



hope and inspiration through the arts

R-E-S-P-E-C-T ———!!



Photo by Keith Jacoby

James Lilley

But that all changed, one day when I was chillin with my little cousin when I saw a couple of gang members who just started to fire. After all the back and forth blazin was done these gangstas were dead along with my little cousin whose name was DESIRE.

Every single day I see her beautiful face and I wish that some how I could have taken her place.

I'm so SORRY DESIRE!!

RESPECT is never taking your family or friends for granted.

Article by Hettie Jones. Poet, novelist, children's book writer. Author of the classic memoir *How I Became Hettie Jones*, a *New York Times* Notable. Jones has taught at NYU, The New School, Penn State, and Naroba. She has also taught writing programs at Bedford prison among others and has been published widely in dozens of national magazines and newspapers.

The face of the boy sitting at the edge of his seat in the audience mirrors the face of the boy onstage. He's *feelin'* it—all the pain and outrage expressed up there is his own. But barely a moment later he's grinning—singing, dancing in his seat, hands in the air—because it's show time! Time for *Respect*—that's right! *R-e-s-p-e-c-t*—not a little but a lot, and all of it shared. What caught—and held—that boy's attention and that of his peers in the high school basement auditorium is a remarkable performance piece by nine

remarkable young people, brought together by HAI and Tony Award-winning choreographer George Faison. Combin-

The *Respect Project* is an innovative performance piece written and performed by nine NYC youth, inspired and directed by Tony award-winning choreographer George Faison. The work has as its core a plea for "respect" communicated through a series of monologues developed from deep-seated, painful life experiences in which respect was denied. This choreographed performance is being presented in public high schools where kids throughout the city are relating to the intensity, humor, and pathos that shines through the tragedy.

ing monologue, song, and dance, the forty-five minute piece addresses most of the major issues facing teenagers today, and each of those forty-five minutes is right on track. Sex, drugs, crime, gangs, money, pregnancy, prison, parental neglect—you name it, you'll hear about it in *Respect*. But unlike your ordinary after-school special, this show is written by the performers themselves—from their own experience. Their own words address their own

Continued on page 4

George Faison—the Wizard of Ah's*

By Michael Jon Spencer, HAI Founder and Executive Director, presenting the Otto Award** to Mr. Faison

George Faison won a Tony for choreographing the Wizard of Oz in '75. Now he has *become* the Wizard of Ah's... *ooohs* and *ahs* as kids in public schools sit at the edge of their seats, exploding with joy and squirming in pain emanating from the youthful performers in George's latest creation. It is based on a subject of interest which he shares with Aretha Franklin and Rodney Dangerfield—R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

What a subtle topic for this day and age where the word has almost disappeared from use. Not for George, for what started as a concern and commitment to civics and civility turned into a passion, identifying "Respect" as a theme for a dramatic presentation. This idea further solidified after participating in a seminar on the subject of respect led by the author, Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot professor at Harvard.

The Otto Award, though only a few years old, is long overdue for a man like George whose choreography and directing over the decades has mounted subjects dramatically probing humanity and inhumanity.

With his latest creation, he has been on the frontline from the very beginning...auditioning and interviewing youth from the public schools, sitting with them week after week demand-

ing that they dig deeper and deeper into their psyches for the painful core experiences that have shaped their lives. In most instances, the profound lack of respect of a father, mother, peer, has been identified as a theme...a source of pain that still simmers and burns. As the youth felt comfortable enough to share their writing about these very personal moments, George would shout "freeze it," meaning it would now be mounted as theater. In all instances, the audience is being admonished to respect one another...to do to others what was not done to them.

These monologues have been mounted, choreographed, and are being shared with youth throughout the city. No matter how early in the day, no matter at what ungodly hour for a theater person, George is there on stage, zapping them with his energy as he warms them up, and gets them on the right vibe. Then he places himself down in the pit in front of the stage and "conducts," later changing, modifying and continually shaping and re-shaping the piece to be ever more effective.

In school after school, he is being told by kids, teachers, and officials that they have never experienced anything as powerful or immediate.

