

# PLAYBILL

OUR YOUNG RENAISSANCE MAN



*A Star is Born - September 13, 1996*

justin  
eugene  
carr

*Last Dance to Heaven - February 22, 2013*





Dear Justin,

We will love you always and forever.  
Sing and dance often with  
Gendaddy, Bommie,  
Papa and Grandma Melvia.

God Bless you.

With Love,  
Dad and Mom



"Happy To See The Sun Come Up  
or Happy To See The Sun Go Down"

Justin Eugene Carr  
Sunrise September 13, 1996  
Sunset February 22, 2013

Artwork by Justin E. Carr © 2012



JUSTIN - "Full of Justice"

The Lord is good,  
a stronghold in the day of trouble;  
and He knoweth them that trust in Him.  
Nahum 1:7



PUSD Gifted & Talented Education (GATE) Program

**McKinley School Productions:**

3 Piggy Opera, Aliens Ate My Teacher, Alien  
Wizard of Oz, Munchkin, A Muppet Christmas Carol, 2003  
The Little Mermaid, Cinderella, 50s Dance Revue, Nutcracker, 2004  
Aladdin, Lion King, 60s Dance Revue, Annie 2005  
Mulan, Beauty and The Beast, Dance for The Ages Revue, 2006  
Marcus Fiye Production, Snow White, Doc  
Pasadena YES: Basketball Team, Center & Soccer Team  
LA Master Chorale, Voices From Within, Choir Member

**Harvard-Westlake Productions:**

The Man Who Came to Dinner, Choir Boy, 2008  
Romeo and Juliet, Balthasar, 2009  
Auntie Mame, Ralph, 2009  
Annie, Burt Healy, 2010  
Grease, Roger, 2011  
Fiddler On The Roof, Avram, 2011  
Oklahoma, Slim, 2012  
Saint Marks Episcopal Church, Altadena, Chorister & Acolyte

**Harvard-Westlake Music:**

7th Grade Boys Choir  
Madrigals Singers  
Chamber Singers  
Jazz Singers, Tenor Section Leader  
Member of SAG-AFTRA  
TV: NCIS, The West Wing, The Bill Maher Show, 1321 Clover  
TV: Commercial with Carmelo Anthony  
Movies: Santa Clause 3 the Escape Clause, Norbit  
**USA Swimming Junior Olympics, Silver Medalist**  
Rose Bowl Aquatics Swim Team, Member  
John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (JHCTY), Member

**Harvard-Westlake Team Sports:**

Swim Team  
Water Polo Team  
Volleyball Team

**Harvard-Westlake and Community Involvement:**

Student Ambassador  
Spectrum, Head of Feature Section  
Summer Enrichment Program  
Habitat for Humanity, New Orleans  
Black Leadership Awareness Cultural Club, Junior Class Leader  
Created Architect Club  
PEF Summer Enrichment Program (PUSD), Volunteer  
Armory Center for the Arts, Volunteer  
Institute for Educational Advancement, Yunasa Camper  
Frank D. Parent Elementary (LAUSD), Second Look Saturday Volunteer Tutor  
California State Summer School for the Arts, Theater Program  
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Summer Career Architect Program  
Wesleyan University Center for Creative Youth, Technical Theatre Design  
Choate-Rosemary Hall Summer Program  
ACT/SAT College Entrance Exams, scored top 95%, Fall 2012

Justin Carr

Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr

Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr

Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr

Justin Carr  
Justin Carr

Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr  
Justin Carr



Seaweed, 2013 (in Heaven)





## Our Star is Born

Justin Eugene Carr was born six weeks early on September 13, 1996 at Cedars Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles, CA. His original due date was November 2, and he was to be delivered at UCLA, but was ready to arrive early. Susan's doctor was out of the country and it was through the grace of God that her best friend from high school, Soledad Dulay Austin, was the Neonatal MD on call at Cedars. Justin was a strong four-pound "well" baby. He was curious from the start, and his eyes were always fixed on the art around the room during his feeding times.

When Justin was four months old, he and his parents, Susan and Darrell, moved to Orlando, Florida. They lived there for two years while Susan worked on the design and construction of Jurassic Park Island in Universal's Islands of Adventure theme park. With both Walt Disney World and Universal Studios as his playgrounds, his eyes were once again in motion trying to take it all in. When Justin was 10 months old he learned how to swim, float, and turn over on his back in the water.

After returning to California, his curiosity and passion for design flourished. He was an artist from an early age, and by three he was drawing stick figures and detailed faces. He often stood alongside his dad asking to help and to lend a hand. Darrell taught Justin how to garden, use a hammer and nails, paint, mix concrete, and restore things. When he was five, Justin received his first puppet theatre from Santa. He spent hours building the sets and creating his scenes.

## Training for A Rising Star

Justin attended Meher Montessori, St. Mark's, McKinley, Aveson Charter, Sierra Madre and Harvard-Westlake schools.

At McKinley, Justin's first acting role was in the first grade as the "Wolf" in the Three Piggy Opera. He was principal Irene Quiñones, aka Ms. Q's, apprentice on many subsequent productions. He helped her with set construction and production planning.

