



PO Box 251598 Glendale, California 91225



Parachute Express



For millions of children across the country, *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* is synonymous with family entertainment at its very best. Featuring the talents of Donny Becker, Janice Hubbard, and Stephen Michael Schwartz, *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* has brought music and smiles to parents and children throughout the nation with their exceptional ability to blend great songwriting, sophisticated harmonies and a high-quality, kid-friendly production style unsurpassed by many children's artists today.

For over twenty-five years *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* has been a mainstay in the children's entertainment world having produced twelve albums, two videos, and a popularity and respect equal to their talent. In addition, *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* has been honored three times with the distinguished Parents' Choice Award, the industry's "seal of approval" for children's products. Their newest recording titled "IT'S A GYMBOREE PARTY!", made exclusively for the internationally known Gymboree Corporation, recently was awarded the NAPPA Gold Award. In addition, their previous album, "DON'T BLINK" garnered three major awards in the children's entertainment business including the NAPPA Award, Parents' Choice Award, and Toy of the Year Award given by Creative Child Magazine.

Their well-known and popular album, "DOCTOR LOONEY'S REMEDY," received three awards since its release -- the prestigious INDIE Award (Association for Independent Music) for Best Children's Music, The Film Advisory Board Award of Excellence, and, once again, The NAPPA (National Parenting Publications of America) Gold Award and was a finalist for Best Music for Young Children in the Children's Music Web Awards.

Included in *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*' extensive list of credits is their many invitations by President and Mrs. Clinton to perform at The White House. They were presented for both Inaugural celebrations -- at The Kennedy Center for "A Salute To Children" and the National Mall in Washington D.C. -- and have performed regularly for the annual Easter Egg Hunt on the White House lawn. Named one of the "Superstars of Children's Music" by <u>L.A. Parent Magazine</u> and included in "Names to Be Reckoned With" by the <u>Los Angeles Times</u>, Donny, Janice, and Stephen have earned their reputation as one of the premiere entertainers in children's music today.

Originally established in 1984 to create music for the universally respected Gymboree Play and Music program, *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* continues to be

their musical backbone and inspiration. *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*' music is not only featured in Gymboree's classes, but its videos can be seen in Gymboree's over five hundred retail stores around the country and the world. In 1991, Donny, Janice and Stephen signed an exclusive recording contract with Walt Disney Records and re-released five of their albums previously with Gymboree. During that time they produced one of their most successful albums, "HAPPY TO BE HERE".

Walt Disney Home Video, the leader in the distribution of children's entertainment, also released *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*' video, "COME SING WITH US". It received The Parents Choice Award for video excellence and The International Monitor Award for Best Special Effects. Included in the album is the family favorite, "POLKA DOTS, CHECKS AND STRIPES", as seen on the Disney Channel and Nickelodeon.

PARACHUTE EXPRESS' uplifting composition, "WE THE CHILDREN," inspired by the growing need to bring awareness to child abuse, has now become an anthem for children's rights organizations across America. In addition, you can hear **PARACHUTE EXPRESS** sing the theme song to the animated hit television show, JAY JAY THE JET PLANE, on PBS!

PARACHUTE EXPRESS' broad range of musical styles spans from folk to rock, R&B to jazz and just about everything in between. Whether becoming the soulful rhythm of a fluttering butterfly, picturing yourself marching down Bourbon Street to the sounds of a Dixieland band, or rocking out at a musical party, the diverse music of **PARACHUTE EXPRESS** never fails to speak to the child in all of us.

In this ever-changing entertainment business, it is a true testament to *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* to have such miraculous staying power. There is no doubt that *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* will continue to touch the hearts of all who hears them for many generations to come.

Biography

Donny Becker's journey to being a children's musical performer is quite unlike any road taken by other entertainers. His diverse life as an academic, a camp director, a children's business entrepreneur and a song leader have successfully converged to make him and his original vision, *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*, one of the most popular groups in the world of children's entertainment today.

Born in Los Angeles and raised in the suburbs of the San Fernando Valley, Donny grew up in a creative and politically progressive environment with music that was always seemingly present. His father was a sound and recording engineer for such luminaries as Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Jascha Heifetz, Pablo Casales, and Paul Robeson. His mother was a modern renaissance woman. A lifelong political activist and founder of the Valley Cities Jewish Community Center in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, she was also an avid seamstress who later became a quilter famous for the well known Ellis Island quilts which have hung in numerous museums. Additionally, she was a singer with the Roger Wagner chorale.

