



**A MUSICAL PLAY ABOUT
YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSFORMING
WASHINGTON, D.C. INTO A
“CITY AT PEACE”**



Rosey Simonds – Original Produce



Cast of the 1st City at Peace Production, Washington DC

PEACE CHILD'S PROGRESS...

Volume 6, Number 4

Winter 1990

Peace Child is a musical fantasy based on The Peace Book by Bernard S. Benson which tells how children bring peace to the world. The Peace Child Foundation has been set up to promote that fantasy and play a part in making it a reality.

CITY AT PEACE GOES NATIONAL

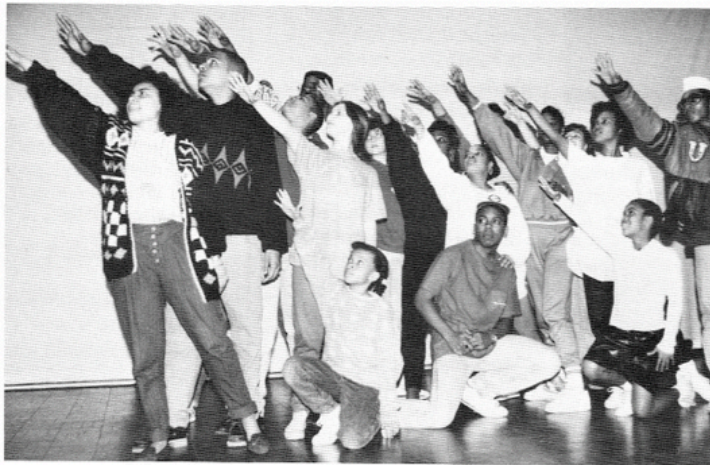
Your community could be the next *City At Peace*! As rehearsals for a second production in Washington, D.C. begin, at least seven other cities across the US are also preparing for performances this year.

The play which premiered in Washington, D.C. last year, uses the Peace Child process in a new way and combines the performing arts with social interaction to bring together youth of varied racial, cultural and economic backgrounds. The participants learn to overcome social barriers and build self-esteem as they work together to generate positive solutions to the conflicts and problems confronting young people in their city.

Auditions for the second D.C. project were held in January and February and performances are scheduled April 28, 29 and May 5, 6. Caron Tate and Natalie Johnson joined the National Office staff recently to help Carlo Grossman, the Project Director and Writer/Director of CAP, coordinate the local production and national outreach. Carlo has just completed the CITY AT PEACE STUDY GUIDE and we encourage you to purchase a copy

to help start a CAP project in your community or school. Call or write the National Office to place your orders or to receive more information.

City At Peace projects are already sparking renewed enthusiasm in many Peace Child "veterans" and drawing in newcomers. Thanks to the work of John Stevens, the Dallas Children's



Cast of original City at Peace in rehearsal

Theater has scheduled thirty CAP performances in local schools this spring and has received a \$38,000 grant from North Carolina National Bank Texas for the project. John's Peace Child experience includes artistic direction of both local and international exchange productions, and even a stint at the National Office helping to set up program orientations. Peace Child alum Katie Christie is organizing a Miami, FL production, and Peace Child groups in Los Angeles, CA; Rochester and Ithaca, NY plan 1990 productions. A Detroit, MI show is scheduled to open Memorial Day and the office continues to receive calls from other interested cities.

For more information about these local CAP projects, contact:

- Los Angeles, CA, Mike Valeo, 213-471-7229 or Stacy McEnnan, 818-707-1651
- Miami, FL, Katie or Jack Christie, 305-667-1089
- Detroit, MI, Mary Cooney, 313-816-3389
- New Milford, NJ, Lottie Porch, 201-262-4892
- Rochester, NY, Vicki Lewin, 716-244-6759
- Ithaca, NY, Gail Sherman, 607-539-7267
- Dallas, TX, Dallas Children's Theater, 214-978-0110



(L-R) Jennifer Albright, Nate Conable, Sadar Chapelle and Stacey Huggins in original CAP scene



Peace Child Alexander Woollcombe chips away at the Berlin Wall

New Short Script Now Available for Earth Day 1990

To help celebrate the upcoming 20th anniversary of Earth Day in April, Peace Child author David Woollcombe has written a one act version of the environmental Peace Child script. Named EARTH CHILD, it uses the Peace Child process and songs and is easily produced to be a free standing performance, part of a larger community celebration or as a class project. Order your copy today by calling the National Office at 703.385.4494

PEACE CHILD'S PROGRESS...

