

# Behind the Scene

**Volume 8, Issue 3**  
**Summer**  
**2003**

**Serving the Washington area since 1992**

## Bard-a-Thon Bonanza

“Something’s rotten in the state of Denmark. I’ll have the full five day forecast after the break.”

Such was the inspired beginning of a hilarious scene featuring Hamlet and Ophelia as we’d never seen them before. Fox 5 Weather Forecaster Sue Palka and Weekend Anchor Will Thomas brought the house down with their unique interpretation of one of Shakespeare’s most famous scenes during Bard-a-Thon 2003, Theatre Lab’s all-night fundraiser to

benefit our education and outreach programs. Joining the Fox 5 team were NBC4 News Anchors Wendy Rieger (a stunning Ophelia), two-time Bard-a-Thon favorite Jim Vance (a dashing and ribald Hamlet) and NBC4 political correspondent and Bard-a-Thon regular Tom Sherwood, making merry as a very pompous Polonius. Along with celebrity news folks, the evening featured an impressive assembly of D.C. theatre stars including Helen Hayes Award winners Rick Foucheux

and Holly Twyford, and a surprise visit from long-time Shakespeare Theatre member Ralph Cosham (who good-naturedly donned a flowery robe and played Queen Gertrude to Twyford’s Hamlet to raise a little extra money from the crowd).

But the real stars of the evening were the 24 pajama-clad participants, each of whom raised at least \$250 from friends, family and colleagues in order to walk the boards for the cause. Together

## A Life Devoted to Stories

He’s been called the “Poet Laureate of Adams Morgan.” He’s also the creator of such acclaimed one-man shows as “Chaos Standing” and “Caminata”—powerful, funny theatre pieces exploring the immigrant experience in the United States. A Salvadoran immigrant who came to this country speaking no English at age

15, Quique Aviles has dedicated his life and art to giving a voice to immi-



Quique Aviles performing in a recent Gala Theatre production.

grants, poor people and others who are too often overlooked in our society. A graduate of the Duke Ellington School for the Arts, he co-founded Lati-Negro as a teenager, the area’s only Black and Latino theatre company, and he is currently Artistic Director of Sol y Soul, a theatre company devoted to using the power of art and the creative process to transform lives and change communities. Through Gala Theatre, he also helped develop “Spoken Resistance,” a performing group which

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they performed heroically for twelve hours in over 100 Shakespearean roles, and raised more than \$10,000 in support of our unique education and scholarship programs serving incarcerated and  
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**Register  
today for  
classes!**

helps young adults express the reality of their own lives and place those realities within a wider social context; the group won the 2002 Mayor’s Arts Award for Emerging Artists.

Without a doubt, Quique has transformed the lives of many through his art over the past twenty years. He has recently joined the faculty of The Theatre Lab and brings

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# Bard-a-Thon

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at-risk teens, immigrant youth, seniors, and people living with HIV/AIDS, among others.

So, all hail this year's Bard-a-Thonians: **Barbara Akin, Andrew Brownstein, Tim Christenson, Paula Correa, Janice Dionne, Thalia Doukas, Eileen Garner, Gamble Gilbertson, Michael Gottesman, Darryl Grady, Irv Lachow, Eowyn Na, Jerry Oshinsky, Alan Roth, Melissa Schick, Janet Shaye, Tom Sherwood, Jeffrey Slavin, Shar Taylor, Catherine Tremeau, Anne Washington, and Bryan Young.** And very special thanks to our Bard-a-Thon 2003 Lord Chamberlain (and highest fundraiser) **Aileen Johnson.**

We couldn't have wished for a better crew to spend the night with! Ω



The few, the proud, ... the Bard-a-Thon 2003 Survivors!

*Support your favorite theatre training center in style.*



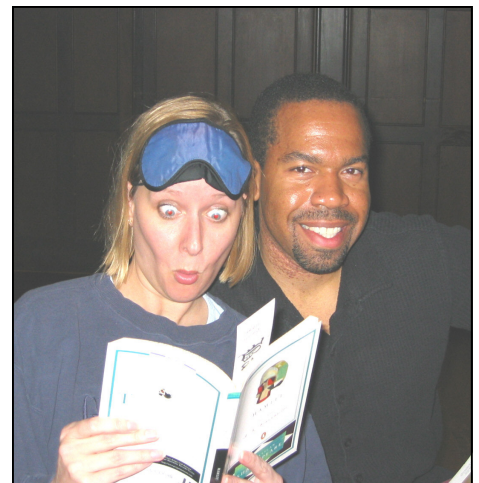
**Order your Theatre Lab cap today!**

Cap is faded khaki with maroon visor and accents. A snappy addition to any wardrobe and only **\$5.50** + \$1.50 (S&H).

