

Michael Pressman  
Muriel Was a Legend

Editor's Note <sup>(1)</sup> I saw Michael Pressman perform in *Guys and Dolls* in my junior high school auditorium, a production which he also directed. He played Nathan Detroit. Gosh, he was good. I had known him, actually had performed with him in *The Prince Who Learned Everything Out of Books* at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y where he played the Ogre. This was before he became an award-winning producer and director with hits such as *Picket Fences*, *Law and Order* and *Blue Bloods*.

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So much for history. A number of years later, well OK, many years later, I spoke with Michael about his memories of working with Muriel Sharon as a child actor.

Although Michael started his theater life at the legendary Neighborhood Playhouse where his father was the Executive Director, it was his work with Muriel and a motley crew of young thespians that his passion flourished.

“Muriel was a legend,” he opined.

“She was inspiring. She encouraged it all, the freedom we all felt, a place where we could all be free. It was a great place for me. She loved all of us and we felt her love. Muriel gave us a sense of theater with her incredible work ethic and her passion for the theatre.

“Oh, and she had such a gutsy laugh.”

Michael performed in:

*Emil and Detectives*, Year, 1962. The Gramercy Arts Theatre. Played Gus, the newsboy who was the ringleaders of the detectives.

*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Year, 1962. Played Bottom, a weaver

*The Prince Who Learned Everything Out of Books*, a musical fairy tale, Year, 1963. Played the Ogre

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<sup>(1)</sup> We were mid-20<sup>th</sup> century New York City kids who had the great fortune to inhabit the fairy tale stages of medieval and Commedia dell'Arte inns, Shakespearean woodlands and Victorian romances.

Now, all these years later, Michael Pressman and Maia Danziger, who played the second daughter of Queen Chucharumbo in *The Prince Who Learned Everything Out of Books* are engaged to be married.

Who says fairy tales don't come true?