Volume 6 No. 2

Summer 1989

PEACE CHILD is a musical fantasy based on "The Peace Book" by Bernard S. Benson which tells how children bring peace to the world. The Peace Child Foundation has been set up to promote that fantasy and play a part in making it a reality.

CITY AT PEACE

- A Triumph !

"Peace Child has a hot new hit on its hands!" exclaimed Bob Wharton, Peace Child member from Olympia Wa. The new 50-minute show "City at Peace" which deals with inner city issues of drugs, violence, and racism was greeted with cheers and two standing ovations at its first public performance in Washington DC on April 29th. Students at Dunbar and Anacostia High Schools gave it an equally enthusiastic reception.

The play was a triumph both on and off the stage. One principal determined immediately to launch a City at Peace project in her school. The head of music at Anacostia said that our performance was the first time in 25 years that they had seen such an enthusiastic school reception for black and white students performing together on their stage.

"This play was all risk!" said David Woollcombe. "The risk that it would compound the problem by confirming stereotypes, the risk that - like so many other plays on these issues - it would leave the audience with a sense of desolation and despair. It is a colossal tribute to the skill of director/writer Carlo Grossman and his excellent cast that the play was such a rich experience. It left the audience with an exhilarating sense of uplift and hope."

The play is set in the future and looks back to an incident where some innocent children are shot outside a high school (modeled on an actual incident in Washington DC.) The incident goads students of the school into action: a mass movement grows and the play reaches its climax at the Lincoln Memorial, recalling the performance there by Marian Anderson, and Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech.



UK Production at Heathfield School. Two children from this production are joining the cast of Peace Child Japan in Hiroshima in July/August.

The cast included children from homeless shelters and detention centers along with affluent students from the Washington suburbs. Results are hard to quantify but there were real transformations in the cast. Stephanie got to love and trust kids from areas whose

very names inspired terror in her before the play. Leonard learned that there were white kids like him who really cared about the city and cared about him. Tammy, coming from a detention center, learned that she doesn't have to go back to her old friends who got her into trouble.

Rosey Simonds, who shouldered the exhausting burden of producing the play, wrote: "It is not simply a moving play - it challenges children, teachers and officials to think about what they personally can do. It makes children realize their opinions count, that they have responsibility and that they can achieve things."

[Editor's Note: Peace Child productions this spring in Santa Cruz, San Antonio and Silver Spring also examined inner city issues. A "City at Peace" Study Guide based on these experiences is to be published, and on-going programs are planned for DC and other communities.]



Carlo Grossman and the City at Peace Cast

MORE NEW STAFF AND NEW SPACE

The National Office has moved into a larger office in the same Fairfax building and has added a new position to manage it!

Joining the staff as Office Manager is Sally Riddles, a longtime Peace Child supporter and volunteer, and mother of Rachel Riddles who was part of the 1988 East Coast International cast and currently participates in the D.C. area City At Peace project. Sally and Rachel were both involved in the original Roanoke Peace Child production before moving to Northern Virginia in 1987. In addition to acting as the bookkeeper and office operations manager for National, Sally will be the primary chapter contact and will be coordinating chapter communications and financial reporting.

Several interns are signed up for this summer. Jen Paul from Antioch College is currently working as our Capital Hill Intern, Stephanie Hylan from George Mason University has just started as a Chapter Communications Assistant, Cathy Hall from American University is serving as a Public Relations Intern and alum Lucia Burns (Latvia '88 and Latvia Reunion '89) begins as an Orientation Assistant in the middle of June.

NEW FAX NUMBER [703]273-6568.

Thank you CATA and Steve Effros for letting us use your fax line so often over the last 6 years.

ALUMNI NEWS

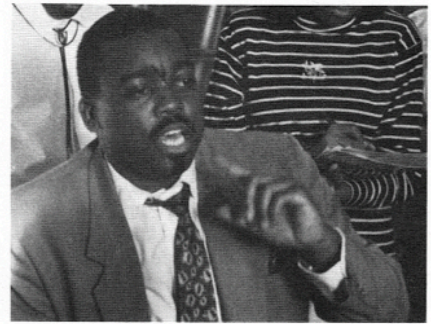
Peace Child Meets the Santa Cruz Earthquake

by Peter Isbister (member of the PC/Santa Cruz Chorus)

This past January, members of the Santa Cruz Peace Child Chorus and the Mission Hill Junior High School drama class collaborated on a one hour show about the aftermath of the October 17, 1989, earthquake.