Donny spent his youth involved with various family camps and summer camps. There he thrived musically and fell in love with working with children. "I learned to play guitar, to sing hootenannies and love the group musical experience," he says.

Pete Seeger was an enormous influence in his life. "To me, he was the quintessential song leader. He was tremendously engaging and promoted audience participation. His music was secondary to the experience," Donny explains. Later on, Donny was awed when he got the chance to perform with his idol.

Despite his love of music and performing, Donny pursued an academic life and graduated with honors from the University of Santa Cruz in Education and Human Development. He then received his K-12 teaching credential and became a co-founder of an alternative elementary school which in turn, affected change in the public school curriculum.

Donny went on to spend six months teaching children on an Israeli kibbutz, followed by two months teaching children (and herding sheep) and living in a hogan with a Navajo family on top of Black Mesa, Arizona. "Teaching has always empowered me with the qualities and techniques I use in performing," he says.

Shortly thereafter, Donny went on to become Program Director of the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. It was there that he met his wife, Adrian. In 1976, after several years, they moved back to Los Angeles. At this point, Donny decided to make a career change and spent the next four years working

as a production assistant and a grip in the film industry. Among notables he worked for are Laslo Kovaks, Ron Howard and Haskell Wexler.

Although he never lacked for jobs, Donny felt he really missed working with kids. At this point, he and his wife decided to open a Gymboree franchise. They had previously been made aware of the company through friends who had started it in the San Francisco area. Hence, in 1981 Donny and Adrian went on to open the first franchise outside the Bay area in Southern California. Gymboree proved to be an instant success, and as a result, they were featured in segments on the Today Show, Good Morning America, and Hour Magazine. It was only after their phenomenal success with the franchise that Gymboree went national and then global. Donny and Adrian's Sherman Oaks franchise became the recipient of over twenty franchise awards.

After a couple of years in business, Donny had a vision to create original music for Gymboree. He approached his next door neighbor, musician Stephen Michael Schwartz, while taking out the trash and asked if he would like to help. Stephen immediately said yes and suggested his friend, Janice Hubbard, join them to round out the group. "At that moment, *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* was born and have been together since 1984." The name itself came from the music time during Gymboree class where parents and children sit on a colorful parachute," explains Donny.

According to Donny, "Our music and lyrics work on multi levels. The music is infectious so that it creates energy, while the lyrics teach self-confidence and individuality. We are not limited to a certain age group because kids seem to keep growing with our music. The youngest will enjoy the rhythm and beat, while the older ones start to enjoy the lyrics and humor. Parents enjoy us because we use a mixture of folk, R & B and Rock and Roll.

Now retired from Gymboree, Donny enjoys life with his wife and two children, Rachel and Joey. Together they have traveled extensively and all have a great affinity for the outdoors. "I love being under a waterfall," says Donny.

As for the future, Donny looks forward to continue to reach new heights with *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*. "This is a very exciting time for us--we love performing together...the audiences elevate us with their feedback. Music is an avenue to so much learning, teaching and good feelings about ourselves and our families."

Biography

Singer/songwriter/musician Janice Hubbard was literally born with music running through her veins. Although she has performed a variety of musical styles since toddlerhood, Janice never had an inkling that her talents would propel her into the world of children's music as one-third of the phenomenally popular musical group, *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*.

Born in Glen Cove, New York and raised on Long Island, Janice is the youngest of three sisters who grew up surrounded by classical music, Broadway show tunes and folk music. Her father, a music teacher, as well as an arranger and bandleader, recognized his daughters' musical talents and made arrangements for them in three part harmony. The Hubbard Sisters, as they were called, appeared at talent shows, the 1964 World's Fair and the top rated T.V. show, "Wonderama."

Janice went on to study music at Queen's College in New York as an oboe performance major. She also plays the flute, banjo, guitar, and piano. Despite her diverse talents in playing music, her real desire was to sing. She became part of the classic rock band, Merlin, which toured the local New York area.

In 1974, Janice decided to move to Los Angeles to test the musical waters in a new arena. On the first day she arrived she met Stephen Michael Schwartz (another third of PARACHUTE EXPRESS) at a recording session. Stephen, at the time, was an independent performer and Janice started singing back up for him at his gigs. She also spent time on the road with Alice Cooper as a guitar roadie. Additionally, Janice wrote music and acted in Richard Schaal's story theater productions.

