The Bully Menace and Applied Theatre

Woyzeck by Georg Büchner, Black Box Studio, NYU Program in Educational Theatre, fall 2009, director Philip Taylor

April 15, 2011

Provincetown Playhouse
133 MacDougal Street, New York City

Judson Church
239 Thompson Street, Greenwich Village, New York City
INTRODUCTION

We are grateful to the NYU Steinhardt School for generously supporting this event, The Bully Menace and Applied Theatre. The catalyst for our planning had been the rising incidence of any number of hateful crimes in New York City and across the US in recent years. Bullies come in all different shapes and sizes, and they are not always human and their intentions are not always clear. We wondered what role the applied theatre, a participatory artform powered by social activism, can play in illuminating the troubling questions the bully menace raises. Can the issue be simply addressed by a few educational imperatives, or does there need to be a more systemic change in how we think about promoting democracy and diversity.

The Program in Educational Theatre at NYU has a long history of teaching justice and citizenship education, especially through our Global centers in Africa, Brazil, England, Ireland and Mexico. This past December we were delighted to take students to the Jana Sanskriti festival in Kolkatta, India, which explored theatre of the oppressed in the subcontinent. With our colleagues in Steinhardt, especially through the Department of Teaching and Learning, we have created dynamic curriculum and vital research which helps investigate the nature of the bully menace and how we can productively deal with it. We are especially excited by the MA Dual Certification in Social Studies 7-12, Theatre K-12, the first of its kind in the country.

Our thanks to the presenters for their exceptional service, and kudos to the Steinhardt deans’ group for their unwavering support, especially Mary Brabeck, Erich Dietrich, Beth Weitzman and Lindsay Wright. From the department of Teaching and Learning, Robby Cohen and Rosa Maria Pietanza have been inspirational as have the Educational Theatre full time faculty: Amy Cordileone, David Montgomery, Joseph Salvatore, Nancy Smithner. Further gratitude to Rochelle Brown, Bill Naugle, Vladimir Golovanevskiy, Randy Susevich and the chairs of the Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions, Lawrence Ferrara and Robert Rowe.

We see this day as one part of a continuing conversation on justice and citizenship, and we look forward to your feedback as we move forward together.

April 15 2011 Symposium Committee:
Robby Cohen and Philip Taylor (chairs)
Project officer: Luke Doyle
The historic Provincetown Playhouse is credited with launching the careers of Anne Bancroft, Bette Davis, Julie Harris and Eugene O’Neill, who premiered many of his early plays at the Provincetown. NYU presents readings, new musical works, and storytelling evenings, among other events and performances in the Playhouse. The Provincetown was an annex of the Federal Theatre Project so it is especially appropriate this event on bullying is hosted here. The theatre, which is run by NYU Steinhardt’s programs in vocal performance and educational theatre, has an illustrious place in the history of American drama. Renovations preserved the Playhouse’s original brick walls, refurbished the mid-century seat end standards, restored the exterior to its 1940 facade, and updated the 88-seat theatre’s seating, lighting and sound controls, and air handling.

9:00 AM ............................................Check in for Bully registrants at the Playhouse

9:30 AM ............................................Welcome from Philip Taylor, NYU Director of Educational Theatre, and Robert Cohen, NYU Professor of History

9:45 AM ............................................Forum Theatre with David Montgomery’s NYU Ed Theatre Freshmen Class

In their second semester (spring 2011), undergraduate students in Educational Theatre have been investigating bullying in school settings. Using dramatic activities, research, reflection and dialogue, they explored questions of why and how bullying happens, the impact of bystanders, and what support systems are in place for victims and their oppressors. They developed forum theatre scenes and workshopped them with each other, thus sparking further dialogue and complex questions to consider. Although new to theatre of the oppressed techniques, the students are excited to share with the audience their process. The class includes: Aisha Abdelmula, Jenna Briedis, Brigid Donovan, Luke Doyle, Katie Goldman, Emma Lieber, Emily Mansfield, Rachel Ryan, Marco Santarelli, Megan Taylor, Ashley Thaxton, Kara Wilson, Rachel Wolf and Kaya Wynn

11:00 AM ............................................Break

11:15 AM ............................................Staged reading of prison theatre project on bullying

Inmates from Woodbourne Correctional Facility in Sullivan County have been writing plays on the bully menace. Ex offenders from WCF, including Manny Borras share this work.