The show was written entirely by students in the class in a matter of weeks. It followed the standard Peace Child structure of a flashback. We used a grandfather telling a story to his granddaughter to stitch together skits about rumors, radio reports, Red Cross shelters, sleeping outside, and most importantly, the rebuilding spirit of the community. The chorus came on and off stage to sing songs like "Reach Out", "Somos Futuro", "Say You Love This World", and an English version of "Mwee Zhaleyem".

The show played to packed houses of elementary school kids and even got a spot in the local paper! Putting the play together was grueling, but the product - combining skits, songs and slides - was wonderful. It was great to see Peace Child mesh with the school so beautifully. The show was important testimony to how Santa Cruz responded so well to the earthquake, and to how we should always live harmoniously, not only when disaster strikes. Thank you to our teacher, Diane Smith, and everyone from Peace Child who helped make it possible.



GRANT CHALLENGES CITY AT PEACE

In response to a Washington Post article about the 1990 D.C. production, an anonymous donor has pledged \$25,000 to match donations received through December 31 for a City At Peace National Capital Area Schools Project.

The National staff and Board are working to set up a local Steering Committee and program design that will develop this Schools Project into a model to be promoted nationwide. "We're hoping that other cities around the country will be inspired to go after local challenge grants to create their own City At Peace," says Foundation Executive Director Jerrie Champlin. A key element in the model program will be evaluation and documentation of the process to facilitate its use in other areas.

In addition to NCASP planning sessions, CAP Director Carlo Grossman and Production Coordinator Jody Grossman have had a full schedule of local appearances and rehearsals for a June 25 Congressional performance by the D.C. cast to fit in since the show's opening performances April 28 - May 6.

In April, 60 Dallas teenagers started spreading the message of hope under the direction of John Stevens and the Dallas Children's Theater. The racially mixed cast was recruited from public schools and Boys Clubs from all over the city. A grant from the North Carolina National Bank Texas made the project possible. For information about continuing performances, call the DCT at 214.978.0110.

Producer Mary Cooney recruited students from Detroit's Northern High School and suburban Birmingham's Groves High School for four performances at the Attic Theatre in May. W.K. Kellogg Youth Initiatives Program sponsored the project through the Arts Foundation of Michigan. Mary is considering another production in the future and can be reached at 313.964.2244 for further information.

Left: Peace Child/Santa Cruz performs at local Earth Day rally. Above: City at Peace Music Director Rickey Payton rehearses cast.





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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 101st CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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No. 98

House of Representatives

THE PEACE CHILD FOUNDATION

"City at Peace"

* * *

Hon. DANTE B. FASCELL

OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 1990

Mr. FASCELL. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to give recognition to a group whose work with children across America and around the world is helping to promote peace and harmony and build bridges across racial lines. The Peace Child Foundation brings children from diverse backgrounds together to work toward a common goal of creating and performing in a musical revue, combining and sharing their unique cultures and experiences.

The Peace Child Foundation is a nonprofit organization which acts as an umbrella for local groups in cities around the United States; helps them get started and gain sponsorship; and oversees the international projects of the foundation. The local groups bring children of different races together to create and perform a musical production extolling harmony and peace. Internationally, Peace Child selects American youth to join with children from other countries to perform and share their cultures and ideas. With these small steps, they are aiding in the peace process in a unique way.

I was recently fortunate enough to see "City at Peace," presented by the Miami branch of the Peace Child Foundation. It was comprised of 112 students who sang and danced their way into the audience's heart. They put their individual talents and interests together and produced a moving show, encompassing the ideals of peace and racial harmony, combined with an antidrug message. Through their effort and group commitment, these young people learned that although they come from different backgrounds, they are all part of one community and can work together to create something truly special on their own. Hopefully with this experience, these children, and those they come in contact with, will grow older and wiser without the prejudice and fear that comes with the unknown.