The project recently appeared



Photo by Paula Court of HAI Founder and Executive Director Michael Jon Spencer

for women inmates at Rikers Island. The reaction was so affirmative that officials requested that the work be presented for the thousands of inmates on the Island. In the many tomorrows to come, George will realize another passion...moving into his new George Faison Performing Arts Center being created in a renovated abandoned fire house he purchased. The building will once again focus on fire, not extinguishing fires, but igniting them in the souls of youth, igniting a spark which will hopefully burn, energize and create a person like George, committed to giving something back to the community. The center will become a place to realize his mission...creating the social glue that marks a government truly of the people by the people and for the people, a goal which cannot be achieved without the cosmic matter that permeates a social organism...respect. Here is a man who has and continues to earn our respect. □

Cast of *Respect* Project

Elena Rios ♦ Emanuel Serrano ♦ James Wilson
Monique Brown ♦ Terri Cann ♦ James Lilley
Khadeejah Smith ♦ Sandra Hernandez ♦ Andrew Collins

* Text of remarks introducing George Faison for an Otto Award

**THE OTTO AWARD FOR POLITICAL THEATRE recognizes theatre artists from around the world who are creating innovative political theatre. It is named after Otto Rene Castillo (1936-1967), a renowned Guatemalan poet and revolutionary who was captured and tortured to death.

'George's Dream'

The *Respect* Project represents just the kind of undertaking George Faison hopes to develop for the George Faison Performing Arts Space—a site on Hancock Place in Harlem that he and his partner, Tad Schnugg, have restored and redesigned as a performing arts center. The four-story building, dating back to the turn of the century, has had many incarnations. Originally built as a firehouse, it has been a church and more recently a garage. As a performing arts complex, it will house a state of the art theater, studios, rehearsal spaces and a cafe. With an anticipated opening this summer, several productions, including *The Wiz*, *Bubblin' Brown Sugar* and *Sing Mahalia Sing*, have already been scheduled to rehearse in Faison's space.

George Faison also sees his arts center as a vehicle to promote collaborations with HAI, and other arts organizations by using dance, music and theater to inspire, educate and give youth self-respect and self-esteem as tools for their future.

With the present cultural and architectural renaissance in Harlem, The George Faison Performing Arts Space will certainly go a long way to help bring new arts events, innovative community projects and new audiences up-town. □



Photo by

Photo by Tad Schnugg

George Faison in front of the performing arts space bearing his name

For the Underdog

She has simpatico for prisoners...both people and animals. The former led to her directing HAI's Prison Arts Program at its inception, the latter to her rescuing abandoned basset hounds behind bars in the city pound.

During the decades that separate these two passions, Jane has served and continues as HAI's Director of Operations, responsible for the day to day interlocking of the various departments and programs at HAI and the monthly reporting to governmental sponsors about services through over 12,000 events each year.

Jane, along with *Tubby the Tuba*, is the creation of her late father, composer George Kleinsinger. A graduate of Hofstra University, she was about to begin graduate school at the NYU School of Social Work when she stopped by in 1973 in response to an advertisement for employment. While waiting on line to register for courses, she checked her answering machine to discover a job offer from HAI. Jane immediately decided to accept the offer, a decision that has permanently changed her life. Two children and several basset hounds later, she is an integral part of HAI and the cre-

ative energy behind the *Respect* Project. "For many years I wanted to involve my friend and neighbor, George Faison, in a project with HAI. I approached him and we began discussing ideas. Several months later he came up with the *Respect* Project based upon an experience at Harvard where he participated in a seminar led by Professor Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot, author of the book, *Respect*. Over the course of months we auditioned, selected and worked with the participating kids to create monologues that expressed their experiences and in-

sights on many topics of concern to them and their peers. Their stories came from deep within and the process of expressing and sharing them has been an emotional roller coaster for everyone involved. It has been one of the most gratifying experiences to date at HAI."

On the canine front, Jane spends several hours a month, at various hours of the day and night, rescuing basset hounds about to be destroyed at the City animal shelters. Her dedication, energy and love for these needy animals is boundless! □



Jane with Belle, her first rescue

R-E-S-P-E-C-T ——!!

Continued from page 1

problems, their own struggles to overcome. It's an amazing, energetic production with a very professional feel, and an edge-of-the-seat experience for all the young audiences who have been fortunate enough to enjoy it this spring. "What'd you like best?" one girl was asked. "Everything!" she shouted into the after-show buzz. "Because it was all about all the things I'm dealing with!"

George Faison, the first African-American director/choreographer to win a Tony (*The Wiz*), has a long string of hits to his credit, including *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope* and *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*, as well as productions for the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater and music videos for a star list that features Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder and Ashford & Simpson among others. Speaking of the performers in *Respect*, Faison says, "I had them create monologues [which we then went] over and over... refining and digging deeper." Faison maintains that the process through which the work is created is "as important in the long run as the end product."

