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## Book Turns Upside Down – And Into Play.

BY RAYNELLE CERICA BULL

A popular book by former borough resident Juan Felipe Herrera is set to turn the local theater world upside down this month when it is turned into a musical

and takes the stage in its world premier at Queens Theatre in the Park.

The book, *The Upside Down Boy: El niño de cabeza*, is a children's book based on Herrera's childhood as a Mexican native moving into new country. The book shows how the main character Juanito copes with cultural changes, and how he receives help from his new teacher and family.

After reading the book two years ago, Barbara Zinn Krieger, the founder of Making Books Sing, a Manhattan-based theatre company committed to turning children's books into plays, decided to turn the book about Herrera's migrant family into a play, according to Dale Heller, press representative.

"Making Books Sing produces shows that exemplify dedication to children and performing arts," said Heller, about the theatre company's mission. Heller also said that the theatre company sends professional artists to New York City schools to teach students and teachers how to create plays and musicals based on books.

As for "The Upside Down Boy,"

Heller said, "The play will allow children to see cultural and educational differences." She added that the play will be viewed by over 7,500 local students before it is premiered at Queens Theatre in the Park.

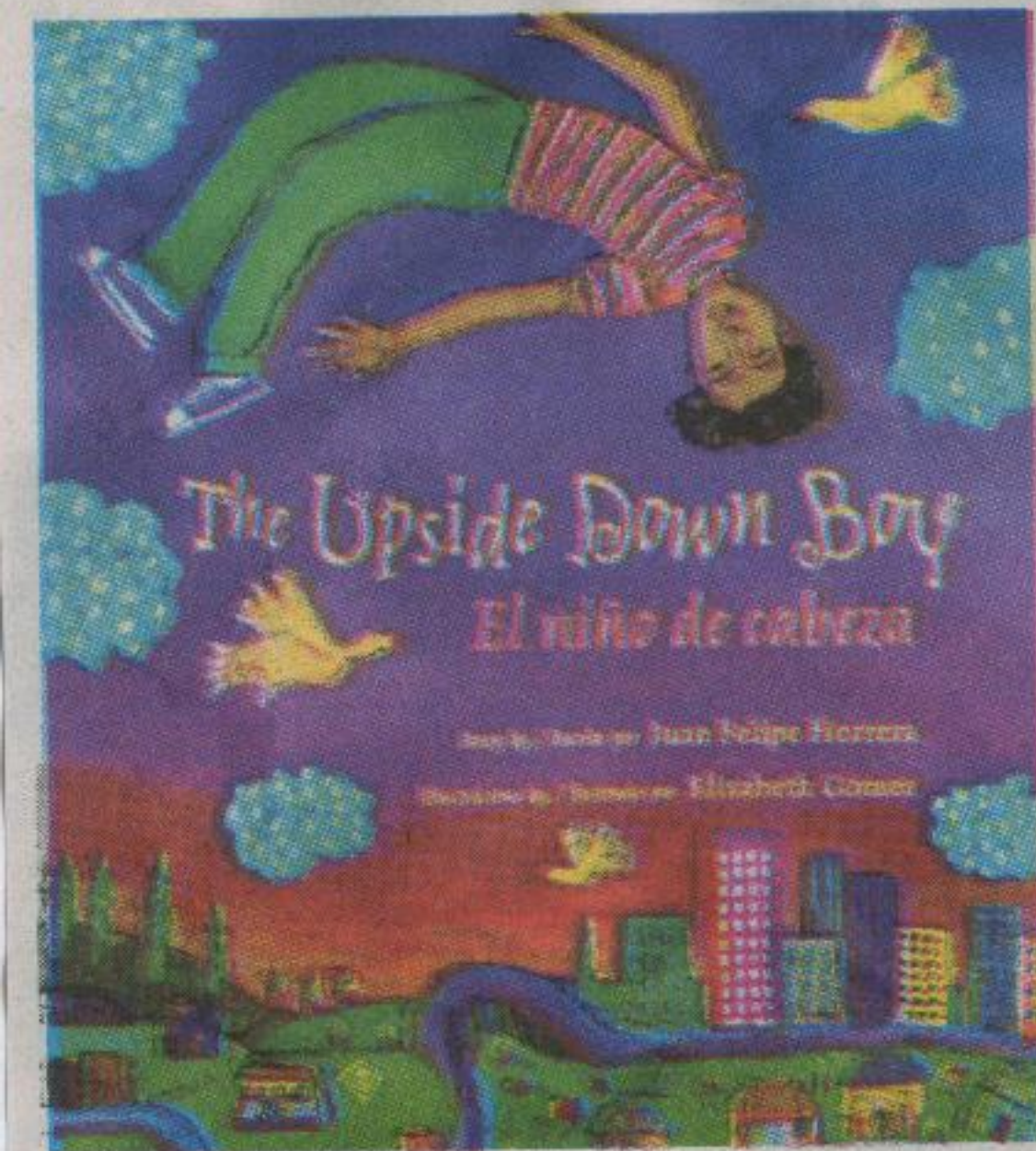
Heller said, "The students will read the book and have a project before seeing the play. This allows for a wonderful cross section."

Along with the performances of "Upside Down Boy" in Queens, the play will be performed at the Lovinger Theatre at Lehman College in the Bronx and the Goldstein Theatre at Kings Borough Community College in Brooklyn.

According to Heller, Herrera, who is an author, musician, professor and Chair of Chicano/Latino Studies at California State University at Fresno and also the recipient of the Ezra Jack Keats Award for his first children's book, *Calling the Doves*, will attend some of the local performances of the play.

The premiere of "The Upside Down Boy" will take place on Jan. 31 at 11 a.m. followed by a 2 p.m. performance at the Queens Theatre in the Park in Flushing Meadows, Corona Park, exit 9E off the Grand Central Parkway.

For tickets, call (718) 760-0064. Tickets are \$16 and \$14 for children.



The book *The Upside Down Boy* by a former Queens resident is being turned into a musical and is set to be performed this month.