Play Plants Seeds of Peace

Youthful Cast Draws Valuable Lessons From Work on Today's Problems, Future Hopes

By Maria Koklanaris
Washington Post Staff Writer

There were about two dozen teenagers in the auditorium at Stuart Hobson Junior High School, and they were angry.

"My little brother was shot just because he looked at somebody!" cried out one girl. "All he did is look at somebody!"

"Racism has kept blacks and other minorities from taking part in this country's wealth," lamented a young man.

"I use drugs," confided another. "I'm trying to quit, but it's hard, man. My friends use drugs, too . . . It doesn't matter what color you are if you're dead."

The scene wasn't real. Instead, it was part of a performance of "City at Peace" by a racially mixed group of students from the city and suburbs. But it could have been real, they know.

And that was the whole point.

"City at Peace," produced by the Fairfax County-based Peace Child Foundation, uses teenagers, drama, song and dance to portray the transformation of Washington from a place torn by drugs and violence in 1990 to a harmonious community in 2010.

The message, full of hope is: It can be done, if everybody helps. If everybody cares.

The story was written by director Carlo Grossman, who has 15 years experience in children's theater, with help from cast members. It focuses heavily on the problems that stem from racial prejudice and the need to overcome that prejudice. Some of it is based on actual events, such as last year's shootings at and around Dunbar High School.

The Peace Child Foundation, which sponsors exchange programs between children from the United States and the Soviet Union, was created in 1982 by David Woolcomb, who

wrote the musical "Peace Child." The foundation, originally formed to back Woolcomb's production, went on to produce other shows focusing on world peace and nuclear disarmament.

Two years ago, a black student from a District high school who had traveled to the Soviet Union as part of a cast wrote foundation officials a letter. The message: we need you right here at home.

"That really did it," Grossman said. "We realized we'd been working internationally so much, but there are so many problems right here at home."

And so "City at Peace," performed here for the first time last year, was born. Last year's performance was woven around the shootings of four students at Wilson High School.

This year's show, which opened last weekend at Stuart Hobson, continues this weekend

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Cast Learning Lessons From 'City at Peace'

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 1990

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with performances open to the public at First Congregational Church, 945 G St. NW, and Holy Spirit High School at East Capitol and Sixth streets NE.

Other performances are planned for at least four city high schools. June performances are planned for the Martin Luther King Jr. Festival in Atlanta and in a special show for some members of Congress sponsored by Del. Walter E. Fauntroy (D-D.C.).

The cast, which includes a few students from last year, is made up of students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. To find some, Grossman held open auditions in local schools. For the rest, he conducted what he calls targeted auditions—contacting social workers and youth centers and explaining his project.

"I know that some kids who don't consider themselves talented would never come out for an audition," said Grossman, who worked in children's theater for a dozen years in San Francisco. "I don't expect them to come up with the traditional monologue or song and dance."

instead, Grossman asks those seeking parts to do "some theater games, some improvisation. Then we just talk."

That way, he identifies talent such as the two boys sent by social worker Tilla Durr. The boys, one from Southeast Washington and the other from Landover, come from families that "have experienced a lot of hardship and a lot of despair," Durr said. She said "City at Peace" and the friendships made through it have helped her clients begin to overcome.

"These kids have been stereotyped in terms of poverty, in terms of race, in terms of ability," she said. Experts say theater experiences, acting out different roles, are frequently therapeutic for such youngsters.

After two months in the cast of "City at Peace," the boys are "more trusting, feeling more self-confidence, feeling that they've felt very loved, that they've learned a great deal, that they're in an environment there that's conducive to healing."

Grossman and his wife, Jody, the show's producer, said this is part of their mission.

"It's very important to me," said Jody Grossman, "that it be more than theater."

So before the acting, singing and dancing come Carlo Grossman's "trust exercises." His favorite is the "Blind Walk," in which one child allows himself to be led around, eyes closed, by another.

And then, there's the writing. "I make them write almost every rehearsal," he said. "It drives them crazy."

Sometimes, the writings are trite and cursory: "We had a good rehearsal tonight. It's a great show."

Other times, "you find out things about their lives," Grossman said. "Things they wouldn't discuss in a group, such as molestation, home problems, deep personal feelings."

After a dress rehearsal last weekend, some of the students told an observer what they've learned from the show.

Kimberly Saunders, a senior at Wakefield High School in Arlington, said that people in the District and their problems were just faces on the nightly news before "City at Peace."