12:15 PM ............................................Keynote address by Dr Ross Prior, editor of Applied Arts and Health, UK

School bullying has become an international focus for concern. With a rise in technological access to applications, bullies have become even more powerful in their pervasiveness. Parents, teachers, politicians and young people have all joined the call for action. The applied theatre community, amongst others, has responded to the issue. But how successful can interventions really be against
school bullying? The demand for ‘evidence’ within applied arts and health has provoked mixed responses amongst academics and practitioners. Working from both successes and failures, approaches to the study of transformation provide valuable insights and debate.

1:00 PM.............................................Lunch at Judson Church

The church was founded by Edward Judson. Judson had been preaching at the Bearean Baptist Church on Downing Street, but his efforts at expanding the congregation were so successful that a new sanctuary was required, so, with the backing of John D. Rockefeller and other prominent Baptists, in 1888 construction of a new church south of Washington Square Park was begun, which was to be a memorial to Judson’s father Adoniram Judson, one of the first Protestant missionaries to Burma. Judson chose as the location of his church because he wanted to reach out to the neighboring communities. By the mid-19th century Greenwich Village had the largest African-American community in the city, along with joined German, French and Irish immigrants, and to the immediate south a majority of Italian immigrants. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judson_Memorial_Church

Judson Church, 55 Washington Sq South, NYC

2:00 PM ............................................The Bully Menace Provocations: Why do kids bully and how can applied theatre help?

Facilitator, Kayhan Irani, with Judyie Al-Bilali, Javier Cardona, Dana Edell, Alexander Santiago-Jirau, Nancy Smithner, and Shirley Steinberg

Addressing the issue of bullying can feel like going up against a hydra -- cut one head off and another two sprout up behind you. This panel will not only offer effective applied theatre tools and approaches, but will map out the multiple areas where interventions can be made. Panelists will offer short “provocations” in order to engage the audience in a rich discussion about the many facets of creative anti-bullying work.

3:15 PM .............................................Break out discussions and talk back

4:00 PM ............................................Final Plenary with Pedro Noguera, Rosa Pietanza, Robby Cohen, and officials from NYC Department of Education

“Research, Resources, and Strategies for Combating the Bullying Menace”

This panel will explore ways that educators can combat the range of hurtful behavior that constitutes the bullying menace. Scholars and educators who work with all age groups will discuss the research, resources, and strategies that can serve as a foundation for making our schools safe for all students.

panel facilitator: Prof. Robert Cohen

panelists: Prof. Joseph P. McDonald, Dr. Fred Kaeser, Renae Despointes, Tom Roderick, and pre-taped interview with Prof. Pedro Noguera

5:00 PM .............................................Reception
6:00 PM .............................................Finish
**SPEAKERS**

**Judyie Ella Al-Bilali**, for over thirty years, has been an innovator in the field of performing arts and arts education. As an actor, director and playwright she has performed and directed off-Broadway and in regional theater nationwide. She has taught at Amherst College, Hampshire College, University of Virginia’s Semester at Sea program and currently teaches at NYU’s Steinhardt School in Educational Theatre. She was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa where she established and directed Brown Paper Studio, an applied theatre company. Judyie received a BA in African American Performing Arts and a MFA in Theatre from the University of Massachusetts. She is the recipient of a Jacob Javits Fellowship in Arts and Humanities, along with grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. In the field of arts administration she was the Development Director for Crossroads Theatre Company, a program officer for the New York State Council on the Arts, the Festival Coordinator for Actors Theatre of Louisville’s Humana and Shorts Festivals and a Board Member on the Kentucky Arts Council. She is the author of a book of haiku poetry, *Halcyon Days* and has written a memoir about her years in South Africa entitled *For the Feeling: Love & Transformation from New York to Cape Town.*

**Manuel “Manny” Borras** was recently released from prison after serving seventeen years. He was a member of Rehabilitation for the Arts, 2004-2009, at Woodbourne Correctional Facility, where he participated in classes in Theatre, including Forum Theatre, Brecht, Shakespeare’s Sonnets, Modern Dance, Commedia dell Arte, Physical Comedy, Clowning, Improvisation, Playwriting, and Acting. He is a strong advocate for the arts in prison. He is an aspiring playwright. He co-wrote *Starting Over*, a peer delivered training play about the importance of maintaining family ties while incarcerated, which was performed at Sing-Sing and Woodbourne Correctional Facilities for prisoners and DOCs administrators and will be adapted into a peer delivered training film for distribution throughout New York State prisons. In 2009, The Working Theatre, a respected Off-Broadway Theatre Company, commissioned Manny to write a play as part of their 25th Anniversary season. The play, “Song to a Child like Me,” received a public reading at the Abingdon Theatre in the spring of 2010 and will continue to be developed by The Working Theatre in 2011. Manny graduated with a Bachelors Degree from Brag College. He wished to send a big thank you to his family and fiends who have been an unbelievable source of support during his transition. Manny currently resides in the Boogie Down Bronx.
Javier Cardona is a performing artist and educator originally from Puerto Rico, who began his performing and arts in education career with Los Teatros Ambulantes de Cayey. Experienced in the use of the arts as an aesthetic form and a dialogical medium for human reflection and social action, Javier currently works as the Arts & Education Director for Rehabilitation Through the Arts, a non-governmental arts in education initiative inside New York State prisons. Additionally, Javier is a teaching artist with The New Victory Theater’s education department, and he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Interdisciplinary Laboratory for Art, Nature and Dance, iLand.

