

UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

# **THE THEATRE FOR TEENAGERS IN NEW YORK CITY**

PART OF THE VIRTUAL NEW YORK CITY TEENAGE TRAVEL GUIDE

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## **Program Outline**

### ***Target Student Age/Level***

This program was targeted at 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade students. These students are between 14 and 16 years of age.

### ***Major Goals***

The major goals of the program are:

- to develop appreciation for live theatre performances
- to teach students the elements of acting, writing, and designing for the theatre
- to publish student writing as artistic expressions, academic research, journalistic pieces; for modeling, and as educational artifacts
- to provide supplementary material on the theatre in New York for students and teachers
- to collaborate with other high schools in the creation of an on-line "Travel Guide to New York City."

### ***Timelines***

This program was for ten weeks.

Each week two, forty-minute periods were spent on the program.

We made five trips to the theatre during that ten-week period.

### ***Types of Assessment Used:***

Creative writing for theatre judged with English Language Arts Rubrics.

Class participation in the form of performance.

# PLAYBILL

1999 - 2000 Season

## THE PLAYERS

"West Side Story" at New York University

Student Reactions to "West Side Story"

UNHS' First Shakespeare Play - "Julius Caesar"

Interview with Mr. Dennis Green our Artist In Residence

Our Student Critics Review George Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man"

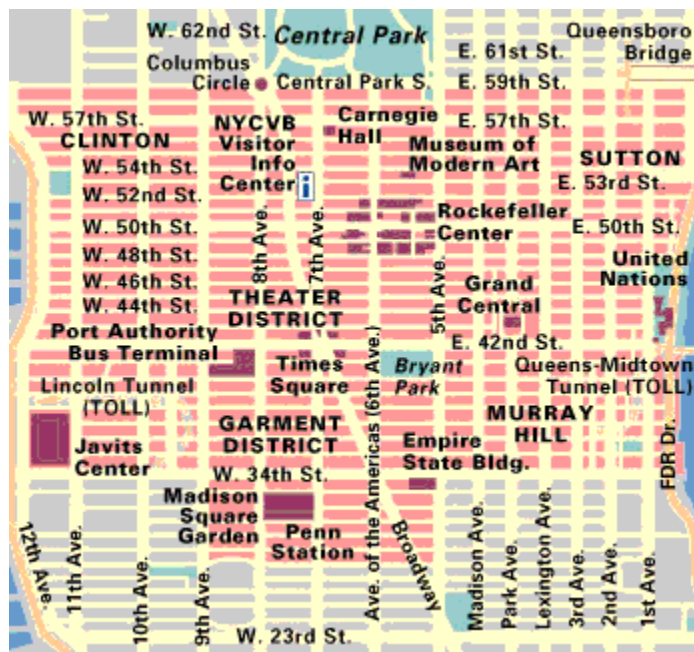
A Comparison between the film "Vanya on 42nd Street" and a live performance of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya"

Group Review of "The Bomb-itty of Errors"

Students' Writing

Lessons - The Theatre for Teenagers in New York City

Websites for Theatre in New York City



2000 - 2001 Season

"A Skull in Connemara"

Character Studies

"Follies" May 9, 2001

# THE PLAYERS

## **Cindy G**

I am 14 years old and I live on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. I love going to the theatre to see plays but only if I feel they are worth going to. I love comedy. If a play makes me laugh, I believe it is worth spending money on.

## **Kristine**

I am 14 years old. I live on the Lower East Side, 12<sup>th</sup> Street. I really enjoy going to the theatre. They are funny, but cost a lot. I have been to another play with other school. The play was about three kids in foster care, about their lives, and the things they have been through.

## **Frankie**

Age: 14

Neighborhood: 111 Street in Manhattan

I feel excited and joyful about to the theatre. I have never been to the theatre before going to see “The Bomb-itty of Errors” with my high school, University Neighborhood.

## **Natalie**

Age: 14

Neighborhood: 103 Street, Manhattan

I feel great about going to the theatre. It is fun and educational. I have also seen an African Caribbean play “Quien mato a Hector Lavoe?”

## **Vanessa**

I'm 14 years old. I live on 4<sup>th</sup> Street on Avenue D in Manhattan. The way I feel about the theatre is that it is very creative. I have been to many other plays. I have been to a Black History Play.

## **Cindy M**

I'm 14 years old and I live in Manhattan with my family. I love living in Manhattan because it is fun and you meet new people everyday. Someday, I would like to be a professional chef because I love to eat.