Finding the performers was a process in itself for Faison and his collaborators, Edwin Gary Robinson and Rhonda McLean-Nur, Assistant Choreographer Wyatt Jackson, and HAI staffers Jane Kleinsinger, Patty Reitkopf and Fredi Orange. Half the applications came from outreach to schools, the other half through word of mouth. The auditions were followed by seminars conducted over a period of months which enabled the selected youth to bring out the material that eventually found its way into the piece. Some dropped out under the stress of having Faison, as one described, "always in my face, and telling me to do



(l) Terri Cann, (r) James Wilson
All photos by Keith Jacoby

this and do that." But for those who stayed the course, who considered working with the director/choreographer an honor, the rewards were obvious. One only has to witness the sincerity and pride with which they presented their stories—even their bitter truths. Teenagers "can give you a line as long as the Long Island Railroad," says Faison.

Creating this production has been, according to McLean-Nur, "a challenge to the kids to look at their lives...and examine the presence or lack of 'respect' as a determinant." *Respect*, as a show, according to Monique Brown, one of the talented performers, is a two-way opportunity—for those onstage as well as in the audience to understand that "we are not alone in every situation." Or as James Lilley, another in the outstanding cast explained in an interview with HAI Executive Director Michael Spencer, "I've had young men come up to me and say, 'Oh wow, I really felt your piece, I really respected it.'"

The long-term goal of the project is to give youth two to three years of involvement and then to move them on to jobs or situations "where they can use what they have," Faison explains. After that, another cast will be assembled. In the future greater emphasis will be given to youth at the junior high school level.

What's especially poignant about *Respect* is

that it soars beyond what adults expect of youth. It uncovers not only the oft-mined resentment toward parents and other demanding—or, worse, non-demanding—authority figures, but questions youth itself in a fast, confusing world, considering the very choices involved in self-respect: "I know I can't get a job talking the way I do but I need money... Maybe I shouldn't care what people think of me." "Bring home a baby when I'm still a baby, without a baby daddy? Abortion or keep? Abortion or keep?" As for the fabulous cast, what counts for them is not just the chance to write and speak what they have coaxed from their hearts, but also the chance to give it as a gift to others. And what those others say after they have been "*Respected*," is, as James Lilley explains, "one of the things I look forward to the most."

The *Respect Project* has generated tremendous response from staff and students in New York City High Schools. Erica Marantz, Coordinator of Student Activities at Lehman said she had never seen her kids so enraptured. At New Dorp High School, Principal Ms. DeAngelis was so moved that she asked for a special presentation one evening for invited parents from several schools in the area.

At several schools the presentation has given rise to heated classroom discussions as the kids talked about particular topics in the production that "hit home." The final appearance of this season is scheduled for adolescent women inmates on Rikers Island.

This project is made possible by a Legislative Special Project grant administered by the New York State Office of Mental Health by means of a contract with HAI. □



Sandra Hernandez



Monique Brown

Veteran HAI Artist, Stephanie Berry Wins an Obie Award

The Shaneequa Chronicles: The Making of a Black Woman is written, directed, and performed by Stephanie Berry. It provided the vehicle through which she won this year's Off-Broadway theater Obie award for Best Performance, coming on the heels of a major role in *Finding Forrester* starring Sean Connery. Through all of this acclaim, Stephanie continues her work in the community, ever mindful of her roots. One example is her literacy-based workshops at Jackson Avenue Family Shelter. Participants in the workshop attended Stephanie's play which is about Berry's life told through monologues, many of which were similar in form to those that the women at the shelter wrote. After seeing the performance, the women were both thrilled and proud. This opportunity proved extremely inspirational to these women, and it epitomizes the power that has resulted from the longstanding association with one of Hospital Audiences, Inc.'s most dedicated and influential artists.

Stephanie's collaboration with HAI began when she auditioned as a dancer for HAI's C.E.T.A sponsored program over twenty years ago. She was very excited about the fact that HAI wanted to establish artistic residencies—a year long contract with full benefits and a salary of \$10,000 (and at that time, \$10,000 really meant something for a young dancer). In spite of the intense competition, Berry—who not only was dancing with the Chuck Davis Dance Company at the time, but also had just started Columbia University Teacher's College graduate program in dance education—made the cut.

As a pioneer member of this new HAI dance group, she performed twice a day, four days a week. The fifth day was devoted to training and learning new choreography. This schedule allowed her to attend Alvin Ailey dance classes. The HAI dance company performed at many of the same institutions that HAI serves today, such as nursing homes, correctional facilities, hospitals, and mental institutions. However, back in the early eighties, these artists had to pave their own path; HAI was just beginning to establish the program and its features.