Robert Cohen is a professor of social studies in the department of Teaching & Learning and an affiliated professor in the department of History at NYU. He is the author of Freedom’s Orator: Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s, Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters From Children of the Great Depression, and served as chair of NYU’s department of Teaching and Learning from 2004-2010.

Renae Despointes is a registered nurse who began her career in the adolescent clinic at Mt. Sinai Hospital. She now works at Lower Manhattan Arts Academy, a NYCDOE public high school, as an intervention specialist. She has been Educational Coordinator at NYU’s School of Social Work. She has also been a guest speaker and contributor in the Social Responsibilities class at Steinhardt.

Dana Edell, PhD is an activist-scholar-artist and the co-founder/executive director of viBe Theater Experience (www.vibeTheater.org). Since 2002, Dana has directed, co-directed, designed and/or produced more than 50 viBe plays, 7 CDs of original music and 2 original radio plays addressing the “real-life” issues that urban girls deal with daily, all written and performed by teenage girls in New York City. She’s produced a girls’ arts festival in San Francisco and a “youth against violence” performance festival in NYC and ran Inside/Out Performing Arts, a theater program for girls affected by the San Francisco juvenile justice system. As an adjunct assistant professor, Dana teaches at New York University, Manhattan Marymount College and with the Bard College Prison Initiative at Bayview Women’s Prison. She has a BA with honors in Classics/Ancient Greek from Brown University, an MFA in Theatre Directing from Columbia University and a PhD in Educational Theatre from NYU.
Kayhan Irani is an Emmy award winning writer, a performer and a Theater of the Oppressed trainer. She directs participatory arts projects with government agencies, community based organizations, international NGOs and with the general public. She also facilitates theater in conflict zones such as Afghanistan (2010) and Iraq (2004). She is a published author and member of the Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory N.Y.; the oldest Theater of the Oppressed training center in the US. For more about Kayhan visit: www.artivista.org

Dr. Fred Kaeser is the former Director of Health Education for the NYC public schools. Fred received his doctoral degree from NYU/Steinhardt in Human Sexuality Studies and has been a sexuality educator for over 30 years. He has a special interest in child and adolescent sexuality, sexual bullying and children who molest other children, and sexuality of the developmentally disabled. Fred has published a number of articles dealing with human sexuality and he has consulted on various topics that pertain to sexuality in 22 states and throughout Canada. He is a member of the New York City Child Fatality Review Team and co-teaches the Steinhardt course “Social Responsibilities of Educators”. His book, “What Your Child Needs to Know about Sex: A Parent’s Guide to Early, Open, and Effective Communication” published by Celestial Arts/Random House will be released this September 6th.

Joseph McDonald is Professor of Teaching and Learning at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, New York University, where he leads faculty oversight of NYU’s extensive teacher education program. He is the author or co-author of seven books about teaching and schooling – including *Going to Scale with New School Designs: Reinventing High School* (Teachers College Press, 2009), and *The Power of Protocols* (Teachers College Press, 2007). He is currently completing a book tentatively entitled *Cities and Their Schools*, based on research funded by the Annenberg and Spencer Foundations on the last decade of school reform in five American Cities.

Dr. David Montgomery is a specialist in drama education, theatre for young audiences, student teaching and integrated arts. In addition to teaching graduate and undergraduate students, he is artistic director for the New Plays for Young Audiences series at the Provincetown Playhouse and has directed numerous educational theatre productions. Dr. Montgomery has written journal articles and is currently collaborating with Dr. Robert Landy on a book to be published by Palgrave in 2012.
Pedro Antonio Noguera, PhD is the Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education at New York University. He holds tenured faculty appointments in the departments of Teaching and Learning and Humanities and Social Sciences at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Development and in the Department of Sociology at New York University. He is also the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education and the co-Director of the Institute for the Study of Globalization and Education in Metropolitan Settings (IGEMS).

