

“The 'sound' came on little 'CAT' feet...”

By Curtis Long

While attending performances at the theater, I was distracted by the emission of two inadequate speakers that were situated on the side walls, about midway between the front and back rows of the seats. I happened to mention this to Mrs. Jennie Hamilton, who has been the heart and soul of CAT since its inception, about 30 years ago. Dear Jennie, who has guided CAT through thick and thin – including a recent, complete renovation whose cost is probably endless – looked at me incredulously and said sweetly, “You know it’s all a matter of money...” Immediately, it dawned on me that I should have known better – I edited the text of CAT’s history when its website was donated by José Rosa and RosArt Multimedia, about 10 years ago.

Then, it occurred to me that, rather than *curse the darkness*, I should *light a candle*. Continuing in my naïveté, I suggested I might seek commercial funding for the project. Smiling, knowingly, Jennie (who has been pounding on the walls of philanthropy forever) smiled again and said, “By all means...”

After a series of unanswered emails, snail-mail and multiple telephone calls to different individuals at a sound company to which the request would be a *drop in the bucket*, Jennie’s knowing smile came back to me; “Welcome to the *Humiliated Beggars Society!*” Now, I had to resort to *Plan B* – ME!

John Proctor, a fellow attendee at the Braille Institute, heard me mention the CAT predicament. He said he had a home-entertainment business, and that he would be willing to donate his time if I were to obtain the speakers. Mrs. Hamilton agreed to a quid pro quo by placing on the site and in the programs an ad for John’s business. I asked if Jennie should have helpers on hand. John said he preferred to use his long-time helper Rick Gentilella, but that he would have to pay him out of his own pocket. Of course, I vetoed that, thereby sinking further into my self-made morass.

Richard, that is when your generous gift arrived – as if by design! Know that I, Mrs. Hamilton -- and everyone who in the future, will be part of a CAT performance or audience – shall be ever grateful.