At the end of the inaugural year, all of the artists from the various HAI-CETA arts groups came together to produce a comprehensive presentation. Through



Stephanie Berry

this experience, Berry met a young actress who was working in the HAI-CETA theatre group. She took Berry along with her to an acting class and the dancer was now introduced to another art that she grew to love. She claims that it was HAI that helped to provide the environment that encouraged her to take up acting. This choice was beneficial to Berry and HAI which has now hired her as a consultant, offering writing seminars to HAI actors and peer educators, and also as an actor/facilitator, conducting workshops on HIV/AIDS and violence prevention.

Berry worked as an actress after her yearlong contract with HAI ended, but was not satisfied with the limited roles available to African-American

women. Furthermore, she felt that theatre mostly portrayed inaccurate examples of the African-American community. So, in 1984 Berry, along with two other artists, co-founded Blackberry Productions to create original theatre derived from the African American canon. "Rather than complain about it," Berry states, "we wanted to take control over defining our own images. That's why we've created original works."

Not only did Blackberry Productions produce new plays, but it also initiated an educational component. The company offers plays, educational programs, workshops and seminars to schools and community-based organizations and has worked frequently with HAI. □

Jesus Takes the "A" Train

I go to work, I pay my taxes, I observe the law. I didn't kill eight people! You did. I don't need to be "saved." Do you really believe that there's a thing called God?..Or is it that your pain is so unbearable that you force yourself to create a belief in order to medicate that pain?..And, if there is a God, Superstar, do you honestly believe that you are free from the burden of what you've done?..And if there isn't a God, then what are you really? In a meaningless existence, your only function was to be a source of pain and death, like cancer or a plane crash. You renounced your humanity when you claimed your first victim. Now what are you? I think you know, Superstar. I look at you, and I know that you know. The most compassionate advice I can give you is this: When you get back to your cell, bang your head against the wall until your brains spill out, only, please do it after six so I don't have to clean the s— up....

In *Jesus Hopped the "A" Train*, Valdez, a tough corrections officer, derides Lucius, a serial killer in Rikers Island Correctional Institution, who has recently "found God." *Jesus Hopped the "A" Train*, which was written by playwright and HAI facilitator, Stephen Adly-Guirgis, finished a critically acclaimed run in December. It was nominated for two Drama Desk Awards: John Ortiz for Best Actor and Philip Seymour Hoffman for Best Director. The play follows the story of two characters, Angel Cruz (John Ortiz) and Lucius Jenkins (Ron Cephas), both in Rikers Island Correctional Center for committing violent crimes. Many of the themes that run through Guirgis' play, such as revenge and forgiveness, faith and desperation, free will and moral responsibility were echoed by HAI peer educators who attended and had a heated, facilitated discussion with the cast following the show. The youth educators frequently participate in HIV and violence prevention workshops at this and other detention facilities and have developed strong opinions about issues such as guilt, redemption and the criminal justice system. Attending the play and talking with the cast following the show provided a forum for the youth to ask questions and express their views about the play and its themes.

Both cast and youth benefited from the discussion, much of which centered on how traumatic events can impact lives. Youth Educator Foster Burton summed it up by stating, "Lucius said that he wasn't feeling the sun at first but after a while he broke down and he stepped toward the sun. It was the same thing with Angel. Angel wasn't feeling religion but at the end he broke down and religion became a part of him."

