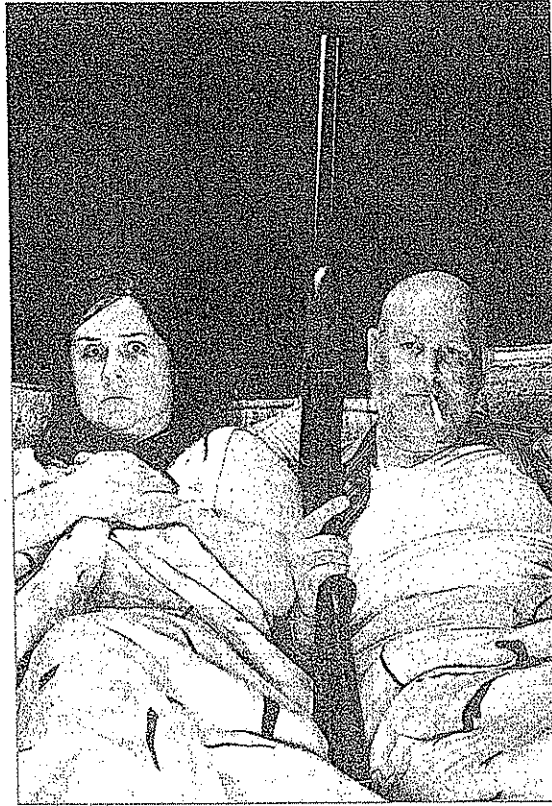


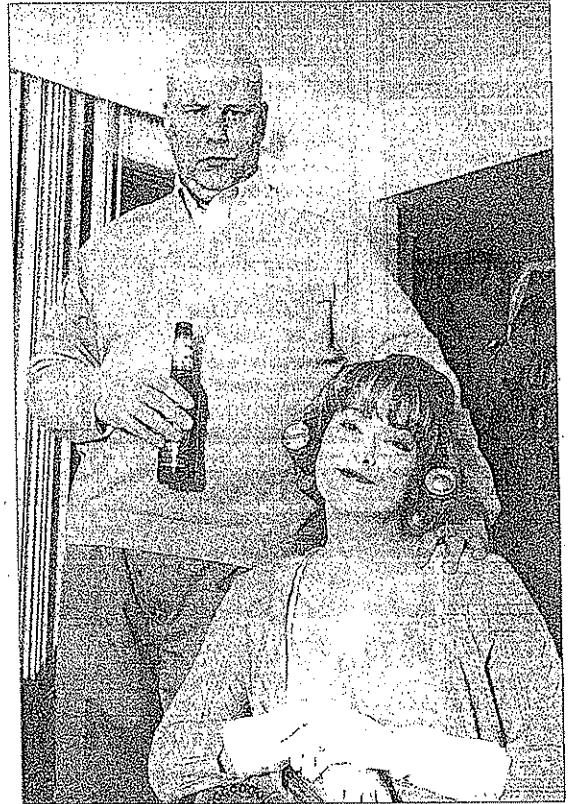
Dallas, Texas, Thursday, March 5, 2009

Project X collaborative emerges from underground with a trio of show openings in the next week



Matt Mrozek

Tina Parker plays *Red* alongside Sean Hennigan as Floyd in *Psychos Never Dream*, opening Friday at the MAC.



Franco Boli

Thomas Riccio's *Some People*, with Brad Hennigan as Frank and Lori McCarty as Morgan, premieres at Out of the Loop.

TRIPLE PLAY

By LAWSON TAITTE
Theater Critic
ltaitte@dallasnews.com

Project X: Theatre lurked underground, literally and figuratively, for years. Now it is bursting out in a big way, with three shows opening in the course of the next week.

Kenneth Lonergan's *This Is Our Youth*, a co-production with Upstart Productions, opens tonight in Project X's new home space, the Green Zone. Denis Johnson's *Psychos Never Dream*, a co-production with Kitchen Dog Theater, opens at the McKinney Avenue Contemporary on Friday. And Thomas Riccio's *Some People* has its world premiere in WaterTower Theatre's Out of the Loop Fringe Festival on Wednesday.

If that weren't enough, a flamenco

dance event is coming shortly.

It seems incredible that such a loosely organized, seemingly offhand group could generate so much activity. More than a dozen producing artists make up the company, and the fluid roster keeps changing. Project X serves as an umbrella for getting their ideas onstage, and the network of friends and collaborators extends broadly into the Dallas theater scene.

