



Michael Presser, *Executive Director*

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Inside Broadway brings theater to the students

P.S. 304, P.S. 71, P.S. 108 slated for program

by amanda marinaccio

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Inside Broadway brought a live performance of Smokey Joe's Café to the students on P.S. 304, located 2750 Lafayette Avenue, on Friday, March 13, and will continue to tour P.S. 71, P.S. 108, M.S. 142, P.S. 182, and I.S. 181 thru Friday, May 15. (top row l-r) Actors Alexander Elisa, Lauran Davidson, Gregory Marlow, Executive Director of Inside Broadway, Michael Presser. (bottom row l-r) Thomas Marley, Kasey Hayes, Marc Porco, Vanessa Akwada, and Patrick Barry. Photo by Victor Chu

Students of the Bronx have a chance to see a live musical as Inside Broadway, a theater group for young audiences, brings a slice of the Big Apple to Bronx schools.

The tour was kicked off on Friday, March 13 at P.S. 304, bringing the music and thrills of Smokey Joe's Café: the songs of Leiber and Stoller to the students.

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"This is intended to introduce children to musical theater, particularly one of the classics," said Inside Broadway executive director Michael Presser. "We also hand out study guides to the students on the background and history of each show and the period it takes place, we incorporate education into the performance. This a good school, we've been here several times, and it's a nice place to kick off the tour."

Students watched in awe as the cast sang and danced to classics such as *On Broadway*, *Stand By Me*, *Hound Dog*, and *Yakety Yak*.

After the performance the cast sat down and took questions from the curious children wondering where they were from, how they got into acting, how they change costumes so fast, what their favorite song is, how they memorize the lines and lyrics and a variety of other questions.

"Today was great, just looking out and seeing all their excited faces and getting to talk to them," said actress Lauren Davidson. "This gives me a chance to do something I love and maybe introduce some of these kids to the same."

The Inside Broadway tour is sponsored by Bank of America, with additional support from a variety of city and state agencies, the New York State Assembly and the New York City Council, whose members also choose the selected schools.

The tour will visit over 30 schools throughout New York City, including P.S. 71, P.S. 108, M.S. 142, P.S. 182, and I.S. 181 in the Bronx from now thru Friday, May 15.

"Inside Broadway does incredible work in our schools, including these performances which give children a front-row seat to some of the best musicals ever made," said Councilman Jimmy Vacca. "I am proud that I was able to sponsor this organization's programs at P.S. 71, P.S. 108 and P.S. 304 this year, and I look forward to seeing another round of world-class performances right here in the East Bronx."

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