## **Justin**

I am 16 years old. I live in Manhattan. I like going to the theatre. I have been to see “Beauty and the Beast”.

## **Students' Reactions to "West Side Story"**

**Andrea Rodriguez, "I give it two thumbs up. Fascinating and funny."**

**Mary Rodriguez, "Romantic and touching. Funny and amazing."**

**Hector Galarza, "Fun for everyone."**

**Maurice Brown, "Loud, banging action. It was a hoot. You'll want to see it again."**

**Trent Berger, "I thought 'West Side Story' was superb. It was sad and funny at the same time."**

**Mohammed Mohin, "The play had great performances. It was very touching."**

## **“Julius Caesar” by William Shakespeare**







Student writing assignment – pretend you are a citizen of Rome and you just learned that Caesar has been assassinated.

Natalie Estrella

I'm a Roman citizen from Rome. My name is Debinuses. I am very worried about what's going to happen here in Rome, now that Caesar died! Caesar was a great ruler. I couldn't believe what I was seeing when I saw Caesar's body full of holes. I was sure that he was assassinated. I wonder who wanted Caesar dead? But to my people and me, Brutus was the one that killed Caesar. The "Noble Brutus", indeed! Cesar would have been a great ruler. I couldn't believe that Caesar left his people money. Brutus was absolutely wrong when he said that Caesar was ambitious.

I think that Brutus was jealous of Caesar just because Caesar had achieved what Brutus would have liked to be "An Emperor". They said that Brutus was noble. Brutus was easy to fool because Cassius brain washed him into killing Caesar, I suppose. Or Brutus was gullible. I think that he is also honorable because he surrendered but died with honor.. Brutus also thought that no one was better than he because he didn't want Caesar to become an Emperor. He thought that Caesar was weak and didn't make a good ruler. Another reason is he wanted the government to stay democratic.

It is actually very hard to guess what's going to happen in Rome. Who is going to be king?" I as a Roman citizen think that Marc Anthony is going to become Emperor (King) at the end. Because he is noble and a good friend to Caesar.

Debinuses.



## **Interview with the Artist in Residence, Mr. Dennis Green**

April 11, 2000

Ms. Vitulano: “Hello it’s a beautiful spring day in New York City and we’re happy to welcome Mr. Dennis Green who’s our artist in residence. I’m Ms. Vitulano and my students are going to be interviewing Mr. Green.”

Fernando Chan: “Hi I’m Fernando Chan. How old are you?”

Mr. Green: “Forty.”

Fernando Chan: “My other question is – How long have you been working in the acting business?”

Mr. Green: “Well let’s see, professionally since I was about twenty two, twenty two years old.”

Vanessa Cartagena: “My name is Vanessa Cartagena. I have a question. Have you ever designed a stage?”

Mr. Green: “Have I ever designed a stage like you mean like a set? Ah no my expertise is really acting and writing, not really set design.”

Jonathan Marty: “Hello my name is Jonathan Marty. I’m going to ask some questions of Mr. Green. Who was your inspiration of becoming an actor?”

Mr. Green: “My inspiration for becoming an actor. Well actually there wasn’t any one specific person that I admired and made me want to become an actor. I sort of, actually I decided that I wanted to be an actor when I was about nine years old, and because my brother was a musician. He played the base guitar and stuff. He got a lot of attention so I wanted attention too and I thought well I can’t be a musician so I think I’ll try acting.”

Elsy Salgado: “Hi my name is Elsy Salgado. I got a question to ask you. Who is your favorite actor or

actress and why?"

Mr. Green: "Wow, favorite actor or actress, well let me see. Well I have a lot of people that I admire very much. I don't have one favorite. Let's see actors, actually the contemporary actors I like actually like Sean Penn a lot. I think he's very very good and I like Johnny Depp, and of course I like DeNiro. That's as far as film actors go, actresses well I like Angela Bassett a lot, and I like Meryl Streep. Let's see Angelica Houston, a couple of others I can't think of."

Elsy Salgado: "All right and second question is, what is your favorite play and why?"

Dennis Green: "My favorite play, well let's see. Actually my favorite play at the moment, is one that I just read. It's called "The Man Who Came to Dinner". It's by a writing team. It's a comedy. Writing team by the name of Kaufman and Hart. So it's a very very very funny play. This famous radio host comes to this family's house for dinner, breaks his hip and ends up staying and turns the house upside down. So all of a sudden there are penguins, and craziness all throughout the house."