See the registration form on the back side of the *Course Update* for ordering information. \$7 is all it costs! (Make sure and include your mailing address.)



Melissa caught sleep walking at 3 a.m., but always ready for a photo op.



"Bryan, stop smiling! Do you know how much more we have to read in this play!"

**A special thanks to our Bard-a-Thon food sponsors for fueling our efforts:**

*Chipotle Mexican Grill, Inc.*

*Cosi Sandwich Bar*

## Add a Professional Credit to Your Resume

One of the missions of The Theatre Lab is to create opportunities for actors, whether they're just starting out or further along in their careers. Acting in a Professional Production, our course in which students perform at professional theatres alongside professional actors, with professional directors at the helm, is perhaps the most unique and valuable opportunity we have to offer, and we're very excited to be teaming up with MetroStage to present a new session of the course this July.

Last year students in Acting in a Professional Production performed in Source Theatre's powerful and well-received *Dutchman*, in non-speaking but integral roles. Here's what they had to say about the experience:

*"This type of class is invaluable—I just can't imagine getting quite the same kind of feedback in a regular class. The mind doesn't process information in the same way as when you're really doing acting in front of a live audience in a professional setting.... It was also nice to be able to add this experience to my resume."*

*"Thank you for the opportunity to act in a professional production.... I would highly recommend this 'class,' or should I say 'experience,' to any actor, either a novice or a professional actor who has been performing his or her entire life."*

*"What I thought would be a great opportunity to participate in a professional production turned out to be so much more. We were treated as professionals and I enjoyed the responsibilities that came with that, as well as the honor to contribute to this show.... I am barely starting to realize how many things I have learned and experienced during the whole process as it was the most enriching theatrical experience I've*

*had so far."*

This time around all student actors enrolled in the course will have speaking roles in a series of staged readings at critically acclaimed MetroStage. An ensemble of students will work under three professional directors with a variety of actors from Washington's professional theatre community, performing readings of three recent full-length plays by prominent women playwrights whose work has not

**Acting in a Professional Production ... is perhaps the most unique and valuable opportunity we have to offer**

...

received the kind of attention in Washington that we think it deserves. The rights have not been finalized, but we're looking at some terrific pieces by Rebecca Gilman, Amy Freed, Eve Ensler, Wendy McLeod, and Jessica Goldberg.

The list of professionals involved in this special event grows every day and is already impressive. Directors Delia Taylor and Lofty Durham are signed on, and the actors will include Helen Hayes Award winner Rick Foucheux, popular performer and teacher Kim Schraf, and Theatre Lab Directors Deb Gottesman and Buzz Mauro. Buzz will head the project, teaching the class that

frames the work of the readings, covering all aspects of how to prepare for a reading, how to work with the director, and the special requirements of professional work.

Following the typical intensive process of producing professional staged readings, each play will receive just one rehearsal, from 7 to 11 on a Monday night, with the performance presented the next evening. Class will meet at Wesley Church (address below) on Thursday evenings, July 10 through July 31 from 7-9pm. Rehearsals and performances will be at MetroStage (1201 North Royal Street in Alexandria) on Mondays and Tuesdays, July 14 and 15, 21 and 22, and 28 and 29. (Please note that these dates and times are different from those listed in the Theatre Lab brochure.) Tuition is \$230. Because these are readings and not full productions, memorization will not be necessary, but considerable preparation will be required outside of class and rehearsal. Students should plan to devote most of their spare time for the three weeks to concentrated work on this project.

Because we expect demand for this course to be high, and because the demands on the performers will be greater than in other courses, we are requiring auditions. We'll be looking for a relatively small ensemble, with roughly equal numbers of men

*(Continued on page 4)*

*programs almost full - call today!*

**Summer Acting Camp for Kids**  
**Summer Acting Institute for Teens**  
**Musical Theatre Institute for Teens**

## Theatre Lab Directors Honored

Deb Gottesman, Buzz Mauro and Michael Rodgers, Directors of The Theatre Lab, are recipients of the 2003 Linowes Leadership Award, presented by the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region. This prestigious award was established in 1997 for the purpose of recognizing "unsung heroes with an exceptional commitment to improving the quality of life in our region."

A volunteer awards committee comprised of the Community Foundation's donors, board members, and other community representatives selects the awards recipients through a competitive process that begins with anonymous nominations. Five individuals receive the award each year. The Theatre Lab trio is the first group of three to be treated as an individual for the purposes of the award, because of their inextricability as a united force bringing the benefits of theatre arts to the community at large.