Janice's career took a different turn when Stephen asked her to join her and Donny Becker to form *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*. The three of them found that they had two important commonalties -- a love of music and a love of children. At the time, Donny was running a Gymboree franchise and wanted to implement original music into the program. Ironically, none of them had thought of becoming professionally involved in children's music.

Janice, Stephen and Donny have been working together for over twenty-five years as *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*. Their music is applauded by adults and children alike. The group has been invited twice by President and Mrs. Clinton to perform at the two Inaugural celebrations. In addition, they have performed at the Annual Egg Hunt on The White House lawn four years in a row. Hillary Rodham Clinton placed the lyrics of one of their songs "We The Children," into Presidential Archives.

"I feel very lucky that life took this turn -- it just feels like destiny because the three of us clicked so beautifully together," says Janice. "With our music and lyrics, I hope we are able to give kids a signpost to grow on and into -- to stretch their imaginations and to give them comfort and confidence. We are constantly getting great feedback from parents about how we connect with their kids. The most rewarding experience for me has been from the parents of numerous autistic children who have told us how their kids seem to respond to the physical actions we use in the concert," she continues.

In addition to her work with *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*, Janice continues songwriting in other avenues. Musicians who have performed some of her work include: Raffi, Dennis Wilson of The Beach Boys, Guitarist Robin Ford and The Fifth Dimension.

When Janice is not working musically, she spends a great deal of time on art projects, "I've always been driven by music, however art has always been part of my creative expression," she explains. She enjoys painting, watercolor, drawing and bead making. One day she dreams of becoming a glass blower.

Currently, Janice lives with her husband and son, Cooper, in Camarillo, California.

Biography

Musical performer and composer Stephen Michael Schwartz is known to children and their parents across the nation as one third of the phenomenally popular musical group, *PARACHUTE EXPRESS*. However, unbeknownst to most, Stephen Michael Schwartz is a show business veteran who began his career at the age of twelve. Independent of his *PARACHUTE EXPRESS* success, Stephen has TV and film roles, musical composing and producing, and an early-on RCA recording deal to his credit. He is truly a multi-faceted personality whose talents seem to have no boundaries.

Born in Victorville, California, and raised in the San Fernando Valley, Stephen is the elder brother to two sisters. He first felt the show biz 'itch' after watching The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1964. "As soon as I saw them, I knew what I wanted to do with my life. They caught me by surprise because they had such a fresh and alive sound -- they were speaking a language that I understood," he explains. The very next day he asked his parents to buy him a guitar. He took two free lessons and then went on to teach himself to play. From that moment on, he started writing songs.

Shortly thereafter, after gaining the attention of a talent agent, he started acting in numerous commercials, TV shows and films. Among his many credits are: I SPY (starring Bill Cosby in which Stephen played guitar), LASSIE, and MISSION IMPOSSIBLE. His first movie role was WHO'S MINDING THE MINT, in which he played Joey Bishop's son.

While in college, he performed at the Hollywood Troubadour's famous Monday night hoots in the company of such up and coming artists as Jackson Browne, Tom Waits, and Stephen Bishop. It was there he was spotted by RCA talent scouts and signed his first exclusive record deal. At this point, he started touring the country as a solo musical act. Around the same time he met Janice Hubbard, a fellow songwriter, who often sang back-up for him, and would later become part of PARACHUTE EXPRESS. He has opened for such performers as David Letterman, Gallagher, Paul Williams and The Association, to name a few. Highlights of his life were being told to shut up by Groucho Marx at a small dinner party and hanging out with Elvis Presley backstage and Wolfman Jack after one of Elvis' Las Vegas concerts.

In 1980, an acting opportunity arose when he was approached to star in a sitcom as a "David Cassidy-type heart throb" character. The show was PLEASE STAND BY -- it was picked up by NBC for 24 shows. Two years later he starred opposite Gary Crosby in THE MUSIC SHOPPE, a cable sitcom.

Stephen's musical career started to take a different turn when he moved next door to Donny Becker. They found they had two important commonalities -- a love of music and love of children. At the time Donny was running the first Gymboree franchise located in southern California and wanted to implement original music into the program. He asked Stephen to work with him. Stephen then brought in Janice and the rest is history.

