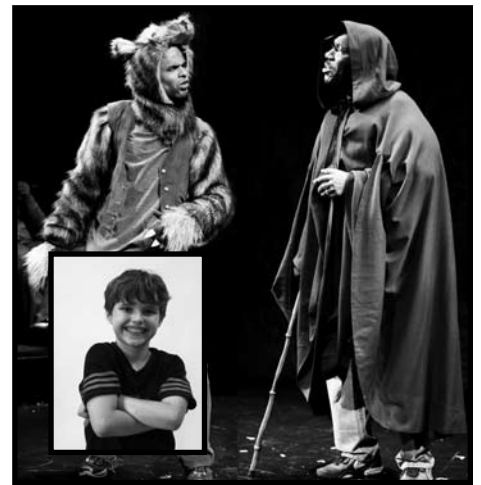
A jumbo serving of thanks go to: The Gersten-Vassilaros Family of Bridgehampton and Laurie Becker of Sag Harbor for housing us on the Playmaking weekend, and Oskar Eustis, Jenny Gersten, Maria Goyanes, Bethany Ford, and everyone else at the Public Theater.



▲Lee Wilkof defies Jeannine Serralles' wrecking ball in Joseph Vasquez's *Living the Life with House and Jenny*, dramaturged by Josh Moody and directed by the great Michael Bernard.



▲Annie Purcell and Reg E. Cathey were lovers at odds (but with a common love of Elmo) in *Together Forever*, written by Nathaly Trinidad and directed by Megan Cramer.



▲A dog named Alpha (Danyon Davis) and an Elemental Lord (James McDaniel) faced off in Kamil Kuzminski's *Two Rivals*, directed by David Costabile.

ALL BLOCK ISLAND PHOTOS BY ROB WHITE



◀Michael Bernard's *Escape From Gumdrop Mountain* related the tale of two Candyland game pieces (Alizette Zapata and Erin Mallon) who venture off the board and encounter stray pieces from other board games.

▼Josh Moody and Lucas Ruedel were Holmes and Watson in Josh's *The Case of the Sweet-Toothed Butler*.

▲They made the audience say "Aah!" Tim Cain and Rene Paul Santiago were *Hot Docs* in the play of the same name, written by Jeff Cox.

►Writer Sascha Paladino's *Outta The Park* saw Kyle Haden beleaguered by Joseph Vasquez, who was, in fact, a player from another planet.





BLOCK ISLAND
(continued)

◀ *It Ant Over 'Til It's Over*, by Cynthia Kaplan, featured Tiara Varela and Brandon Dirden as a pair of ants forced to find a new home. It was a thinly disguised rumination on the fortunes of the Project this year, but it all turned out well, so we took heart.

▶ Katie Meister and Dante Quinones were a pair of dissatisfied garden gnomes in Katie's *Greener Still*. Dante went traveling in Europe while Katie was a stick-in-the-mud.



▲ Sharyn Rothstein's *Thunder Fast* cast runner Daquan Nelson as a sports phenom and Annie Henk as his ambitious publicity agent. She learned her lesson!



▲ Elizabeth Vasquez was a cancer survivor whose best friend, Crystal Dickinson, couldn't stop living in the past in Pia Wilson's *The Greatest Memory on Earth*.

Square One: The Original Plays
The 2009 Block Island
One-on-Ones

was rehearsed during a week on Block Island and produced at The Ensemble Studio Theatre at 549 W. 52nd St. on July 24-26.

The Creative Team

Greg MacPherson Lights
Kim R Sherman Composer
Katherine Brown Costumes
Casey Keeler Stage Manager
Vanessa Valdes Goddess of Sound
Martha Velie-Gass
and Pat Ritter Chefs

The Host Families

Elliot & Amy Nerenberg; Sue Black; The Homans Family; Jennifer & Elliot Taubman; Ron & Judy Tierney; Joya Verde & Virginia Dare; Martha Velie-Gass & Pat Ritter; and our headquarters host Dr. Christina Biaggi.

▶ In John Sheehy's *Rock Age*, John cast himself as a very dim caveman. Jeremy Sanchez played the Cro-Magnon friend who taught him the meaning of Rock... music, that is.



◀ Elena Caballero was the title character of Sean Kenealy's *The Extreme Painter*. Jackie Chung was Tae Bo Suzie, the girl who idolized the Painter to extremes.

THE WAREHAM ONE-ON-ONES AUGUST, 2009



▲ Gerardo Escamilla was a socially-minded hippie kid and Felix Solis was a malevolent and destructive robot in Tommy Smith's *Grady and Roger*.