The work that is being recognized is summarized by the awards committee as follows: "Deb Gottesman, Buzz Mauro, and Michael Rodgers are passionate and persevering in their mission to bring dramatic arts participation and education to underserved populations in the metropolitan Washington region in new and creative ways. This inseparable team founded The Theatre Lab to

provide affordable, high-quality theatre training, but over the years have expanded the organization's mission to serve as a valuable community resource delivering the excitement and life-affirming benefits of dramatic self expression to everyone. They achieve this through a creative mix of acting and theatre workshops for novices and professionals, and innovative programs that teach disadvantaged people to create original dramatic works from real-life experiences. Prior to them coming together to create The Theatre Lab, there really was no other space and programming quite like it even though the region has a very rich theatre and arts community. Through leadership, courage, patience, skill, and dedication to their craft, Deb, Buzz, and Michael have brought theatre arts out into the entire community, and by doing so, are beginning to create solutions to community problems, including the marginalization and isolation of underserved and vulnerable populations including incarcerated youth, immigrant teens, seniors and people living with HIV/AIDS. Their vision of theatre arts education and participation for all has attracted not only a high-quality Board of Directors, but also a first-rate, culturally diverse faculty that includes some of the region's best-known performers and theatre arts trainers."

The award will be formally presented at a ceremony at the NBC studios in Washington on June 10, hosted by entertainment reporter Arch Campbell. Mr. Campbell will also be interviewing Deb, Buzz and Michael and filming portions of a *Life Stories for Seniors* class to be presented in an NBC News4 feature. Ω

# Act Now!

## Professional Credit

*(Continued from page 3)*

and women. Each member of the ensemble will perform in at least two of the readings.

If you have some scene study or performance experience under your belt and find this project intriguing, we're interested in seeing you! Please prepare a contemporary monologue (one-and-a-half minutes). Bring headshot and resume if you have them, but don't worry at all if you don't. This audition, like any other, is just a chance for us to get a look at you and your work, and we promise to make it as friendly and non-threatening as an audition could possibly be. Auditions will be held on Monday, June 9 starting at 7:00pm at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 5312 Connecticut Avenue, NW. *Please call Buzz at 202-588-8113 for an appointment.* Ω

Congratulations to the participants of  
**Life Stories: A Class Presentation**

Classic Residence by Hyatt — May 20th, 8:15 p.m.

Your stories and the way they were told  
truly captivated the audience.

*Thanks for all of your hard work — Michael*

# Read City Paper

## A Life Devoted to Stories

(Continued from page 1)

his unique gifts to troubled teens through our *Life Stories for Incarcerated and At-Risk Youth* projects, in which young people learn to create original dramatic works from their own life experiences. This spring he has returned to the Potomac Job Corps, a vocational and GED program for teens who have been expelled from traditional school environments, where he inaugurated a successful *Life Stories* program in 2002. He has also recently launched a similar program with City Lights School—a high school program for emotionally disturbed youth.

Quique likes the *Life Stories* programs, he says, because “they are an opportunity for kids to take their temperature and see where they are in their lives and where they want to go.”

While he acknowledges the thera-

peutic benefit of such creative work, he insists that its primary impact comes from the fact that it’s not therapy—at least not in the traditional sense.

With theatre, he says, “You are still remembering your experiences, but

**“They [Life Stories programs] are an opportunity for kids to take their temperature and see where they are in their lives and where they want to go.”**

you’re also having some fun with those memories by acting them out. The whole idea of performing – even for a few minutes—takes the threat out of it. When you go see a counselor, you know you’re there because you have a problem. Here you come because you’re an artist—it takes the label off of it.”

A lot of the stories the participants choose to act out “are painful—not pretty,” he says. But they enjoy the process of taking creative control of these experiences and having a chance to share their own voices because “they’re so used to people talking *at* them.”

Quique has been “amazed that people open up to the extent that they do.” He says that it takes a few weeks of working together for the groups to gel, but around the halfway point in the process they feel safe enough to “look to each other for support, and they really want to act in each other’s stories.”