"The part of Project X that interests me most is the collaboration," founder Ra-

phael Parry says. "To sustain your artistic life in Dallas, you have to reach out. You don't want to stay in your own little cubicle, the way so many of us used to do."

Parry incorporated the company as a nonprofit group in 2001, shortly after he left Undermain Theatre. He wanted a formal way to continue such work as collaborating with California avant-garde playwright Erik Ehn. For years, Project X inhabited a soulfully snazzy office in the basement of a building just south of downtown, but plans to turn a cavernous adjoining room into a theater never worked out.

Nearly four years ago, the Green Zone, an arts venue owned by Claude Albritton (also the patron of the MAC), was an-

Project X opens 3 shows in next week

What the artists have to say about their Project X co-productions

"This Is Our Youth is about three people suspended between adolescence and adulthood. It's set in an apartment on New York's Upper West Side. I moved to New York in the 1980s, and I terrorized our designers because I lived in about eight West Side apartments. This play speaks to me on so many levels."

Director **Rene Moreno**

Thursday at 8 through March 22 at the Green Zone, 161 Riveredge Dr.
\$10. 877-238-5596, www.upstarttheater.com

"Psychos Never Dream is about an ex-hippie in northern Idaho who gets greedy. It's like a Coen brothers movie — it's violent, it's funny, it will rip your heart out. It's also visually stunning."

Actor **Tina Parker**

Friday at 8 p.m. through April 4. McKinney Avenue Contemporary,
3120 McKinney Ave. \$15 to \$30. 214-953-1055,
www.kitchendogtheater.org.

"In Some People, the hero's your neighbor, but he has an anger-management issue. I wanted to overlay our western theatrical expressions with indigenous expressions. It's about finding the navel of the world in your house."

Writer-director **Thomas Riccio**

Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. through March 14 at WaterTower Theatre,
15650 Addison Rd., Addison. \$10; passes for entire Out of the Loop
Festival \$60. 972-450-6232, www.watertow theatre.org.

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nounced as a new home for Project X and another company, which soon disbanded. The bright-green cinderblock structure in the Design District near the Trinity River opened to the public late last year.

Because of his commitments as producing artistic director of Shakespeare Dallas, Parry no longer sits on Project X's board or raises money for the organization. But he still seems the dominant figure in this loose but ambitious artistic collective.

The current shows under the Project X aegis reveal how tangled the web of relationships is. Parry and Kitchen Dog co-artistic director Tina Parker star in *Psychos Never Dream* — each has directed the other, but this is their first time onstage together.

Their show started out as a staged reading under the old regime of the Dallas Theater Center. The National Book Award-winning playwright has been coming in and out of Dallas to help former Theater Center artistic associate David Kennedy (returning from New York to direct) with the production — only the second the script has had to date.

University of Texas at Dallas professor Thomas Riccio joined Project X as a producing artist shortly after he moved to Dallas. Last summer, he wrote and directed the world premiere of *So There* and *Orange Oranges* as Project X's entry in the Festival of Independent Theatres at the Bath House Cultural Center. *Some People*, like those two short plays, is part of Riccio's cycle of his impressions of Dallas life.

He and Parry have collaborated on projects at UT-Dallas.

Riccio was a teacher of Josh Glover, a recent UT-Dallas graduate who founded Up-

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'OUT OF THE LOOP'



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start Productions last year. The young company had an auspicious debut at Deep Ellum's Dallas Hub Theater last fall; Upstart has since entered into an agreement with Project X to be a resident company at the Green Zone for at least two seasons.

Director Rene Moreno recently became attached to *This Is Our Youth* through a mutual friend — and of course, Moreno is a Shakespeare Dallas artistic associate with long ties to Parry.

The growing phenomenon of a medium-sized theater hosting a younger company is another indication of the newfound sense of collaboration on the Dallas theater scene. It has worked well for Second Thought Theatre at Water-Tower and for FireStarter Productions at Fort Worth's Circle Theatre. Sometimes the more established group acts as a mentor for the new one.

"I feel like a mentee," Glover acknowledges.

"If there's anything that intrigues me about Project X, it's finding and developing new talent and giving it some exposure," Parry says. "It's also about developing new work. A lot of people are uncomfortable with that, but that's what we're here for."