▲ Jed Clarke cast himself and his partner Francis Rivera as zany astronauts on a long and absurd space voyage in *Miracle Rock*.



▲ Carlo Alban's *More Than You Know*, featured Carlo as a small-time crook whose world is rocked by a Fortune teller played by Nathaly Trinidad.



▲ Christopher Randolph was a show-tune loving Sheriff of Rottingham and Lincoln Bernard was *Rockin' Hood* in Christopher's play about clashing musical forms.



▲ George Babiak and Aidan Martinez gater-crashed Yankee Stadium in GB's *Crash Course*.



◀ *Mabel's Big Break* told the tale of an elderly chorus girl who takes on Death himself in a dance-off. Jasmine Hernandez was the feisty Mabel and author Craig Cox was the Grim Reaper.

Back to Square One: More Original Plays

was rehearsed during a week in Wareham, Mass. at the home of Peter and Helen Randolph and performed at E.S.T. on August 21-23, 2009.

The Design & Tech Team

Greg MacPherson.....Lighting Designer
Patrick Barnes.....Composer
Crystal Thompson & Kathleen DoyleCostumes
Maury Schott.....Sound Designer
Karen Munkel.....Stage Manager

The Host Families

Emily & John Morgan; Patty & David Straus; Gray & Rosemary Watson; Bob & Marina Whitman; Sidney Worthen & David Pearce; Joe McNay; Peter, Helen & Christopher Randolph.



◀ Ashley Melon was a regular-type girl who suddenly gets a wacky Fairy godmother (Shirley Rumierk) in Jihan Crowther's *The Wish Switch*.

▶ In *You Can't Blend In* by Julie Sharbutt, Eliza Leilani Munoz was a diligent veterinary student plagued by a pesky gecko (Julie).



◀ *Bacon The Rules*, by Annie Purcell, showed what happens when a time-traveler from the future (Katie Liu) meets a hungry 19th century ghost (Annie).

▶ Samantha Paduani was a fashionable alien and Ginny Lee a UFO investigator in Vickie Ramirez's *Case 24: Roswell, New Mexico*.



MEET OUR NEW TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Remember the character of "Son" in *I Want My Mommy Back*? Or "Caveson" in *Sometimes Y*? Or maybe you remember Oberon and Theseus from our teen *Midsummer Night's Dream*? No? Well, you should, because they were all played by the great Ray Harold in a string of memorable performances at the Project way back in the 20th Century.



Ray Harold

After many Project adventures, Ray went to SUNY Purchase and graduated with a BFA in Entertainment Design Technology. Since then, he has worked non-stop as a technical director and production carpenter. The highlights include stints at the Actors Theater of Louisville, Williamstown Theater Festival, the New York Auto Show, and his Broadway debut *The Farnsworth Invention*. Several other Great White Way jobs followed that auspicious start.

A big new theater demands a bigger staff, so Ray has become our very first Technical Director. Don't worry, George will continue on as Production Manager.. just to pester poor Ray. Says Ray of the pestering, "I wouldn't have it any other way."



The Following Foundations, corporations, and government agencies 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.

The Altman Foundation.....	\$35,000
Bloomberg	10,000
The Brenner Family Foundation	10,000
The BWF Foundation, Inc.	1,000
The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation	10,000
Carnegie Corporation of New York.....	75,000
CBS	5,000
Consolidated Edison Co.....	25,000
Eleanor, Adam & Mel Rubin Foundation.....	1,000
The Educational Foundation Of America	62,500
EIF	50,000
The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.....	20,000
Heisman Foundation	1,500
Hudson Scenic Studios	25,000
Lightspeed Financial LLC	5,000
Ann M. Martin Foundation.....	6,000
Steve Martin Charitable Foundation.....	2,000
MTI.....	2,000
The New World Foundation	1,000
Newman's Own	20,000
Primiano Electric Corp.	2,000
Jonathan Rose Companies	2,500
The Shubert Organization	5,000
The Surdna Foundation.....	30,000
Susquehanna Foundation, Corp.....	5,000
TaxPro Financial Network.....	2,500
Tiger Baron Foundation.....	5,000
John A. Vassilaros & Son, Inc.	5,000
Law Office of Claudia Wagner	1,000
I. Weiss & Sons, Inc.	1,000
Yorke Construction Corp.....	25,000

MEGABITS



▼They met at a Re-play Picnic! Our old pals Josh Lewis and Sarah Kay, a true Project couple, are the proud parents of Mira Kay Lewis, who was born on August 27, was 7 lbs., 12 oz., and is said to be "sassy!"

