

Street Angels Reveal the Heart of the Homeless

By [Libby Motika](#), Senior Editor, *Palisades Post*

2006-12-14 Zebulon Projects presents the world premiere of Mary Lou Newmark's "Street Angel Diaries," directed by Darin Anthony, running December 14 through 16 at 8 p.m., and December 17 at 2 p.m. at Boston Court performing arts complex, 70 North Mentor in Pasadena. Created and composed by Palisades resident Newmark, "Street Angel Diaries" explores the issues of homelessness through first-person accounts and multimedia, including live as well as recorded music, poetry, soundscapes, storytelling, projections and movement. Newmark developed the piece as an outgrowth of her interest in learning more about the homeless, putting a face on homeless men and women by finding out more about who they are. She strolled the Santa Monica Promenade, talking to the men and women whom she encountered. Her encounters may have been just a few words or life stories. 'I listened to people and engaged them,' she says. 'It wasn't an interview; there was no pressure.' Later, at home, Newmark would write a response to what she had heard, her own interpretation. In February 2005 she gave a concert reading of the piece that she had developed. 'I had my visuals, people reading and one dancer moving through the audience.' Zebulon producer Mimi Champlin became interested in Newmark's work and decided to develop the project in a fully staged performance piece. While the work turns on the stories of homeless people, Newmark believes that it goes far deeper, believing that the staging gives shape to the piece. She has attempted to break down barriers between the performers and the audience. 'There are layers of meaning to this piece which get down to the fact that we're all in this together,' Newmark says. 'We're all struggling with our own stuff, whether in Beverly Hills or on the street.' Newmark has always been interested in multimedia; she writes poetry, dances and paints. 'I was originally trained as a classical violinist,' she says. 'But I've always enjoyed creating my own music and was never really satisfied playing the standard classical repertoire. I have always been interested in extending the palette of the violin, and when I started working with electronic music, I saw that I could bring the entire world into my studio.' Not reliant on synthesizers, Newmark prefers to record sounds from the real world. 'I go out to record sounds--street noise, birds--and then integrate them with the instruments. Using live sound results in a deeper sonic quality.' Newmark is an award-winning violinist, composer and poet. She has a traditional classical background, with master's degrees in violin performance and music composition from USC and UCLA, respectively. Her works encompass a wide range of styles and techniques, incorporating live performance, original poetry and electronically generated sounds into unique pieces that inhabit their own sound world. She maintains a private violin and composition studio in Los Angeles. Zebulon Projects is headed by raconteur and philanthropist Z. Clark Branson, who financed the Boston Court performing arts complex. Mimi Champlin is the producer for Zebulon. Tickets are \$25 and are available online at www.bostoncourt.org or by calling (626) 683-6883, ext. 106. Senior and student tickets are available for \$20. A percentage of ticket sales will benefit Union Station Foundation, which operates a 36-bed adult shelter, a 50-bed family shelter, a 14-unit transitional housing facility for families, an intake and assessment center, and a career development program.