Fatou Ndiaye: "My name is Fatou, the question is how do you get students to be interested in acting?"

Dennis Green: "How do I get students to be interested in acting? Well I don't know if I get them to be interested in acting. I think most of the time they start off with some kind of interest already. Then from there hopefully by presenting them with the skills of the profession, they become more interested in acting. So I think most of the people that I work with they come to it already with some interest."

Fatou Ndiaye: "My second question is if there was a part in a play what part would you want to play?"

Mr. Dennis Green: "Like what part would I really love to do? I really don't know, a couple of Shakespeare's. Actually I would really love to do, maybe Richard the III."

Cindy Mei: "My name is Cindy Mei. Have you done any movies?"

Mr. Dennis Green: "Yeah I've been in a couple of movies. One is called "Jacob's Ladder". Some years back I did a movie for a friend of mine, called "Murder Magic" and actually I'm going to do a reading tonight of a couple of screen plays by another friend of mine who's a director and producer. Hopefully those will soon get produced and do some acting again."

Cindy Mei: "Why do you like acting so much?"

Mr. Dennis Green: "Why do I like acting so much. I think because I can get to be somebody else and the things you can't, you usually don't get to do in life, you can do in a play or in a movie. It's OK. Like no one will come after you. "

Cindy Mei: "Thank you."

Cindy Gonzalez: "My name is Cindy Gonzalez, and my question to you is what is your favorite role to play?"

Mr. Dennis Green: "My favorite role to play, actually I think I like comedies more than dramas. I mean I like dramas too but comedies are kind of more fun. You get to cut loose and be silly and be inventive and you know and really have a good time in a way that you can't quite do when you are doing a drama."

Cindy Gonzalez: “My next question to you is, have you also studied singing, dancing as well as acting cause they kind of go hand in hand?”

Mr. Dennis Green: “I never studied singing really although I do sing. I studied dance well in college and in graduate school we had like movement classes. They weren’t really like dance, dance classes. But they involved like your using your body and your being aware of your body and all of that really does help you as an actor. Helps you to be aware of your body as an actor so taking dance classes is a really smart thing. Taking singing lessons helps you be aware of your voice and how to use it and how not to hurt it. Like if you’re going to be on stage you how do you get heard night after night without hurting your voice. So I agree I think these classes are very important.”

Justin Burgos: “Hi my name is Justin. What was the most fun or funny play you ever did?”

Mr. Dennis Green: “The most fun or the funniest play I’ve ever done. Well actually two things. One of them I have a one man show that I’ve written. So that’s a lot of fun to do cause you get to do all the characters and you get to write all the jokes and play all the jokes and get all the laughs from all the jokes and that’s a lot of fun. And I did a play a couple of years back called “Tell Tale Hearts”. This was at a theater called the Cross Roads Theater, just kind of a well known regional theater and that was a lot of fun. I got to play a guy who had trouble finding; well he had trouble in romance. So he’s very, very shy and that was really great.”

Justin Burgos: “My second question is, after every play that you did like what do you do to relax yourself?”

Mr. Dennis Green: “What do you do to relax yourself? Usually you go hang out with the other actors. Sometimes you go get a bite to eat or something else, but usually you hang out or you know take a nice nap.”

Krystal Serrano: “My name is Krystal. Do you feel funny when you have to kiss someone in a play?”

Mr. Dennis Green: “Only if you don’t like them or you don’t get along with them. Then it’s not funny. It’s just annoying. But you know if you have to, you have to. But you have to do, what you have to do, right?”

Ms. Vitulano: “That was great. Thanks you so much Mr. Green and we look forward to talking with you again.”

Anonymous: “Yup.”

## **“Arms and the Man” Reviews**

I. This play “Arms and the Man” by George Bernard Shaw was great. The scenes, costumes, the great acting and the lighting made the whole show interesting and exciting to watch. Also I thought it was hilarious. The theatre was small but I was so into the play.

This play that I saw with my class was about high and low society. In the beginning there was a whole situation that the higher class person wouldn't get involved with the servant who was low class. Higher class persons were scared of what people might say or think of him if he got involved with a lower class than him. However in the end, everyone was equal. The higher class people and the lower class people were together and lived happily ever after.

I would recommend it to my friends because its funny, romantic, and it is something that makes you want to know what's going to happen next.

By Cindy Mei

- II. The play that we went to see was about a family. There were three women and three men. One of the women and one of the men were getting married to each other. The man is in the army. His side was victorious and he came back home. Meanwhile the woman had helped another soldier, and she fell in love with him. In fact her fiancé also is attracted to another man. Neither of them know about the other soldier and girl.