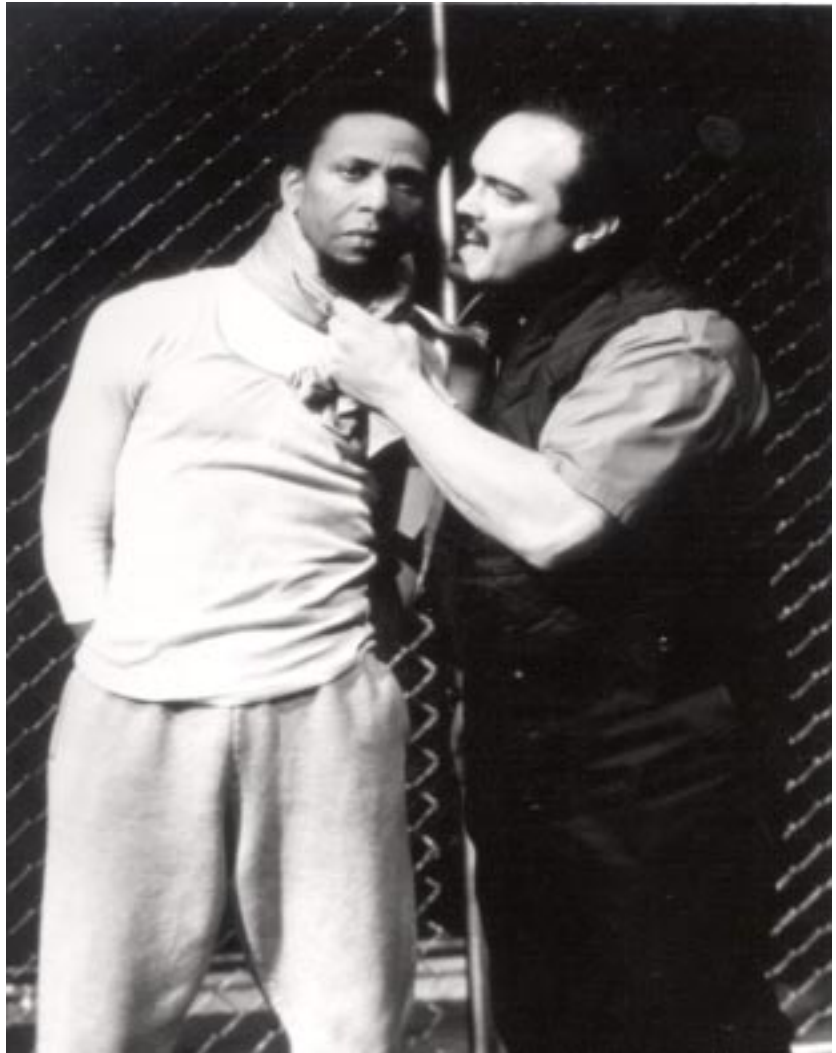


Photo by Joan Marcus of Ron Cephas and David Zayas

A December 10, 2000 article in the *Sunday New York Times Arts and Leisure Section* commented:

A good deal of Mr. Guirgis' inspiration has come from his part-time job with Hospital Audiences, Inc. For the last several years, he had been visiting prisons, halfway houses, homeless shelters, hospitals and community centers, providing young people with HIV education and violence prevention training. Guirgis continues to facilitate workshops for HAI, giving and receiving inspiration for art and life.

Postscript: Ortiz received an Obie for Best Performance in Jose Rivera's Off Broadway theater production of References to Salvadore Dali Make Me Hot, at the Joseph Papp Public Theater.

Cast and audience at a facilitated discussion after the play:



John Ortiz, star of *Jesus Hopped the "A" Train*



Above: John Ortiz and Stephen Adly-Guirgis, the playwright



Above: Foster Burton, III, Devon Barrette and Amora McKenzie, all HAI Peer Educators



Right: Rhonda McClean-Nur facilitating discussion between HAI Peer Educators and cast

Photos by Lynn Padwe

Tickets To Go: Round Two

"It made me feel like a swinger," responded Mildred Miller (age 81), when asked what it was like attending her first live performance in 40 years. Traveling alone by subway, "a little bit scared," she went to see *A Christmas Carol* at the Theater at Madison Square Garden. "You weren't trying to pick up any men?" she was jokingly asked. "I was looking them over but I think they were all taken. In my age group they are too old, too young, they're married or they're dead," she retorted.

Mildred Miller is one of the nearly 27,000 individuals who have registered with Tickets to Go, the majority learning of its existence through an article in the Sunday Daily News and by word of mouth.

She secured her \$10 ticket through this new HAI initiative funded by the New York City Department for the Aging in collaboration with the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The funding came from the City Council, passing through these two governmental agencies to HAI, which, in the second round, has bought 7,300 tickets at discounted group rates. Seating locations at the venues vary from orchestra to the balcony.

The most sought after tickets have been to Broadway shows such as *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, *Cabaret*, *Proof*, *Grease*, *Fosse*; classical music such as The New York Philharmonic and Mostly Mozart; dance such as The New York City

Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre; *Riverdance*, and special events such as the joint appearance of Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis.

With the number of people who have registered (at no cost) greatly exceeding the number of tickets available, the second round had to be limited to several thousand people who registered last fall who were unable to secure tickets at that time.