According to Stephen, "PARACHUTE EXPRESS is parent-friendly -- we want parents to be as happy listening to our music as their kids are. We don't talk down to kids...we try to inspire them by introducing a variety of musical styles with clear and concise lyrics. Whether its R & B, rock n' roll, folk music or an Irish jig, we want our music to be building tools that kids can grow up with."

Although **PARACHUTE EXPRESS** has been the mainstay of his life. Stephen has been fortunate to have worked independently as well. He has composed songs for numerous television and film projects, such as GRUMPY OLD MEN, REVENGE OF THE NERDS, thirtysomething, AMAZING STORIES, HELLO KITTY, and Interscope's POCAHONTAS. In addition, Stephen's work can be heard on the animated television series for PBS, JAY JAY THE JET PLANE. Stephen wrote the title theme and penned most of the songs featured in daily episodes. For years, his original composition, "MERRY CHRISTMAS, WHEREVER YOU ARE", was chosen by Barry Manilow to be performed for Barry's annual Christmas tour. Stephen's latest accomplishment is as composer/lyricist for "IT CAME FROM BEYOND", a sci-fi musical. Selected for the New York Musical Theatre Festival in the fall of 2005 and winner of six Ovation Award nominations in 2006, it received rave reviews and is presently in production to be made into a theatrical motion picture.

When he's not working, Stephen spends his time with his wife, Althea, and his two sons, Adam and Zachary, at his home in Glendale, California.

As for the future --- Stephen hopes to continue to create quality children's music with **PARACHUTE EXPRESS** and other projects dedicated to uplifting us all through the power of music.

Product/Publicity Overview

AUDIO RELEASES

SHAKIN' IT HAPPY TO BE HERE FEEL THE MUSIC WHO'S GOT A HUG?

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS FRIENDS, FOREVER FRIENDS SUNNY SIDE UP DOCTOR LOONEY'S REMEDY

OVER EASY DON'T BLINK

IT'S A GYMBOREE PARTY! GYMBO'S PLAY AND PRETEND

FAVORITES

MUSIC VIDEOS

PARACHUTE EXPRESS "LIVE IN CONCERT" / GYMCORP (Long Form) "COME SING WITH US" / WALT DISNEY HOME VIDEO (Long Form) "POLKA DOTS, CHECKS AND STRIPES" / WALT DISNEY (Short Form) "WALKIN' IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD" / WALT DISNEY (Short Form) "DOCTOR LOONEY'S REMEDY" / WALT DISNEY (Short Form)

TELEVISION

JAY JAY THE JET PLANE (Theme)

THE TODAY SHOW

THE DISNEY CHANNEL

CNN

NICKELODEON

E CHANNEL

THE HOME SHOW

thirtysomething

ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT

RELATED

AWARDS/HONORS

- Winner PARENTS' CHOICE GOLD AWARD for recording, "DON'T BLINK" (2005)
- Winner NAPPA Award (Nat. Parenting Pub. of America) for "DON'T BLINK" (2005)
- Winner Toy of the Year Creative Child Award, "DON'T BLINK" (2005)
- Winner KIDSING 2000 Inspirational Composition for "WE THE CHILDREN" (2000)
- Winner INDIE Award (Association For Independent Music) for BEST CHILDREN'S ALBUM, "DOCTOR LOONEY'S REMEDY" (1999)
- Winner NAPPA Award (National Parenting Publications of America) for "DOCTOR LOONEY'S REMEDY" (1998) and "IT'S A GYMBOREE PARTY!" (2008)
- Winner FILM ADVISORY BOARD AWARD for audio excellence, "DOCTOR LOONEY'S REMEDY" (1998)
- Winner PARENTS' CHOICE VIDEO AWARD for excellence "COME SING WITH US"
- Winner PARENTS' CHOICE GOLD AWARD for their recording, "FEEL THE MUSIC"
- Winner BEST GROUP by the American Academy of Childrens Entertainment
- Winner International Monitor Award for BEST ELECTRONIC SPECIAL EFFECTS for video, "COME SING WITH US"
- Participants in the 42nd & 43rd Presidential Inaugural Festivities -- The Kennedy Center in "THE SALUTE TO CHILDREN" hosted by Hillary Rodham Clinton on The National Mall
- Music in the motion picture, "GRUMPY OLD MEN" starring Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau

Parachute Express Appearances

Theaters and Amphitheaters (Partial List)