The mother knows about the soldier whom the girl helped. In the end the originally engaged couple break up and go with their new boyfriend and girlfriend.

By Fatou Ndiaye

- III. I really liked the play. The acting was very good. The scenery was good because it looked real. Well, I loved the costumes especially the ones the mother and daughter had on. The accents were nice even though I couldn't understand them at first. The lighting was good. I liked the part when the guy got thrown into the girl Raina's room t. I liked the whole play. I thought it was very interesting and funny.

By Krystal Serrano

- IV. To me the play was cast very well. The costumes were realistic to the period. The make up looked good. The lighting could have been better but the problem was that in the first act, the lights just shot at you and that sort of bothered me. The actors themselves were very good and played their parts very well. To me the dialogue was humorous. Last but not least the scenery was very beautiful. In conclusion I say the play was very good. I loved it and if I could watch it again, I would be glad to.

By Fernando Chan

- V. I went to a play to go see “Arms and the Man”. From my perspective, the play was great. I had never been to a play. The acting was great. The main character was a soldier and a woman. I realized at one time that the girl and the man would fall in love. One of the best things were the sound effects. In every scene the sound effects were wonderful. The best sound effect was the gun shots. That made the play more interesting in many ways. I thought the dialogue and accents were good, especially the maid. Her accent flowed very easily from her mouth.

By Jonathan Marty

- VI. “Arms and the Man” seemed like a play that was put together well. The setting of the play was the best thing of the play. It set the mood and point in time that the story took place. What I loved most about the play was the conflicts. You see in the play Raina (the main character) falls in love with a soldier but she is engaged to be married, and the man she is engaged to is in love with her maid.

By Cindy Gonzalez

- VII. “Arms and the Man” by Bernard Shaw was a play about a soldier who was in a war. He finds his way into this girl’s room for protection. Then he returns when the war is over. He comes back to see the girl who is going to get married and that the housekeepers have a lot of secrets on the family.

If you were watching this play you would think that you were watching a talk show without a host, but in a different century. This play had very good scenery, acting, and the actors wore classical costumes of that time period. There was music that went with the play’s time but many people didn’t like it. Other than that the play was very good and I would love to see it again.

By Michael Barrett

- VIII. On March 15, 2000, my class went to The Gramercy Park Theater to see “Arms and the Man” with Ms. Vitulano and Mr. Cuchapin. The play was great. It was very interesting. The actors were very good. They acted as if it were their own lives. The play was about romance and how a soldier falls in love with a rich, pretty woman. Also there was a rich man who was supposed to marry the rich girl. He fell for the maid.

In the end, the characters did find their true loves, and everything turned out fine.

By Vanessa Cartagena

- IX. The play “Arms and Man” is about love. The scenery was almost the same for each act. They could have done better because you could see when they moved the scenery for the next act. Some of the costumes I liked because they were ethnic. The play takes place in Bulgaria. The dialogue was good because they worked well together and the acting was good. The accents were strange but suited with the play.

I also liked the play because the lightning was just right. They knew when to put a lot of lights, a little light, or no light at all. The sound effects were good because they made the gun shots in Scene One, Act One sound real. The make up was good because they knew what color went with the people and the characters. This is my opinion on what I liked and disliked about the play.

By Elsy Salgado

- X. I went to see "Arms and the Man". The background scenery of the play was a map, a window, and a backyard. The people who fell in love were the soldier and the girl, and the maid with the soldier.

I think that everything worked fine because everybody was happy at the end of the war. The Bulgarian family and the Swiss came together and happiness was throughout the place.

By Justin Burgos

# Group Review of

## “THE BOMB-ITTY OF ERRORS”



The new Times Square

### **General**

Natalie: “The Greatest Show on Earth” is no longer the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. Now with the new sensation “Bomb-itty of Errors” there’s a new cool and fly play. teenagers say that the show is hard to forget. You can meet the guys who are from NYU. When you leave you will have a special desire to come back.”

### **Lighting**

Fatou: “I went to the “Bomb-itty of Errors”. It was cool because the lights gave the show life. Everytime they went on the audience sparked up. When the lights went on the theatre came to life. They also had colorful lights. This made the play more interesting.”

### **Dancing**

Vanessa: “I think the “Bomb-itty of Errors” is great. The dance movements were good because they moved to the sound and the beat. The moves were very, very artistic.