He is the author of The Imperatives of Power: Political Change and the Social Basis of Regime Support in Grenada (Peter Lang Publishers, 1997), City Schools and the American Dream (Teachers College Press 2003), Unfinished Business: Closing the Achievement Gap in Our Nation’s Schools (Josey Bass, 2006) City Kids, City Teachers with Bill Ayers and Greg Michie (New Press 2008), and his most recent book is The Trouble With Black Boys…and Other Reflections on Race, Equity and the Future of Public Education (Wiley and Sons, 2008). Noguera has also appeared as a regular commentator on educational issues on CNN, National Public Radio, and other national news outlets.

Dr. Ross Prior is the founding editor of the international Journal of Applied Arts and Health. He is a principal lecturer at The University of Northampton, United Kingdom, where he is also the widening participation and external relations co-ordinator for the School of The Arts. He has held a range of posts both within the profession and education, having taught at all levels of education for many years. In 2007 he was awarded the distinguished ‘Teaching Fellow of The University’ for excellence in teaching. Dr Prior was a key figure in the establishment of the first Arts and Health conference at The University of Northampton in 2007 and Inspiring Transformations: Applied Arts and Health Conference in 2009. He has been closely involved with the Drama in Education and Applied Theatre movements for much of his life, as a researcher, teacher and practitioner.

Tom Roderick is executive director of Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, founder of The 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution), and co-founder of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) and an array of other programs for developing youngsters’ social, emotional, and academic skills. Morningside Center has developed programs that have helped thousands of teachers and hundreds of thousands of young people (pre-K to 12) learn skills in communication, anger management, negotiation, mediation, intercultural understanding, collaboration, and critical thinking. Before coming to Morningside Center as executive director in 1983, Tom was a teacher in the NYC public schools and director of the East Harlem Day School. He has a Master’s degree in Education from Bank Street College and a Bachelor’s degree from Yale University. Tom is the author of A School of Our Own: Parents, Power, and Community at the East Harlem Block Schools (Teachers College Press, 2001). For more information about Morningside Center, visit the website at www.morningsidecenter.org.
Alexander Santiago-Jirau is an educator, advocate and theatre artist committed to the use of theatre for youth and community development. He is Associate Director of the Career Development Program at The Center for Arts Education (www.caenyc.org), where he counsels youth pursuing arts careers and leads professional development workshops for New York City public school educators. A Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner who studied with Augusto Boal, Alex facilitates multiple workshops, particularly with youth and diverse immigrant communities. He is Past President of the Board of Directors of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, Inc. (www.ptoweb.org), a national organization devoted to the work of liberatory educators, activists, artists, and community organizers. Alex is also co-founder of The Forum Project (www.theforumproject.org), a theatre training and facilitation company that designs custom workshops, community projects, performances and trainings for a wide range of communities and social justice issues. Alex has previously taught at Drew University and The Living Theatre Conservatory. In addition to presenting his work at numerous national and international conferences, Alex is also a recipient of Repertorio Español’s Van Lier Young Directors Fellowship. In 2010, he was elected to the board of the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable. A co-written article on queer youth performance and Theatre of the Oppressed is forthcoming in the anthology *Come Closer: Critical Perspectives on Theatre of the Oppressed*. Alex holds a B.S. in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University and an M.A. in Educational Theatre from New York University Steinhardt.

Alex Sarian is an arts education director who has designed and implemented programs for cultural organizations, education non-profits and government agencies in three continents. Prior to serving as the Director of Education & Outreach at MCC Theater, an award-winning theater company in New York City, Sarian created and managed arts programs for the NYC Department of Education and the New Jersey public school system. Originally from Argentina, he has presented workshops and lectured on the subject of arts education at conferences and universities in New York, San Francisco and Philadelphia, amongst others, and was a featured speaker on creativity in the classroom at a recent TEDx conference in Toronto co-hosted by the International Baccalaureate and the York School. In addition to having served on the board for the New Jersey Arts Education Collective, Sarian is an active committee member for the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable and a judge for the National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards (in the Dramatic Writing category). He is a proud graduate of the program in Educational Theatre at NYU, where he earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees with concentrations in K-12 education and Performing Arts Administration.
**Dr. Nancy Smithner** is a performer and director with expertise in acting and directing styles, physical theatre techniques, and the devising of original works. She has taught for the Program in Educational Theatre at NYU since 1985, as well as many other venues such as Circle in the Square Theatre School, Playwrights Horizons, Movement Research, the New York Dance Intensive, Berkshire Theatre Festival, and Soongsil University in Seoul, Korea. Recent directing credits include Sonia Flew by Lopez, The Eumenides by Aeschylus, Mad Forest by Churchill, and Macbeth by Shakespeare. Smithner is also an applied theatre practitioner, teaching in prisons and performing for children in pediatric settings.