While many remain disappointed that they have not yet received ticket offerings or that they will not be able to partake in the program for the time being, notes of appreciation have been received such as:

Dear Hospital Audiences,

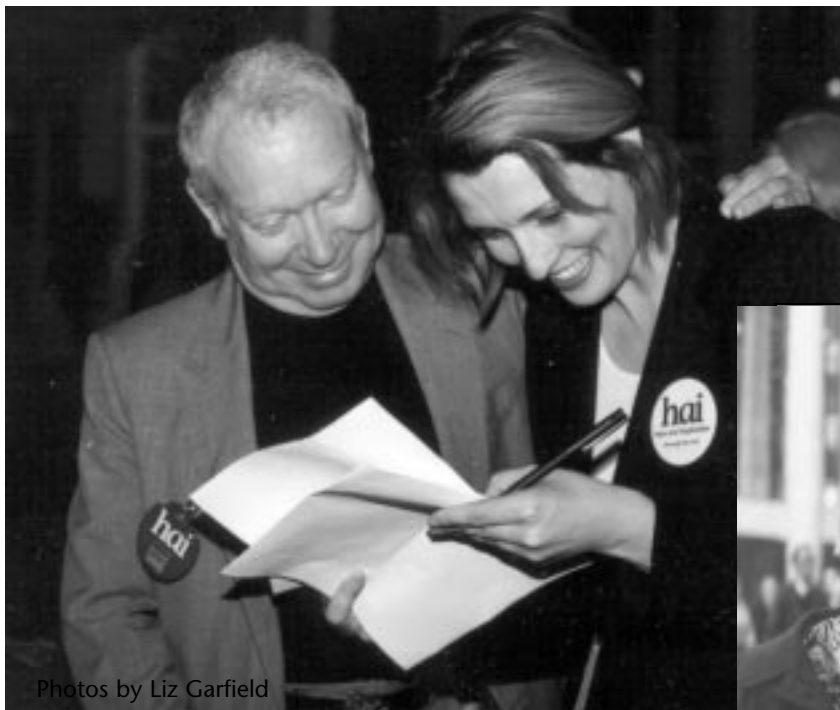
I'm writing to say thank you for your very gracious decision to call me and offer me a ticket to ABT on Tuesday night, because I missed the chance to go on Saturday. This courtesy was way beyond the call of duty. I'm sorry I don't remember the name of the person who called me, but I hope she'll get this message. Why do New Yorkers have such a bad reputation in terms of manners? This shows that it isn't so.

—D.H.

Dear Hospital Audiences,

Your organization is simply wonderful. You really think about us old timers and seem to know just what we need to keep us up with the times. Most of us couldn't afford the regular prices. Keep up the good work. It surely is a worthy a cause.

—Mildred Miller



Photos by Liz Garfield

HAI volunteer Sami Steigman and HAI staff member Ullie Fenninger preparing to distribute Tickets To Go for New York City Opera's *Rigoletto* at Lincoln Center.



"I used to go to the Metropolitan Opera when it was on 37th Street, even when I was a student, but I couldn't afford it now, if not for Tickets To Go."

—Fred and Felice Charasz

Photos by Liz Garfield

HAI's Latest Theater Festival Presents Top Humorists' Wackiest Characters

"Laughter may or may not activate the endorphins or enhance respiration, as some medical researchers contend. What seems clear, however, is that laughter is an antidote to apprehension and panic." - Norman Cousins, *Anatomy of an Illness*

For 14 performances in April, night after night, HAI Theater Festival audiences giggled, chuckled and guffawed during a triple bill of one-act comedies about people on the edge, trying to connect with others: *The Loveliest Afternoon of the Year*, by John Guare, *Hotline*, by Elaine May and *Wanda's Visit*, by Christopher Durang. In these plays, American theatre's top humorists created some of their wackiest characters. The cast included Klea Blackhurst, Ian Blackman, Sarah Knapp, Rahsan Rahsan Lindsay, Adrian Martinez, and Wayne Pretlow.

The Loveliest Afternoon of the Year depicted two lonely New Yorkers who meet and start a clandestine affair in Central Park. *Hotline* takes place in a suicide center in Manhattan where an operator receives a call from a distraught woman whose life he tries to save. In *Wanda's Visit*, a married couple's world is turned upside down when the husband's high school sweetheart shows up at their home in a frantic state.

This year, Theater Festival Producer and Director Max Daniels thought that HAI audiences needed some substantial belly laughs. (In the past, issue-oriented plays have been produced which dealt with such varied subjects as HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, aphasia and alternative therapies for terminal illness.) The noise made by the audience at every performance confirmed for Mr. Daniels that he made the right choice to try something different this year. "There is nothing more exhilarating to hear than a theater full of people laughing and enjoying themselves."