"I don't spend any of my time in D.C. at all . . . I didn't know any kids from there," she said. "It wasn't alive, until I witnessed it personally."

Abby Friedman, also a Wakefield senior, said the best part of "City at Peace" comes after rehearsal.

"We've bonded together," she said. "We go out together after the show . . . It's not just that we're doing a play together and then we're going to forget each other."

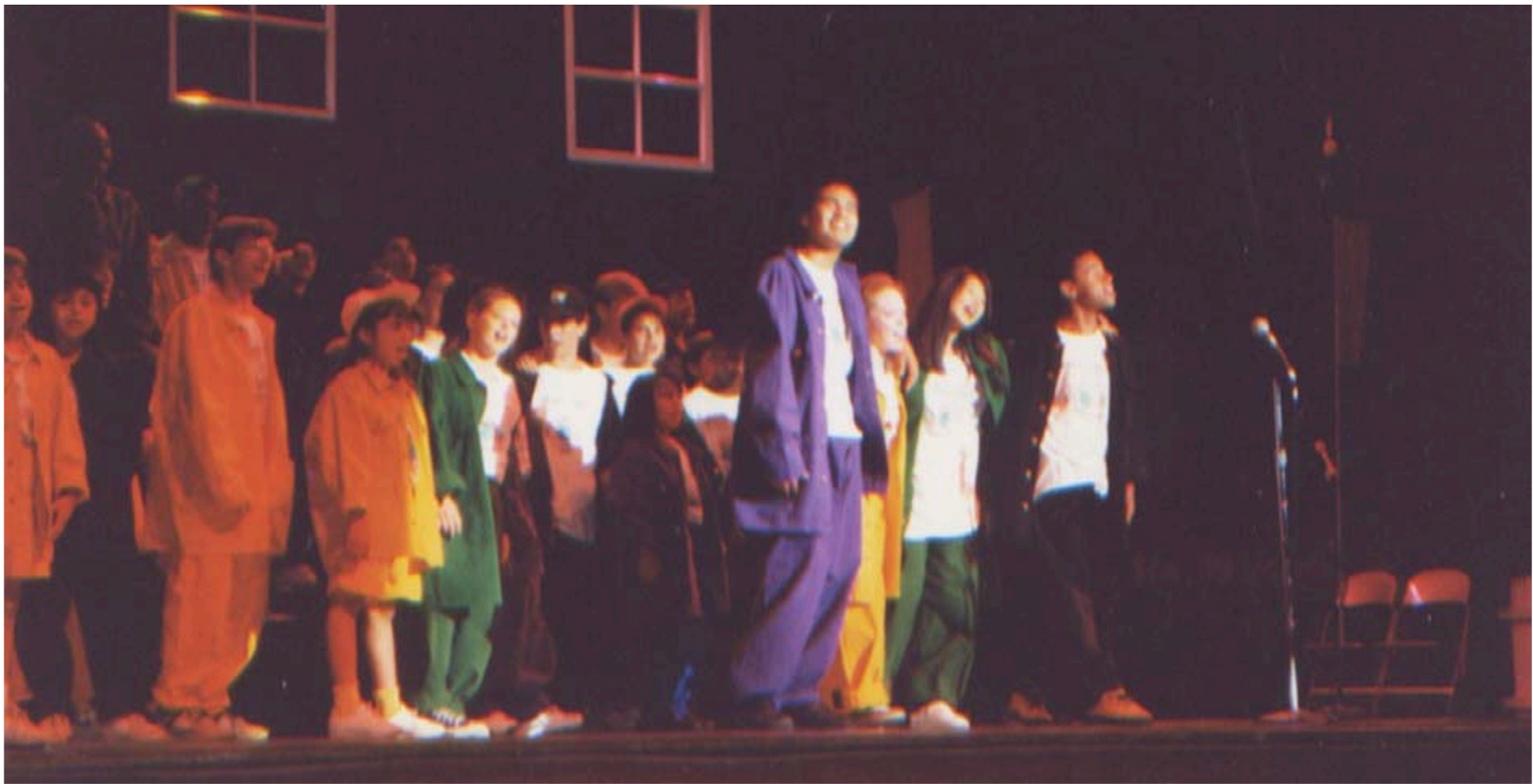
And Thomas Peterson, a seventh-grader who recently moved from Seventh and F streets NW to Montgomery County, said the show has helped him realize that violence never solves problems.