### **Music**

Fernando: “I thought the music was great. There was singing and dancing, duets and solos. It also had the quartet and trios that were very good. The rhymes were great and the beats were nice.

### **Scenery**



Cindy M: "On Wednesday 10, my class and I went to see a play called the "Bomb-itty of Errors". I thought it was hilarious. I really enjoyed it. This play was very different from others that we saw and this was my favorite. I recommend this play for all teenagers. The scenery of "Bomb-itty of Errors" was a small stage and they used the same scenery for the entire play. It made the stage very lively and it went really well with the play."

Min: "The scenery was a small stage. There were three boards in the back. Those were actually doors that lead to the backstage. There was a big round sewer cover in the middle of the floor of the stage. It also lead to the back. There was a DJ on the left upper corner of the stage.

### **Costumes**

Justin: "They were dressed alike most of the time. However, four people get dressed up as each other so they interchanged parts."

### **Acting**

Kristine: "The acting was very funny. They did a very good job. It was played by four males. They played both male and female parts. They jumped from character to character. They played from two to three characters each. There were different roles such as a Jewish man, a white policeman, a Jamaican doctor, a prostitute, and two ugly twin sisters and two male twins.

# Character Studies

Yasmin Clark

## "All About Mary Johnny Rafferty"

She's the grandmother of Thomas and Mairtin. She goes over to Mick Dowd's (the gravedigger) house to get as many drinks as possible. She suspects, like most of the town's people, that Mick may have killed his wife. She gossips and takes more bingo cards than she's supposed to. She basically takes whatever free things she can get. She acts as if she is a good, moral person, and later does hypocritical things.

Frankie Fabian

## "Mairtin Hanlon"

Mairtin is the teenager of the play. He is also one of the funniest characters in the play. He looks like a regular teenager but without a life. In the play he hangs out with an old lady, an old grave digger, and his brother who thinks he is a T. V. detective. Mairtin Hanlon curses throughout the whole play because he is always being bullied by everybody.

Elenne Mitsigiorge

## "Thomas Hanlon"

Thomas Hanlon was a tall man. Who was always wearing his policeman's uniform. He had long hair to the neck, and dark brown eyes. The character's personality is weird. He likes to be practically in everything. He also wants to get promoted.

Thomas Hanlon's part started in the cemetery when the character of Mick Dowd, the gravedigger is about to dig up the body of his dead wife. However, Mick Dowd does not find any of the bones because Thomas Hanlon has moved them. Thomas wants to frame Mick for the murder of his wife. He does not succeed, and he does not get promoted!

Angel Santiago

## "The Four Main Characters"

The play "A Skull in Connemara" was about a man named Mick Down. He heard that a lot of people think that he has killed his wife Luna, but he didn't. They were drunk and got in a car crash. The policeman Thomas Hanlon framed him. Hanlon's younger brother, Mairtin, knew all about what was happening, but he doesn't say anything until the end of the play.

MaryJohnny Rafferty is the grandmother of he Hanlon brothers. She is an old drunken lady who plays

bingo everyday. In every game she cheats. She gets drunk and let's it slip out about Mairtin's part in the plot against Mick. That's when Mick hits Mairtin in the head with a mallet and slips it open. That was the most violent and scariest part of the play.

# Prepared by Julie Vitulano

**Topic:** “Uncle Vanya” by Anton Chekhov

**Grade:** 9 – English

**Aim:** How can we prepare to attend a performance of “Uncle Vanya”?

**Instructional Objectives:** Students will be able to use the Internet to get background information on Anton Chekhov and a summary of the play; they will be able to use the dictionary and encyclopedia on their Internet provider service; they will be able to write their findings into a report and e-mail it to their teacher.

**Materials:** Computer with Internet access, word processing program, notebook, pen, marker board.

**Do Now:** Find the dictionary and encyclopedia on your Internet provider.

**Motivation:** Which of the following websites will give us a summary of the plot of “Uncle Vanya”?

<http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/NCW/chekleg.htm>

<http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/NCW/chekwrit.htm>

<http://endeavor.med.nyu.edu/lit-med/lit-med-db/webdocs/webdescrips/chekhov822-des-.html>

## **Development:**

1. The students will quickly see that the third website has a summary of the play. They are directed to write down any words they do not understand. These are to be defined on the Internet provider’s dictionary (AOL, for example).
2. After they review the vocabulary, they go back to the website. Then they shorten and paraphrase the summary for their report.
3. The second part of the research report is to describe Chekhov’s life and work. The students may go to their Internet provider’s encyclopedia. AOL has several. The Compton’s has an appropriate biography for high school level. Since there is also a picture of him, the students may also describe his physical appearance.
4. Finally, they type their report on the word processor that will be sent via e-mail to their teacher.