One of the actors in the cast, Adrian Martinez, is also an actor for HAI's Prevention Education Program. Mr. Martinez could be seen frequently on television in such shows as *The Sopranos* and Denis Leary's *The Job*. He took a break from film and television to perform for the Theater Festival. When asked about his experiences he said of the audience, "Their eyes lit up when we spoke. Their eyes make all the hard work worth it." On the other hand, actor Ian Blackman thought the experience was a "challenge." Certainly the concentration required was more than average. I did ultimately sense that while the



Photo by Tom Brazil

Actors Sarah Knapp and Ian Blackman appeared in Christopher Durang's *Wanda's Visit* in this year's HAI Theater Festival.

HAI audience members were certainly vocal and somewhat distracting (in the intimate 82 seat theater), they were also paying attention and committed to their theatre experience. I personally decided it was not unlike a street theatre situation in some aspects."

Because seniors from the general public were an increased presence this year, producer Daniels is considering material for the next festival of greater interest to them. □

The Late, Late Show

Jazz Singer Extraordinaire Dakota Staton Performs at the Isabella Geriatric Center
Where She is a Resident



Photo by Bill Burns

Famed jazz vocalist Dakota Staton performed for HAI audiences in nursing homes and mental health facilities as part of the On-Site Program for many years. These performances were co-sponsored by Circuit Productions, an organization dedicated, in part, to the preservation of jazz and tap by senior artists of color. Dakota Staton began singing at age seven and was touring the nightclub circuit by the 1950's. She recorded for Capitol Records, first as an R & B singer, but was then given the *Downbeat Jazz Poll Award* for "most promising jazz vocalist of 1956." She fulfilled that promise by recording 17 albums over the years with such prominent musicians and arrangers as Nelson Riddle, Benny Carter, George Shearing and Jonah Jones. Her most recent engagements were Tuesday nights at the Lenox Lounge and at the Harlem Meer in Central Park, both in 1999. But it is her generosity that is legendary. Even if she was working for little or no money, she paid her musicians. While performing in Africa, she gave away her entire performance fee, to street children in Ethiopia. She'd carry a box of money to her club dates and help anyone with a story of need. She befriended and mentored young performers, who continue to admire and love her today. A *Chicago Tribune* review states, "...Staton seems to have improved with age—perhaps, one suspects, because whatever hard knocks she's endured in life have been put to use in her music." Her complete discography can be purchased on the internet.□

ISABELLA

GERIATRIC CENTER 321 Audubon Avenue New York, NY 10001 212-942-4208

April 30, 2001

Dear HAI,

Wow! What a phenomenal afternoon provided to our facility by Circuit Productions on March 28, 2001. As you and most of the jazz world know, Ms. Dakota Staton, jazz singer extraordinaire, is a resident at our facility. This concert was a gift from HAI and Circuit Productions to her.

As a music therapist, I understand the effect that music has on the soul and the role it plays in the circle of life. For those with less belief in the healing powers of music, this event most certainly opened the windows to this world.

On the grand piano the Circuit performers, Sara McLawler and Tina Pratt had an album Ms. Staton recorded for Capitol Records. Sitting next to the piano was Ms. Staton, dressed elegantly in white with hair and makeup done as if by a professional. The performers wowed the audience with jazz standards [Sara on piano and vocals] and phenomenal footwork [Tina on taps]. Ms. Staton's manager even dedicated a song to her.

Next came Ms. Staton herself. (Truly what the audience had been waiting for.) At that moment, Isabella became the jazz clubs and recording studios that Ms. Staton had graced so many times before. The love of the song, music and audience shined right through. The smile, the eyes and the music that is Ms. Staton were as one in the room that afternoon.

After the concert ended, the buzz continued for all of that evening and several days later. Ms. Staton glowed in congratulatory praise. Two days later during the regular Friday evening music program on her unit, she asked for the microphone, named the song and the key and sang with a contented heart.

Cordially,

Lesley Halliday, C.T.R.S.
Director of Recreation
Isabella Geriatric Center

www.hospitalaudiences.org.

HAI has begun an extensive redesign of its web site: www.hospitalaudiences.org. The goal is to make its 32 years of programming experience and resources, advocacy information, research and publications available and accessible to a broad public audience, including individuals with physical disabilities.