"I didn't have many friends when I went to my new school," he said. "I got in a lot of fights. Here I met a lot of friends and I don't fight any more."



THE CAST OF THE WASHINGTON DC SHOW PERFORM AT THE CAPITOL





THE CAST OF THE MIAMI VOICES UNITED SHOW TAKE A CURTAIN CALL



PRODUCER, ROSEY SIMONDS, INTRODUCES CITY AT PEACE, WITH DIRECTOR, CARLO GROSSMAN

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Metropolitan

Monday, April 16, 1990

© 1990, The Dallas Morning News

The Dallas Morning News

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13 A

Dallas teens present today's troubles in play

By Jeffrey Weiss

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

City at Peace is a play in which 60 Dallas teenagers depict the city as anything but.

The local production, spun off from the International Peace Child Foundation, alternates generally upbeat songs provided by the foundation with generally bleak vignettes created by the local performers.

Thursday's opening-night per-

formance combined the relentless optimism of an *Up With People* concert with the equally relentless — and unpleasant — reality of Parkland Memorial Hospital's emergency room on a bad night.

And that's the point, say the student-creators and their adult sponsors: to unflinchingly examine the problems of today's Dallas while offering hope for a better future.

"I think it is reflective of Dallas at this time," choreographer Fern Tresvan-Seibles said of the harsh

world shown in the musical. "But you can't change things until you face what they are."

"All this stuff is in our lives every day," said All A'gyle, a 13-year-old student at Alex W. Spence Middle School.

The "stuff" is grim and unsettling. In the 70-minute production, three actors "die" on stage — two by drugs and one shot to death as part of a gang initiation. One girl talks regretfully about her abortion. Another talks regretfully

about the baby she put up for adoption and will never see again.

AIDS, alcohol, racism, even the cloud of pollution — the city's ugliest facets are put on display.

Cast members said every scene was based on incidents involving them or someone they knew.

"We're going to be considered either precocious or insightful," said Curtis Sparrer, 15, a student at the Talented and Gifted Magnet High School. "Either way, we're going to be considered."

The idea for *City at Peace* emerged about two years ago from the Peace Child Foundation. The foundation was created to foster better understanding between children in the Soviet Union and the United States.

One child came back from a trip commenting that it was easier to get together with Russian children than with children in her own city. The idea was born to create a theater company of children with diverse racial and ethnic back-

grounds who would create a play exploring the problems in their lives and hinting at solutions.

The first production of *City at Peace* was put together in Washington, D.C., where John Stevens caught a performance. Mr. Stevens, artistic director for the Dallas Children's Theater, was captivated.

"I knew Dallas needed this show," he told the opening-night audience. Please see YOUNG on Page 15A.

Young actors seek hope amid troubled reality

Continued from Page 13A.

audience.

After obtaining a \$35,000 grant from NCNB Texas, Mr. Stevens and other Dallas Children's Theater officials started work in January. Drama students at Dallas public schools and Boys Clubs were recruited for auditions. The result was a racially mixed troupe of African-Americans, whites and Hispanics from all over the city.

Given a loose framework and a set of songs to choose from, the students were encouraged to come up with scenes that show the hardest problems they must confront.

"When we started, I really didn't know where it was going to lead," Mr. Stevens said. "The down part, the dark part, that's really the way

they feel about a lot of things."

But so, say the students, is the upbeat part as represented by the songs and a flash of hope at the end when children of many backgrounds agree to work together to solve their problems.

The very framework of the play is designed to show hope. It is supposed to be a look back at the tribulations of 1990 from the perspective of "Peace Day" 2035, an anniversary celebration of the day when young people in Dallas agreed to band together and make things better.

"When a child comes out and tries to make a difference, I think that's very important," said Ventira Scott, 13, a Spence student.

Thursday night's performance was held at Madison High School in South Dallas before an audience

composed mostly of friends and family members of the cast. An hour before showtime, cast members worked through a final rehearsal.

"Who is absolutely certain of the words in this song?" asked musical director Richard Abrahamson. "Who is not?"

Mr. Stevens looked reprovingly down from a balcony at some mild horseplay.

"This is no party place. This is opening night," he said.