Justin entered Harvard-Westlake in the seventh grade. He quickly embraced all of the academic, visual and performing arts, and extracurricular opportunities available to him. He loved his teachers and the Harvard-Westlake staff. During the construction of the middle school campus, Justin had the opportunity as the Little Architect to take three hardhat construction tours with John Amato, VP of Harvard-Westlake.

He often visited his mom at work at each of her projects and most recently at the University of Southern California where he knew his way around campus. He marveled at the vast opportunities that were ahead of him. Justin often spoke about seeking a career in technical theatre design and architecture, but his life stopped short of these plans.

## Technical Difficulties

Justin started kindergarten when he was four years old. Due to his creativity and passion for learning, he was busy and curious. After four months, his kindergarten teacher advised his parents that perhaps he should repeat kindergarten. His parents replied, "For what? To teach the class?" Supporting Justin's parents, the principal showed the teacher Justin's entrance exam where he had been asked to draw the other half of a face to test his understanding of correct spatial placement. Not only did Justin correctly complete the face, he also added a full head of hair, a hat, coat, purse, cat, and even a car.

When he was five years old he went to his first art class. The instructor told his parents to return for him in two hours. Within 15 minutes Susan and Darrell were called to come pick him up. The instructor told them that Justin did not want to follow the rules. He was asked to draw a circle, but he wanted to draw a horse. He was happy to leave and go home where he continued his spontaneous creativity.

In fourth grade Justin often came home saying in frustration, "I raised my hand all day and the teacher did not call on me!" When his parents approached his teacher she said, "He is so bright and gifted. I don't call on him because I know he knows the answer. He will find his niche in college."

Just last year when Susan asked one of his teachers how he was doing, the teacher responded, "He is every teachers' dream; he is bright, inquisitive, curious and he asks a lot of questions. The big problem is that he acts like he is 30, and the rest of the boys act like they're 10. He is the type of kid that will be a great adult."

In a recent conversation with his parents, Justin discussed people's expectations of him as compared to who he really was. "I'm 6-foot 3-inches tall, I'm African American, and I don't play basketball or football. Instead, I swim and my best stroke is the butterfly. I know everyone, but I'm not part of any one group. I also like architecture and technical theater design. I've taken Papa's (the late

Burt Toler Sr.) advice. He often said, "Don't let other people determine how you act; do your best and your best will be good enough." Justin was comfortable in his own skin.

Justin was a steadfast supporter of the underdog. He stood up for what was right, regardless of the social consequences. He also stood by his friends and supported them in a variety of ways.

## Intermission

Justin always had a passion for the visual and performing arts as well as a strong love of learning. He embraced singing, drawing and building. His favorite shows were on HGTV, and he knew all about the aspects of good design. He enjoyed going to his dad's classroom at Citrus College to photograph and work in the photo lab. He also liked going all over the USC campus to wander around and look at the various architectural building designs.

He loved going to theme parks, not necessarily to ride the rides, but to look at the rides and attractions and to see how they were constructed. He was great at making sure everyone else was happy. He loved reading about the technical history of Broadway shows. He enjoyed swimming, singing, traveling, dancing, and horseback riding. He relished Thai food, apple tarts from Trader Joe's, Whole Foods Oreos, soul food, and of course, his gourmet traveling breakfasts and lunches that his mom prepared daily. He would often create imaginary casts for school musicals and he was trying to convince the Harvard-Westlake theatre department to produce *Hairspray* as the Fall 2013 musical.

## Final Curtain Call

On Friday, February 22, 2013, Susan received a joyful phone call from Justin at 3:10 pm. He was just about to enter the pool for swim team practice. He said, "Hi Mom, this is Justin. Molly is coming home with me so we can go see her mother's production of *Hairspray* at Pasadena Community College tonight. See you later, I have to go jump in the pool for practice...with my phone (laughing). Goodbye Mom." His teammates said later that night before diving into the pool, they were dancing on the pool deck and singing End of Time, along with his favorite crush Beyonce.

Justin was indeed our little/big Renaissance man. He was deeply loved by his parents Darrell and Susan and family and friends. Darrell called him his Champ; Susan called him her Gift (but he called her crazy, and Over The Top Olivia: OTTO). His Tauntes called him Mookie, his uncles called him Hercules, his big cousins called him J.C. Money and his little cousins called him Juku.

*"I want to be able to give back to those less fortunate than me by creating an after school program in neighborhoods where kids are not exposed to the visual and performing arts allowing them to have another outlet to be expressive. I have lived a very fulfilling life so far, and I thank my family and friends for consistently supporting me throughout my journey."*



Justin Carr Christmas 2002



Trevor Bryant © 2006

Trevor Bryant is an artist and the father of one of Justin's grammar school friends. When Justin went over to the Bryant's house to play, he often wandered into Trevor's studio to watch him paint. Trevor gave this painting to Justin for Christmas in 2006 with the following inscription.

### **"A SPIRIT PAINTING FOR JUSTIN CARR"**

This painting started out as a portrait of a local artist. I never felt it was finished, until I added some things.

- The moon sets your life cycle in motion
- The trapeze artist is your free spirit
- The crown is your leadership
- The football is your heritage
- The mask is the theater in your soul