Austin, TX

Beverly, MA

Branson, MO

Camden, NJ

Cincinnati. OH

Cincinnati, OH

Concord, NH

Tony Burger Center
North Shore Music Theater
John Davidson Theater
Sony Blockbuster Theater
Riverfront Coliseum
Memorial Auditorium
Concord City Auditorium
Orange County Performing Arts Center

Orange County Performing Arts Center

Dallas, TX
Plaza Theater

Dallas, TX
Symphony Hall

Dallas, TX

Denver, CO

Macomb Center

Detroit, MI

Valley Forge Music Fair

Devon, PA

Abraham Chavez Theater

Costa Mesa, CA

Dallas, TX

Dallas, TX

Denver, CO

Detroit, MI

Devon, PA

El Paso, TX

Abraham Chavez Theater El Paso, TX
Patriot Center Fairfax, VA
Lincoln Center Fort Collins, CO
Tillis Center Greenvale, NY
Ravinia Highland Park, IL
Mid Pacific Institute Theater Honolulu, HI

Mid-Pacific Institute Theater

Big Spring Park

Cape Cod Melody Tent

Barclay Theater

Rialto Square Theatre

La Mirada Theatre for the Perf. Arts

Honolulu, HI

Huntsville, AL

Hyannis, MA

Irvine, CA

Joliet, IL

La Mirada, CA

La Mirada Theatre for the Perf. ArtsLa Mirada, CARiverfest AmphitheaterLittle Rock, AKCarpenter Center for The ArtsLong Beach, CAJohn Anson Ford TheaterLos Angeles, CAUniversal AmphitheaterLos Angeles, CAMacomb Center for the Perf. ArtsMacomb, MI

Criterion Theater Medford, OR
Star Plaza Theater Merriville, IN
Midland Center for The Arts Midland, MI
Marcus Amphitheater Milwaukee, WI

Community Theater Morristown, NJ
Zeiterion Theatre New Bedford, MA
Plaza Academy Theater North Hollywood, CA
Meadowbrook Oakland, MI

Levitt Pavilion Pasadena, CA Celebrity Theatre Phoenix, AZ Mandeville Center San Diego, CA Luther Burbank Center Santa Rosa, CA Van Wezel Perf. Center Sarasota, FL Scottsdale Perf. Arts Center Scottsdale, AZ Spokane Civic Center Spokane, WA Freedom Hill Amphitheatre Sterling Heights, MI

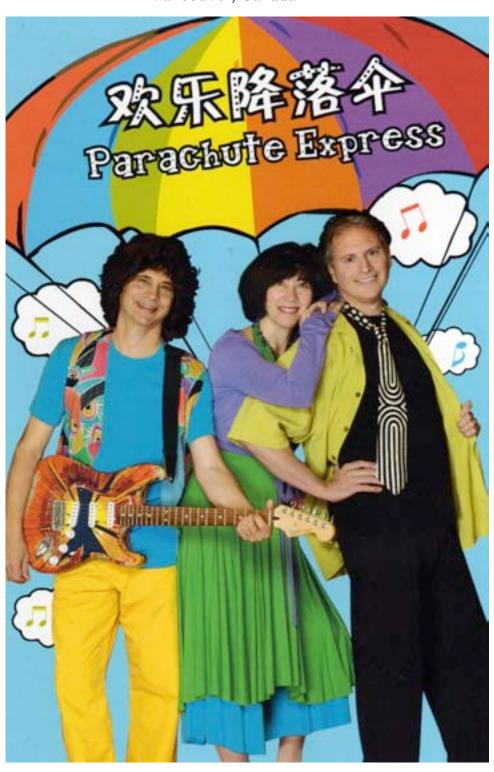
Landmark Theater Syracuse, NY
Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza Thousand Oaks, CA

Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum
Topanga, CA
The Grove Theater
Upland, CA
Carter Baron Amphitheater
Washington, D.C.
The Kennedy Center
Westbury Music Fair
Westbury, NY

Geffen Theatre Westwood, CA
Gymboree Concerts Various US Cities

INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES

Seoul, Korea Shanghai, China Shenzen, China Tianjin, China Guanghzou, China Nanjing, China Vancouver, Canada



Television and Special Events

Sing Theme to Jay Jay The Jet Plane

PBS

The National Mall 1996 Presidential Inauguration Washington D.C

The Kennedy Center - "Salute To Children" 1992 Presidential Inauguration Washington D.C.