Opening night went smoothly. And 14 more performances are already scheduled at Dallas schools and Boys Clubs. Other performances are possible if groups want to see the show. Anyone interested in booking the show can call the Dallas Children's Theater at 978-

0110.

The goal is to get a familiar message about the city's problems out in a new and, hopefully, more effective manner, the performers said.

"A lot of people see it but are blind to it," said Cicely Stinson, 14, a student at Lincoln High School.

And the students themselves carry an important message that transcends their performances: Despite the bleakness of parts of their lives, 60 people from widely divergent backgrounds are willing to work together and are able to maintain an idealistic vision of their own future.

That message is going to inspire positive change, they say.

"We're going to wake up everyone," Curtis Sparrer said.

Detroit Free Press

• DETROIT FREE PRESS/MONDAY, MAY 14, 1990

Students enact play's ideals of racial harmony

Students learn roles of racial harmony

PLAY, from Page 1A

banks Elementary School in Detroit, becomes the "Peace Child."

"I think the most important aspect of the whole experience is that we're not simply putting on a play about interracial harmony. We're enacting that," said Erin Dilly, 17, a Groves senior, who shares the role of Jenny. "We're going into the city and we're mixing. We're not just playing a role. We're taking our own advice."

The Groves students worried about traveling to a school in Detroit — news reports having left them with the impression that Detroit students carry guns to school. The Northern performers wondered what they had in common with upper-middle-class students from Birmingham.

"At the first rehearsal, we were all apprehensive. There were some definite barriers to be broken down," said Roger Lewis, a Northern freshman who plays crack-addicted Kevin. "But we found out we were alike in many ways and we all believe in the play's message."

Proceeds from "City at Peace" will benefit Northern Community Arts, an after-school and weekend performing arts program for neighborhood students held at the high school on Woodward, near Clairmount.



ACTORS IMAGINE A CITY AT PEACE

*Detroit, Birmingham students
to portray vision of integration*

BY PATRICIA MONTEMURRI
Free Press Staff Writer

They call this play a "musical fantasy," but it tackles real-life problems of race, drugs, alcohol and violence.

It brings together black students from a Detroit high school and white teenagers from suburbia. And just by virtue of rehearsing — in the dance room of Detroit's Northern High School or the auditorium at Birmingham Groves — these animated students are practicing what the play "City at Peace" preaches.

The play — which envisions a 21st-Century integrated urban utopia born from the take-the-streets-back efforts of today's teenagers — will hit the stage in four performances at Detroit's Attic Theatre on May 25, 26 and 27.

"City at Peace" is based on a true-life incident in Washington, D.C., in which a little girl was shot in a schoolyard while trying to stop her older brother from buying drugs.

The play centers on a black family in Detroit. The teenage son, Kevin, is addicted to crack. In the suburbs, teenage Nate drinks too much, and his sister Jenny pleads with him to stop.

Both families come together and help galvanize change when Kevin's sister, Nadira, is shot during a drug deal gone bad. Nadira, played by 10-year-old Carolyn Pratt from Fair-

See PLAY, Page 6A

Miami Herald

February 15, 1990

Young artists compete at arena for role in *City at Peace*

By LOURDES FERNANDEZ
Herald Staff Writer

After Katie Christie toured the Soviet Union with a group of young performers in an effort to chip away at the Cold War, the answer to Miami's problems became crystal clear: Let the kids have a shot at it.

On July 4th, a cast of 100-plus will tackle Miami's problems — drugs, gang warfare and, most importantly, ethnic divisions — with a musical production of *City at Peace* at the Bayfront Amphitheater.

On Saturday, about 130 children and teen-agers from schools around the county auditioned at the Miami Arena for a spot in the cast. Another audition will be held in two weeks.

"We feel that if we, as children, can learn to love each other, then when it's our turn, we don't see why things can't shape up," said Christie, president of Peace Child Miami, a chapter of the international organization Peace Child Foundation.

Last year, as a senior at the New World of the Performing Arts, Christie performed in the Soviet Union with the international foundation. She returned and founded the Miami chapter, which is putting together the show.

The movement began in England in 1981 with a play, the story of Soviet and American children who meet and come to an understanding.

The children sing about the possibility of a nuclear holocaust: "I don't want to die. I want to live."

"We're not trying to be flower children," said one of this year's organizers, 15-year-old Seonaid Rijo. "We're just asking for more communication."