The redesign, now in its testing phase and soon to be available to the public, will begin with the mounting of HAI's access guides in the form of a searchable database: *Access for All: A Guide for People with Disabilities to New York City Cultural Institutions*, its update, *Addendum 2001*, and *On the Go: A Guide to New York City Culture at a Discount for Seniors*. This database will allow site visitors to access information about specific cultural venues in New York City. Individuals interested in Broadway theaters, for instance, can search this part of the site for a comprehensive list of theaters. Travelers

to New York City will be able to select a neighborhood and search it for museums, concert halls, Broadway and Off-Broadway theaters, as well as other types of cultural institutions. Persons seeking information about the physical and programmatic accessibility of a specific New York City venue will be able to type in the name of that venue and retrieve details about its accommodations. Seniors looking for special senior discounts will be able to select a cultural venue and the category "senior" to access discount information. In addition, the search capacity will allow users to simultaneously select choices from several categories for an inclusive search, for instance, the name of a neighborhood *and* a type of cultural venue *and* senior discounts.

Further changes, to begin late summer, will involve a comprehensive redesign of the content on HAI's current site to make it more user-friendly, navigable and accessible for a broad

range of users, including persons with physical disabilities, especially blind and visually impaired individuals. HAI has employed the services of a web designer experienced in accessibility to ensure that the new site will enable *all* users to comfortably find the information needed.

Features will include descriptions of all of HAI's services with a message from department heads, updated information about current events, and a special links page that will provide users access to sites about mental health, mental and physical disabilities, and the arts. Plans exist to mount an on-line gallery featuring the work of the Outsider Artists of HAI, individuals with a history of mental illness who emerged as talented artists through their participation in HAI's Arts Workshops Program.

The searchable database is expected to be launched this summer. We are excited about providing a tool that will inform and empower the public. □

What is HAI?

HAI (Hospital Audiences, Inc.), a not-for-profit organization, was founded in 1969 by Michael Jon Spencer. In 32 years has reached an audience totaling over 9.7 million individuals through over 298,000 events. HAI restores a sense of Hope And Inspiration through live arts experiences by providing opportunities...

1. To Enjoy Music, Theater, and Dance:

- through the **Cultural Events Program:** at theaters, concert halls and other cultural venues. Also:
 - the **DESCRIBE! Program:** blind or visually impaired people enjoy theater while HAI audio-describers provide live description of the performance.
 - the **Omni*Buses:** uniquely designed transit vehicles that accommodate people with severe disabilities (including people who are bed-confined or who use wheelchairs).
 - the **HAI Theatre Festival:** original productions on issues of concern to those in rehabilitation.
 - the **Summer Program:** access to outdoor parks concerts and performances.
 - Special Events:** productions created and produced by HAI, at neighborhood locations.
- through the **On-Site Performance Program:** appearances by professional artists in human service settings.

2. To Create

- through the **Arts Workshop Program:** for people in mental health facilities, led by professional artists.

3. To Acquire Skills for Supportive/Independent Living

- through the **Prevention Education Program:** improvisational role-play workshops that develop decision making skills and confront public health and social issues such as HIV/AIDS, youth violence, managed care and housing.

4. To Benefit from HAI Publications

- ACCESS FOR ALL: SECOND EDITION, A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO NEW YORK CITY CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS**
- The report from HAI's 25th Anniversary Symposium, "**Hope and Inspiration Through the Arts: A Vision of Health, Healing and Wellness,**"
- Live Arts Experiences: Their Impact on Health and Wellness.** The third edition, which draws on Michael Spencer's interview's with noted artists, physicians and researchers, examines the benefits of attending live arts events. Printing of a "hard copy" has been made possible by Pfizer Medical Humanities Initiative. The monograph is also available on the web.



HAI Outsider Artists

Jennie Maruki has been a participant in the HAI Arts Workshop Program for almost twenty years. Now, at eighty-four and in frail health, she continues to sketch on occasion. A Japanese-American who was interned during World War II, Maruki moved from California to New York after the war where she was hospitalized for mental illness. Maruki now lives in a group residence in the community.

Maruki's paintings have been shown at numerous galleries in the city and have graced the covers of several national psychological journals.

The HAI Arts Workshop Program brings professional artists to mental health residences and day programs throughout New York City. Workshops recur on a weekly basis providing opportunities for participants to express themselves in an art form of their choice. Visual arts and video workshops also take place at the HAI offices every Saturday and are open to participants in CSS supportive residences or Clubhouses. □

Hospital Audiences, Inc.
548 Broadway, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10012-3950

Change Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
New York, NY
Permit 1422