

THEATER FOR ALL

Ingrid Griffith

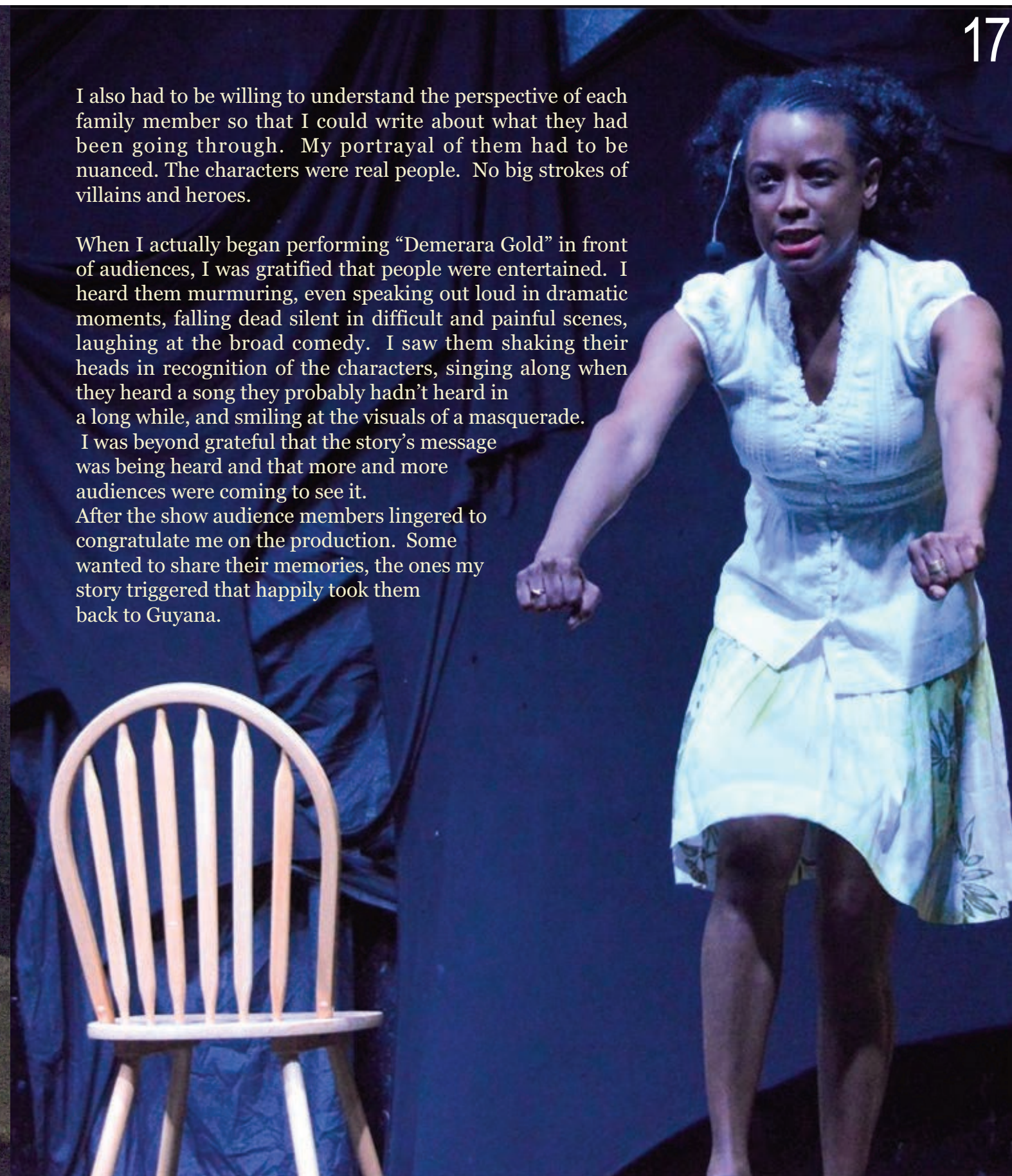
I had a story to tell. But the truth is I wasn't sure I could tell it. I had doubts. Why would anyone want to hear my story? Further, a full size project like this was unknown territory to me. Could I bring the endeavor to fruition? What pushed me on though, was the story demanded to be told. I bent myself to the task. I would have to be willing to dig deep into my soul and reveal experiences I had never shared. I needed to be willing to recall what it felt like as a 7 year old, watching my parents leave Guyana without me, the years without them, the day I re-joined them in the US and the harsh reality of what my family had become.



I also had to be willing to understand the perspective of each family member so that I could write about what they had been going through. My portrayal of them had to be nuanced. The characters were real people. No big strokes of villains and heroes.

When I actually began performing "Demerara Gold" in front of audiences, I was gratified that people were entertained. I heard them murmuring, even speaking out loud in dramatic moments, falling dead silent in difficult and painful scenes, laughing at the broad comedy. I saw them shaking their heads in recognition of the characters, singing along when they heard a song they probably hadn't heard in a long while, and smiling at the visuals of a masquerade.

I was beyond grateful that the story's message was being heard and that more and more audiences were coming to see it. After the show audience members lingered to congratulate me on the production. Some wanted to share their memories, the ones my story triggered that happily took them back to Guyana.



But something else was happening. Some wanted to share painful memories, experiences I hadn't had. And there were those who confided they too had witnessed domestic violence. I saw the relief on their faces as they bared their secrets.

I realized I had touched a nerve and that "Demerara Gold" was playing a restorative role. Everywhere I performed, from New York to Georgia, California, Canada, England, Guyana and SVG, I was bonding with audiences of all ages, cultures and backgrounds in the hallways and lobbies of venues long after the shows were over.

I've since incorporated an after-show discussion when performing for high school and college students and been invited to share the first part of the show with middle school students. The children's interaction with the story are as profound as an adult's.

Demerara Gold has evolved into a shared experience. The transparency that I feared at the outset, has turned out to be cleansing and empowering for me as an artist and my audience.

While discovering the strength of theater as an engine for social change, I also have found something of great personal value. **I have rediscovered my own community.**



Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. on-line Magazine

BRAATA
PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

DEMERARA GOLD

A ONE-WOMAN PLAY *By: Ingrid Griffith*

at

NEW PERSPECTIVE THEATRE

458 W. 37th Street
(@ 10th Ave.)
New York, NY 10018

5 EVENING PERFORMANCES

Wednesday - Saturday (March 8 - 11) @ 7:30pm
Sunday, March 12 @ 6:30pm

2 MATINEE PERFORMANCES

Saturday & Sunday (March 11 & 12) @ 2pm



"*DEMERARA GOLD is a show for all ages, races, cultures and backgrounds. It is an ode to taking back your own worth.*"
_New York Amsterdam News

"*Moving with lightning speed through 18 characters Griffith keeps her audiences enthralled and engaged...a gem of a show.*"
_NY Daily News

"*A one woman tour de force that brings the pride and passion of the Caribbean to the global village.*"
_The West Indian

"*DEMERARA GOLD is really fantastic...*" _WBAI Radio

DemeraraGoldTheShow.com

"This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council specifically NYC Council Members Rory Lanceman & I. Daneek Miller."

GET YOUR TICKETS EARLY!
BraataDemeraraShow.bpt.me

\$25 PRESOLD

\$30 AT THE DOOR

\$10 STUDENTS (AT THE DOOR)

For more information:
BraataProductions.org
or call 917-668-2209



Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. on-line Magazine