Rijo was in one of the international casts last year. She was the only Miamian among 13 Americans, a Canadian, an Australian and 15 Ukrainians who performed at the United Nations. Any stereotypes quickly broke down.

"They said, 'We thought you'd all dance like Michael Jackson,'" Rijo said, recounting the first encounter with the Ukrainian performers. "We said, 'We'd thought you'd all be fat.'"

In its initial year, the Miami chapter undertook a musical on the Soviet-American conflict.

"We decided that was nice, but we said, 'I'm having trouble right here in my own school,'" said Killian High senior Jennine Ayala, who performed last year and is now a board member of Miami Peace Child.

The show's organizers hope to have a multi-ethnic cast. "We're looking at a *West Side Story* for Miami — the Jets, the Sharks and the Joneses," said production director Cornelia Dozier, founder of the Coconut Grove Children's Theatre.

Those who auditioned Saturday came mostly from arts programs in Dade's public schools. For most, it was their first chance to be part of a large-scale performance.

The show also is an opportunity to reach younger children, said Miami Springs Middle student Joel Echevarria, 14. "Because we're about the same age, they might pay more attention to us than to adults," he said.

Miami chapter president Christie hopes the show will touch the performers as well. "They're learning to work together," she said. "Really that's what it's all about."

Cast Learning Lessons From 'City at Peace'

PEACE, From Page 1

with performances open to the public at First Congregational Church, 945 G St. NW, and Holy Spirit High School at East Capitol and Sixth streets NE.

Other performances are planned for at least four city high schools. June performances are planned for the Martin Luther King Jr. Festival in Atlanta and in a special show for some members of Congress sponsored by Del. Walter E. Fauntroy (D-D.C.).

The cast, which includes a few students from last year, is made up of students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. To find some, Grossman held open auditions in local schools. For the rest, he conducted what he calls targeted auditions—contacting social workers and youth centers and explaining his project.

"I know that some kids who don't consider themselves talented would never come out for an audition," said Grossman, who worked in children's theater for a dozen years in San Francisco. "I don't expect them to come up with the traditional monologue or song and dance."

Instead, Grossman asks those seeking parts to do "some theater games, some improvisation. Then we just talk."

That way, he identifies talent such as the two boys sent by social worker Tilla Durr. The boys, one from Southeast Washington and the other from Landover, come from families that "have experienced a lot of hardship and a lot of despair," Durr said. She said "City at Peace" and the friendships made through it have helped her clients begin to overcome.

"These kids have been stereotyped in terms of poverty, in terms of race, in terms of ability," she said. Experts say theater experiences, acting out different roles, are frequently therapeutic for such youngsters.

After two months in the cast of "City at Peace," the boys are "more trusting, feeling more self-confidence, feeling that they've felt very loved, that they've learned a

great deal, that they're in an environment there that's conducive to healing."

Grossman and his wife, Jody, the show's producer, said this is part of their mission.

"It's very important to me," said Jody Grossman, "that it be more than theater."

So before the acting, singing and dancing come Carlo Grossman's "trust exercises." His favorite is the "Blind Walk," in which one child allows himself to be led around, eyes closed, by another.

And then, there's the writing.

"I make them write almost every rehearsal," he said. "It drives them crazy."

Sometimes, the writings are trite and cursory: "We had a good rehearsal tonight. It's a great show."

Other times, "you find out things about their lives," Grossman said. "Things they wouldn't discuss in a group, such as molestation, home problems, deep personal feelings."

After a dress rehearsal last weekend, some of the students told an observer what they've learned from the show.

Kimberly Saunders, a senior at Wakefield High School in Arlington, said that people in the District and their problems were just faces on the nightly news before "City at Peace."

"I don't spend any of my time in D.C. at all . . . I didn't know any kids from there," she said. "It wasn't alive, until I witnessed it personally."

Abby Friedman, also a Wakefield senior, said the best part of "City at Peace" comes after rehearsal.

"We've bonded together," she said. "We go out together after the show . . . It's not just that we're doing a play together and then we're going to forget each other."

And Thomas Peterson, a seventh-grader who recently moved from Seventh and F streets NW to Montgomery County, said the show has helped him realize that violence never solves problems.

"I didn't have many friends when I went to my new school," he said. "I got in a lot of fights. Here I met a lot of friends and I don't fight any more."