**Shirley R. Steinberg** is the incoming Chair and Director of the Werklund Foundation Centre for Youth Leadership and Professor of Education at the University of Calgary. She is the founding director of The Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy (freireproject.org). She teaches critical media literacy, cultural studies, and critical pedagogy and has a background as a former high school drama teacher. Her recent books include: *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood* (2011); *Teaching Against Islamophobia* (2010); *19 Urban Questions: Teaching in the City* (2010); and along with Joe Kincheloe: *Christotainment: Selling Jesus Through Popular Culture* (2009), *Changing Multiculturalism: New Times, New Curriculum* (2004), and many other books and articles. An internationally known speaker, she is a frequent contributor to CBC Television and Radio, CTV, and The Toronto Globe and Mail. Her research focuses on critical emancipatory education and grassroots activism employing improvisational theatre and the collective, bricolaged research, and cultural contextualization.

**Philip Taylor** has been Director of the Program in Educational Theatre since 2003. His research interests are in the fields of applied theatre and process drama, qualitative research, reflective praxis and educational inquiry. His book *Applied Theatre: Creating Transformative Encounters in the Community* describes how theatre can empower individuals and communities to effect change. Dr Taylor established the International Institute in Drama in Education Research Institute (IDIERI) which has met in Australia, Canada, England, Jamaica, and the United States. He was inaugural director of the first centre in Australia dedicated to applied theatre research, Centre for Applied Theatre Research, Griffith University, 1997-2001, and was foundation editor of *Applied Theatre Researcher*. At NYU he established a new scholarly periodical, *Arts Praxis*, and is excited by his forthcoming book *Theatre for Critical Social Change*. 
SOME RESOURCES WE FIND HELPFUL

NY TIMES ARTICLE

MAKE THE ROAD
http://www.maketheroad.org/article.php?ID=1687

IT GETS BETTER
http://www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/about-it-gets-better-project/

AGAINST BULLYING OR ON LOVING QUEER KIDS
http://www.thenation.com/blog/155219/against-bullying-or-loving-queer-kids
NYU Steinhardt’s Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions was established in 1925. Since that time, Steinhardt Music and Performing Arts Professions has functioned as NYU’s “school” of music and developed into a major research and practice center in music technology, music business, music composition, film scoring, music performance practices, performing arts therapies, and the performing arts-in-education (music, dance, and drama). Today, 1,600 students majoring in renowned programs—baccalaureate through Ph.D.—are guided by more than 400 faculty who share The Steinhardt School’s spirit of openness and innovation. Faculty include international performing and recording artists, music business and technology leaders while others sit on leading journal editorial boards and publish some of the most significant music technology and performing arts research on the scene today. This depth and breadth of resources offer unparalleled opportunities for artistic, professional, and scholarly growth.

NYU’s Program in Educational Theatre has developed partnerships with some of the most recognized educational teams and theatres in the world. Our students have the opportunity to do internships year round for course credit and practical experience. They have worked in a wide variety of positions ranging from assistant education directors to teaching artists to production assistants. Some of the many companies we have developed partnerships with are The New Victory Theatre, The Manhattan Theatre Club, The City Light’s Youth Theatre, The Lark Theatre, The Roundabout Theatre Company, and The Abbey Theatre in Dublin, Ireland.

We recognize that in addition to substantial training in individual specializations, our graduates require multiple skills. To that end we encourage students to benefit from rich and varied courses throughout The Steinhardt School and the University. In addition, our campus is surrounded by and blends into the world’s capital and epicenter of the performing arts, New York City. Alumni have major performing careers and coveted professional positions in the music industry and in universities throughout the world. Prominent alumni include: jazz great Wayne Shorter, multiple Tony and Grammy Award winning music theatre composer and songwriter Cy Coleman, multiple Tony and Grammy Award winning lyricist Betty Comden, multiple Oscar winning film composer Elmer Bernstein, and Tony Award, Oscar and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and film writer John Patrick Shanley.

Lawrence Ferrara, Director