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hope and inspiration through the arts

March
2004

One Step Further Dealing with "Loss"

Playwright Elizabeth Swados has unveiled two works this year dealing with the subject of loss. *Loss & Gain*, made in collaboration with HAI, was created by youth whom she selected through auditions to portray through song, dance and monologue how they have coped with loss in their lives. The work is currently appearing at area high schools and for other youth audiences.

The second work, *Ten Years of Hope*, was reviewed by The New York Times on March 9, 2004. Excerpts from this review:

"*Ten Years of Hope* is a look at immigrant women who fled countries like El Salvador in search of a haven and a fresh start in Brooklyn... Sisters Mary Burns and Mary Dowd commissioned the piece to mark the 10th anniversary of their Maura Clarke-Ita Ford Center in Bushwick, Brooklyn, which is named after two Maryknoll nuns who were killed in the attack in El Salvador in 1980.

"The musical - a 15-song choral work for six actresses ... was welcomed by a small army of gray-haired nuns who attended its premiere on Feb. 29 at the Mary Louis Academy in Jamaica Estates, Queens. The keenest critics were the immigrant women who also sat in the audience and nodded when the actors sang about the fear that consumes them in this country...

"Elsa Bonilla could not attend the show, but she had already lived it. Ms. Bonilla came to the United States three years ago from El Salvador, where one of her college teachers was among six Jesuits killed by the army in 1989. The day of the show, she was working as a cashier, a job she hoped to quit once she has learned enough English to resume her career in finance and economics...

"Such battles are the stuff of drama, Ms. Swados insists. They are won through old-fashioned self-reliance, mutual help and unwavering belief."

-- **The New York Times**, March 9, 2004, B1



Ms. Swados comments on the relationship between the two productions:

"Both these works serve both cast and audience. My best work and artistic relationships come out of utilitarian linkages - those that serve the practical needs of other people. There isn't one sector of our city that isn't in some way affected and changed by loss.

"In *Ten Years of Hope*, the community of the Maura Clarke-Ita Ford Center (Central American women struggling for their rights) contributed to the writing with stories of their lives. For this production, professional singers interpreted my take on the lives of these immigrant women and the nuns who helped them.

"*Loss & Gain* goes one step further. Not only did the high school cast contribute their first-hand experiences and writings of loss, they were also the performers sharing their stories with the audiences. The process of *Loss & Gain* affected the producers, audiences and most deeply those who wrote and created it - the young cast."

Over...

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This March, HAI will provide **Hope And Inspiration** to an audience of more than 28,000 people at more than 1,000 events by offering opportunities...

...to enjoy dance, theater, concerts and more

◆ In March, HAI's **Cultural Events Program (CEP)** will make the following events accessible to NYC residents who are culturally isolated due to age, frailty, physical or mental disability:

Paul Taylor Dance Company	City Center
Fiddler on the Roof	Minskoff Theatre
42nd Street	Ford Center
Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus	Madison Square Garden
Sweeney Todd	New York State Theatre
New York Knicks	Madison Square Garden

Other components of HAI's CEP include: the **Community Performing Arts Series**, which mounts dance, drama and music performances throughout the year in each of the five boroughs; the **Omni*Bus Program**, which enables people who are bed confined and those using wheelchairs from hospitals, nursing homes and rehabilitation centers to attend cultural events throughout the greater New York area. March destinations include *Jenifer Lewis in Concert* and *Stars on Ice* at Madison Square Garden;

Tickets To Go, which provides seniors age 60 and over with greatly discounted tickets subsidized by the NYC Dept. of Cultural Affairs, will provide tickets to *Mama Mia*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *It Had to Be You* in March; **STEP** (Student Ticket Enrichment Program), which provides discounted tickets to Broadway, Off Broadway and cultural events to NYC public schools will offer circus and *Lion King* tickets in March; and the **Describe!** program, which makes live theater performances accessible to visually impaired and blind individuals. On March 10th participants will enjoy an audio described performance of *Aida*.

◆ In March, as a part of the **On-site Performance Program**, HAI will commemorate Women's History Month with a diverse and talented array of female artists performing at NYC health and human service facilities and nursing homes. Artists performing this month include Lord & Weber with standards on vocal and guitar, Micheline, a chanteuse extraordinaire with an international flair, Dakota, jazz-style vocalist, Susan Chang, performing music from China, Nina Deutsch, pianist; and Linda Russell, vocal guitarist performing traditional Americana. For St. Patrick's Day, over 40 performances will bring the luck of the Irish to HAI facilities with traditional Irish music from Mike Barry, John Adisano, The Dixie Trixies, Sean Grissom, Larry Siegel, Jason Bergman and the Ebony Hillbillies.

...to develop competence through artistic expression

◆ In March, HAI's **Arts Workshops Program** will provide computer graphics workshops at Riverview High School in the Bellevue Hospital Adolescent Day Treatment Program. Funded in part by the New York State Council on the Arts, workshops are now underway for students to learn computer skills and create web sites as a forum for expressing their ideas and individual interests. Workshops are conducted by HAI teaching artist and computer graphic designer Shelley-Ann West.

...to acquire skills for supportive/independent living

◆ In March, HAI's **Prevention Education Program**, which uses theatrical role-play to develop decision making skills with respect to HIV/AIDS, homelessness and youth leadership/violence prevention will present *Peace-by-Peace* violence prevention workshops, HIV Prevention workshop and Housing Readiness workshops. *Loss & Gain* will continue to tour in March, appearing at Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, The Summit and Rockland Children's Psych Center. The *RESPECT* project, currently in its fourth season will begin its tour at Bridges Youth Detention Facility in the Bronx this month.

...to gain access to information and to learn more about our mission

◆ Visit HAI's website, www.hospitalaudiences.org and view *Access for All: Guide for People with Disabilities to New York City Cultural Institutions* and its update, *Addendum 2001, On the Go: A Guide to New York City Culture at a Discount for Seniors* and the monograph, *Live Arts Experiences: Their Impact on Health and Wellness*.

This March, HAI will reach a projected audience of over 28,000 people at more than 1,000 events... through:

Cultural Events Program	4,225 people at 83 events
On Site Performance Program	9,000 people at 200 performances
Arts Workshop Program	11,300 attending over 737 hours
Prevention Education Program	3,600 attending over 60 workshops