.White House Easter Egg Roll (Annual Event) Washington D.C.

The Disney Channel Kaleidoscope Concert Series

Good Morning, America

Entertainment That Counts

CNN

Nickelodeon

E Channel

Festivals and Fairs

Ohio State Fair Akron, OH Family Fest Atlanta, GA Chicago Fest Chicago, IL Arlington Raceway Chicago, IL South Shore Music Circus Cohasset, MA Antelope Valley Fair Columbus, OH Dallas, TX Pepsi Kidaround Music Festival All About Kids Expo Denver, CO KYGN Kids Fair Denver, CO Fairfax, VA Fairfax Festival Big Spring Park Huntsville, AL Kennewick, WA Kennewick County Fair Milwaukee Fest Milwaukee, WI Kids Fest Minneapolis, MN Penns Landing, PA Yo! Philadelphia Sundance Music Festival Provo, UT Fundango Festival Virginia Beach, VA San Diego, CA North County Fair San Fernando Valley Fair San Fernando, CA Saturn County Fair Spring Hill, TN Main Street Fair Upland, CA

Amusement Parks

Virginia Beach, VA

Disneyland Anaheim, CA
Knotts Berry Farm Buena Park, CA
Hersheypark Hershey, PA
Disney World Orlando, FL
Six Flags Magic Mountain Valencia, CA

Fundango Festival

Shopping Centers

Tower City Center Cleveland, OH Sun Valley Mall Concord, CA Crystal Court Costa Mesa, CA Country Club Mall Cumberland, MD Fredrick Mall Fredrick, MD Yorktown Center Mall Lombard, IL Dadeland Mall Miami, FL Fairlane Town Center Dearborn, MI Mall of Americas Minneapolis, MN Bellevue Mall Nashville, TN Clackamas Town Center Portland, OR Riverside, CA Galleria at Tyler San Francisco Shopping Centre San Francisco, CA Woodfield Shopping Center Shaumberg, IL Sherman Oaks Galleria Sherman Oaks, CA Lakeside Mall Sterling Heights, MI Walnut Creek, CA Broadway Plaza Mall Wheaton Plaza Wheaton, MD

Los Angeles Times

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2005

WITTERTHER KINDS



Don't Blink
Parachute Express
Trio Lane Records
CD: \$14.98
www.parachuteexpress.com

When they got together 20 years ago, Donny Becker, Janice Hubbard and Stephen Michael Schwartz, collectively known as Parachute Express, were in the vanguard of artists crafting children's music with jaw-dropping sophistication. They're still first rate. With their amazing, Manhattan Transfer-quality signature harmonies, slick pop, rock and jazz instrumentals and some of the smoothest heartfilled and playful lyrics around, this all-new album ranks them among the best of the best.

More joy than in Mudville

Chicago Tribune

Parachute energizes kids concert

By Jennifer Mangan SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

In one of the most-spirited kiddie concerts, Walt Disney Records had its newest trio for little tykes, Parachute Express, rockin' at Ravinia Saturday.

With the skies holding heavy clouds over eagerly awaiting fans, the sun broke through when Parachute Express hopped onstage, bopping to the title song of its latest album, "Happy To Be Here."

The three—Donny Becker, Janice Hubbard and Stephen

Kids' music

Michael Schwartz—put on a stage show neatly and vigorously choreographed with sophisticated vocals and melodious harmony. Although Parachute Express is accompanied by pretaped instrumentals with an occasional live guitar, flute or banjo, one would never feel slighted by the absence of an entire ensemble. The trio's package is superbly wrapped.

Each song was given a short and humorous intro, which kept this easily distracted audience hypnotized most of the time. But what made Parachute Express really fly was its ability to get the kids involved through movement-oriented lyrics. (The group's music is the cornerstone of the movement and play programs of Gymboree kiddie centers.)

The group delivered its harmonies in a variety of styles like rock, funk and doo-wop. But what sets this group apart from other performers of children's music is the members' energy and stamina. This included vigorous dance routines and jogs through the audience.

"Ups and Downs" from the "Happy To Be Here" album had the children in the audience off their seats. The tune, "When I Build My House" from the same album, motivated the audience to "saw the wood, hammer the nails, lay the bricks and paint the walls."

As Schwartz sang the song "When You Come Over to My House," he stopped to ask a few kids what they like to do to have fun. It started out sweetly with a boy talking about his cute poodle puppy but escalated when a little curly-haired girl said, "Break the dishes." There's one in every crowd.