**Homework:** Based on the summary write a dialogue between Uncle Vanya and Yelena.

**Extension:** Chose a quote from the second website on Chekhov and write about what kind of man he probably was based on the quotation.

## **SCAVENGER HUNT**

Answer the following questions by reviewing the website - [www.roundabouttheatre.com](http://www.roundabouttheatre.com).

1. When and where does *Uncle Vanya* premiere?
2. Who wrote *Uncle Vanya*?
3. Is it possible to buy tickets on-line? How?
4. Name three (3) artists who will be performing in *Uncle Vanya*.
5. What kind of contest is on the Kids Page?
6. Go to "This week at Roundabout". What is playing at Cabaret at Studio 5, The Grammercy Theatre, Brooks Atkinson Theatre on Monday?
7. What do you think this means?
8. Where will the Roundabout Theatre's new home be?
9. Which company is the new partner of the Roundabout Theatre?
10. What color is the interior of the new theatre?

## **Topic:** Theatre for Teenagers in New York City



**Grade:** ESL Intermediate/Varied 9-12

**Aim:** How can the Internet be used to prepare students to see a show?

**Instructional Objectives:** Students will be able to; scan a website and find information; review a site and create their own Internet Scavenger Hunt; e-mail their written assignments to their teacher.

**Standards addressed by this lesson:** Use computer technology to create, manipulate, and edit text; use the conventions of electronic mail; use both primary and secondary sources of information for research; select and limit topics for informational writing; analyze and integrate data, facts, and ideas to communicate information; analyze a variety of texts using resources such as recognized experts, knowledge from school subjects and reading, and personal experience.

**Materials:** Computer with Internet access; Scavenger Hunt hand out, e-mail accounts.

**Do Now:** What do you think .org and .com stand for? Answer: organization (non profit) and company (for profit).

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

[www.bomb-itty.com](http://www.bomb-itty.com) (No longer active - You need to identify an active website of an appropriate play.)

**Development:** Teacher directs the students to go to the first website of the Roundabout Theatre and answer the questions on the Scavenger Hunt handout. The handout must be rewritten regularly as the websites may change at any time. The handout should include 10 questions. The answers to the questions are located on different pages within the website.

After they are finished, then they make up a scavenger hunt of their own by reviewing the “The Bomb-itty of Errors” site and developing questions based on the information on the site.(For future use, just choose a current performance with an active website. The website for "Bombitty of Errors" has been taken off the Internet because it is no longer playing in New York City. It is on the road.)

The answer to the first scavenger hunt is e-mailed to the teacher. The questions of the second scavenger hunt which they wrote is e-mailed to a classmate.

The students who exchanged scavenger hunts orally exchange the questions and answers.

**Homework:** Write a paragraph on – Which show are you looking forward to seeing more, “Uncle Vanya” or “The Bomb-itty of Errors”? based on the information you learned from your scavenger hunts.

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## **INTERNET RESOURCES FOR NEW YORK CITY CULTURAL INFORMATION**

[www92w.greatcollegetown.com](http://www92w.greatcollegetown.com) - lists the "Press the Right Buttons" ad which links to 30 of New York's museums and cultural institutions. It also links to the 95 web sites of the 95 colleges within the five boroughs. Many of these sites have cultural calendars.

[www.nytoday.com](http://www.nytoday.com) - web site of *The New York Times* which provides complete listings of events at cultural institutions as well as dance, theater, etc.

[www.timeoutny.com](http://www.timeoutny.com) - Complete weekly listings and calendar of events of what's going on in New York. Comes out each Wednesday. *Time Out New York* is also a magazine which can be purchased at any major newsstand.

<http://newyork.citysearch.com> - Full search engine providing up-to-date information about events and cultural calendar in New York. This is also the official web site of (NYC & Company) the New York Convention & Visitors Bureau

[www.playbill.com](http://www.playbill.com) - Full New York City theatrical listings for Broadway and Off-Broadway as well as music and dance performances. This site also lists what discount tickets are available.

[www.vgp.com](http://www.vgp.com) - Multilingual Multimedia Guide to NYC - this web site provides information about New York cultural events, dining, attractions, etc. and is accessible in English. German. Spanish. French. Korean, Japanese, Portuguese and Italian