Quique’s *Life Stories* projects will wrap up in early June and a screening of the student work captured on film will be held mid-summer. Please email [Deb@theatrelab.org](mailto:Deb@theatrelab.org) if you would like to be notified of upcoming screening dates. Ω

## Where Are They Now?

Theatre and film venues all over town are chock full of Theatre Lab students and grads this spring:

**Lisa Buckley** will appear in *Curious Savage* with Serenity Players in late May; **Helen Day** performs cabaret at Café Promenade in Bethesda every Saturday night; **Chuck Dluhy** and **Jane Petkofsky** are starring in *Wrong Turn at Lungfish* at Port City Playhouse; **John Feist** is appearing in the area premiere of Lee Blessing’s *Thief River* with Theatre Alliance; **Cody Jones** directed *The Paul Robeson Story* at Howard University’s Blackburn Center in April; **Joe Lewis** is currently featured in *Macbeth* at Cedar Lane Stage; **Samantha Peller** is appearing in *Quilters* at the Drama Learning Center in Columbia, MD;

a whole slew of Theatre Lab folks, including **Lisa Buckley, Paula Correa, John Gorelski, Andrew Mack** and **Themis Pountzas**, took part in DC’s spectacular 48 Hour Film Project—their short film *DC Dates.com* screened at Visions Cinema. And the following students performed a hilarious evening of David Ives one-acts as part of Theatre Lab’s most recent Creating a Role class: **Andrew Brownstein, Pat Douglass, Suzanne Frain, Jeremy Frankel, Eileen Garner, John Gorelski, Kathy Greif, Marcus Jerkins, Greg Mangiapane, Jerry Oshinsky, Aimee Parker, Margaret Poethig, Roger Shakra, Janet Shaye, Nicole Stankosky, Danni Stewart, and Catherine Tremeau.** Ω

### Funding News

The Theatre Lab is proud to announce a three year, \$60,000 grant award from the Beech Street Foundation in support of our *Life Stories for Incarcerated and At-Risk Youth* projects.

Where are YOU now? Contact us about your theatre exploits and we’ll include you in the next *Behind the Scene*.  
Contact@theatrelab.org

**The Theatre Lab, Inc.**

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**Staff:**

Deb Gottesman, Director  
Buzz Mauro, Director  
Michael Rodgers, Managing Director  
Colleen Estep, Program Coordinator

*For information on advertising in  
**Behind the Scene**, please contact  
our office and ask for Michael  
Rodgers.*

**We're on the Web!**

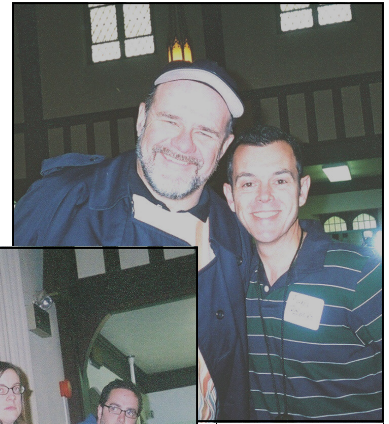
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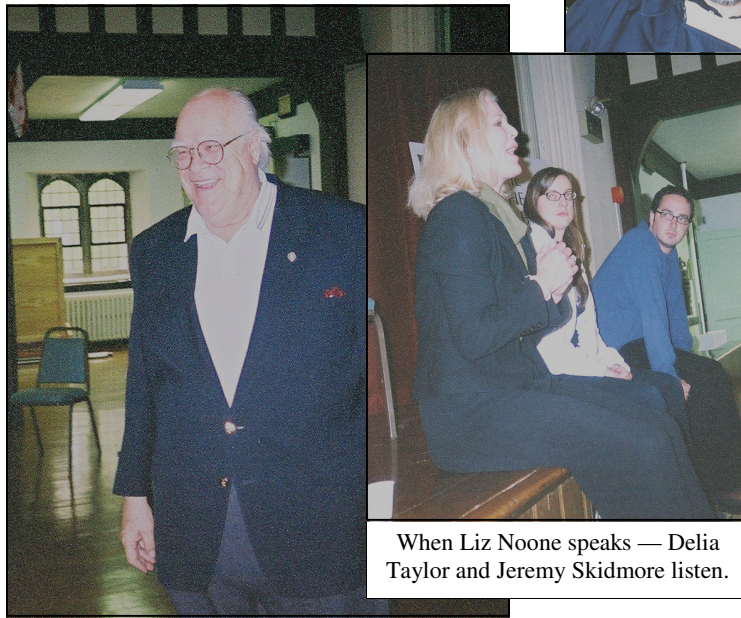
**PO Box 21400  
Washington, DC  
20009**

[www.theatrelab.org](http://www.theatrelab.org)

# Pics from Actors Prepare!



Nick Olcott  
and Michael  
Rodgers mugg-  
ing for the  
camera.



When Liz Noone speaks — Delia  
Taylor and Jeremy Skidmore listen.

David Huddleston telling a funny story about  
Mel Brooks and the making of *Blazing Saddles*.

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# Summer Fun = Acting!