"Polka Dots, Checks and Stripes" was a snappy tune about a girl named Sue with an unusual taste in clothes, "Shakin' It" managed to get the kids' sillies out, and "High-5-ious" was contagious.

CALENDAR

Los Angeles Simes

WEEKEND REVIEWS

Family Parachute Express Drops In for Fun

By CYNNE HEFFLEY TIMES STAFF WRITER

ith its solo debut at Universal Amphitheatre on Saturday, the nationally touring, locally based children's music trio Parachute Express proved why it belongs among the class acts in the field, along with such luminaries as Canadians Fred Penner and Raffi.

Dynamic harmonies, instrumental integrity, comic interplay and an enormous sense of fun galvanized more than 3,000 young children and parents into clapping and swaying along and acting out some of the smoothest lyrics in the business. And the warmth and epithusiasm of these 40-ish adults never rings false.

Living up to the promise the group showed when it opened for Fred Penner at the amphitheatre in 1992 and virtually stole the show, Parachute Express offered a mix of the familiar and the new in its Saturday concert. Parachute members Stephen Michael Schwartz, Janice Hubbard and Donny Becker led with this year's signature song, "Friends Forever," an upbeat affirmation of their 10 years together. (The group began by recording music for Gymboree, the national movement/play program for parents and preschoolers.)

They then launched into "Happy to Be Here," the title song from last year's Walt Disney Records album, a joyous anthem that was greeted with shouts of recognition.

Participatory favorites were "Polka Dots, Checks and Stripes," "When I Build My House," "Walkin' in My Neighborhood" and a masterpiece of the absurd, "Ups and Downs," that had the audience standing and sitting on cue to comic effect. For adults, the big hit was "Butterfly," the trio's memorable three-part vocal harmony, with deceptively simple accompaniment on



IRIS SCHNEIDER / Los Angeles Times

Parachute Express members Stephen Michael Schwartz, left, Janice Hubbard and Donny Becker at the Universal Amphitheatre: A class act.

bass, sax and keyboard.

The big difference in this concert compared to the group's past shows, however, is a confident new theatricality, with props, costumes and a central theme—a mysterious gift that must be opened at the "right time." Known for their very physical performances, the singers' imaginative choreography, comedy bits and miming skills now inform the banter and tie the songs together, effectively complementing the sophisticated musicality.



Concert review

Parachute Express

Universal Amphitheater, LA.

By Darryl Morden

They were out of their seats, smiling, singing and clapping along. And that was just the grown-ups.

A supergroup for toddlers and the pre-school set, Parachute Express drew several thousand children and parents, together with grandparents and aunts and uncles too, for an hourlong (perfect in kid time) afternoon show.

This is the 10th anniversary for

Stephen Michael Schwartz, Janice Hubbard and Donny Bocker as a children's music group, spending the last few years as one of Disney's top children's recording artists. While perhaps not Raffi-class in sales, they do move units — and the little ones.

One could see a scattered sea of small bobbing heads just above seats, as well as gyrating boys and girls in the aisles. Part of the group's success comes from not talking down; they offer up happy

Ser PARACHUTE on page 28

27

Parachute

Continued from page 27-

homilies of life, including their theme song "Forever Friends" and pleased-ta-meet-'cha "Walking in My Neighborhood."

The group sang along to prerecorded tapes, augmented by occasional live acoustic guitar and banjo, the music running from folkish tunes such as "Build My House" (with motions for sawing, hammering and laying bricks, of course) to the pretty Motownstyled "Butterfly" to the Bo Diddley-by-way-of-Jimmy Buffet "Dr. Looney's Remedy." Rhythmic and tuneful for kids of all ages.

The choreography was cute, matching movements part Broadway musical, part Gymboree, the outfits colorful, But most of all, the kids were — as one of the Parachute Express songs goes — "Happy to Be."

THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

May 23, 1996

PERSONAL

Ms. Janice Hubbard

Mr. Donny Becker

Mr. Stephen Michael Schwartz

Parachute Express 1210 East Palmer Avenue Glendale, California 91205

Dear Ms. Hubbard, Mr. Becker, and Mr. Schwartz:

Thank you for the copy of your tape, We the Children. It is a wonderful reminder of your performance at the White House, and I appreciate your thoughtfulness.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,