►You can't tell it here, but Matilda Jones Briggs is a beautiful blonde. She was born to our former intern Melissa Jones and volunteer Lee Briggs on April 20, 2009. In case you didn't notice, she is cute.

◀This is Louie Stephen Eigenberg with his dad, David, and his mom, Chrysti. He came into this world on Monday, Jan 19th at 4:50pm and weighed 6 lbs 9 oz. They're a nice looking family, we gotta say.

►We love it when BOTH the bride and groom are Projvols. Here are Emily Dorsch and Elliot Villar, who tied the knot in Lakewood, OH on Aug. 22.



►Danny Goldstein, a Project director who goes way back with us, is now engaged to Melissa Lee. They're cool.

▼Erin Mallon raced off from the Block Island One-on-Ones to marry Keith Wittenstein on Aug. 1 in Doylestown, PA.



◀Baby #2 for Liliانا Amador and Frank Marty will henceforth be known as Jude Frank Marty. He was born on Jan. 25 and is happy to join big brother Lucas in the Amador/Marty clan.



▼Former intern Jeremy Seymour got hitched to his long-time gal Maggie last June in Illinois.



LATE NEWS: As Project Update went to press, we heard that former ProjKid Noel Polanco and his wife Ruth just had a baby boy named Ephraim. We'll print a photo of the little dude next ish.

EVEN LATER NEWS: Project Actor Frank Wood got married to Kay Gayner in late September. More news to come!



▲Flyer and prop artist Esther Geller and Scott Freeman had a daughter on June 16th and named her Vera June Freeman after her paternal grandmother.



◀Bruce MacVittie, Carol Ochs, and their daughter Sophia earned their open-water diver certificates in Cozumel in August and became the newest New York City Dive Rats.

►On September 1, 2009, after 13 years together, Reg Flowers and Chris Hammett officially tied the knot in Brattleboro, Vermont. They are the first same-sex marriage announcement in Megabits! Reg, by the way, is now devoting his time to being the artistic director of Falconworks, the community-based arts organization he founded in Red Hook, Brooklyn.





THE 52ND STREET PROJECT
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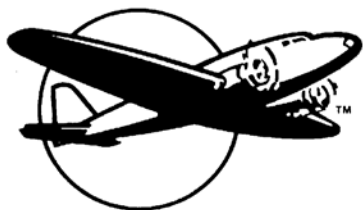
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COSTUME OF THE YEAR:
 John Sheehy gets all the best outfits. In the Spring Playmaking show, he played a giant Cyclops. In August, he appeared as this alien bodybuilder. Those pecs may be padded, but the legs are all his! The costume was built by the great Crystal Thompson.

IN THIS ISSUE OF "PROJECT UPDATE:"

- A report on the Teen Ensemble's Project Learn
- Photos and recaps of the Spring Playmaking and Summer One-on-One shows.
- Introducing Tech Director Ray Harold.
- A Flyer for our October show... and much more!



Flyer Bar Profile

Place of birth: Hanover, New Hampshire.

Current habitat: Block Island and the mountains of Vermont.

Occupation: "Hard to pin down. I guess my main occupation or purpose is being an educator. People refer to me as the engine of enthusiasm because I have so much going on. When you live in a small town and when you're a do-er, there's a lot to do. I am the Ex-Director of the Block Island Maritime Institute, the education program coordinator for the Local Prevention Task Force and Cultural Diversity Exchange Program for the local Episcopal church, and I work part time in a real estate office trying to make some money."

Why she does what she does: "I love making a positive difference in the world, especially for kids, island kids and city kids."

What she does for the Project: Sue is a Block Island host. Every summer she puts up a few kids or a few adults when we descend on the island for the annual One-on-One trip in July.

Hobbies: "Yoga, water aerobics, weaving, sailing, cooking."

Last book read: *Beyond Business as Usual* by Neal O. Michell

Most recent accomplishment: "Surviving my kids' high school years."

Best 52nd Street Project memory: "Attending the Playmaking show in NYC with the Block Island 8th grade."

Credo: "I believe in fate. If you put out positive energy you will get positive back."

Advice to kids: "Work hard at what you do and remember to have fun."

Favorite thing about the Project: "Sharing my home with the kids who are truly appreciative."



SUE BLACK