


# Four Bases, Three Strikes and Dream

## By Maya Dennis



**Major League Baseball's (MLB)** 2012 Opening Day roster included **243 foreign-born baseball players**. Of these players, **95 of them were from the Dominican Republic**. And while popular belief would sum this number up to 'natural talent' or 'national pride,' this percentage of Dominican-born players is actually a reflection of the MLB's academy system. Currently, **all 30 MLB clubs have academies** in either the Dominican Republic or Venezuela, where they dorm, feed, and train hundreds and thousands of teenaged Dominican boys in hopes of creating high-profile baseball players. Baseball greats like **David Ortiz** and **Vladimir Guerrero**. However, for every Ortiz or Guerrero there are hundreds and hundreds of boys left behind. In fact, according to MLB.com, the rule of thumb is that **for every 100 players in one given academy, only four or five of them make it to a 40-man roster in the Major Leagues**.

This statistic begs the question, **"What happens?"** What happens to the men that get left behind? They're taken out of school to play baseball at an early age. How do they make a living? Although they are the exception to the rule, we usually only hear about the rags-to-riches narratives. What about the majority? What about their stories? **What would they say? Where would they say it?** And, more importantly, **who would listen?**

**Four Bases, Three Strikes and a Dream** serves as a dramatized exploration of these questions. Based off of peripheral characters in the 2008 film *Sugar* and the 2008 independent documentary, *Road to the Big Leagues*, this one-woman performance, written and performed by **Maya Y. Dennis '13**, provides these marginalized voices a platform (via her interpretation), breaks down the theatrical 'fourth-wall,' and forces audience members to listen. **Four Bases, Three Strikes and a Dream** travels to and from a vendors' market in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and a coach's office and a woman's laundry room in Texas to share some of the dreams and realities in the world of professional baseball. The play opens with a former **pelotero (baseball player)** selling phone chargers to the audience in la capital. He stops to tell audience members about his life as a baseball player. **The vendor** shares stories of excitement, sadness, and contentment while the voices of **Coach Parker**, a minor league coach, and **Peggy Sue**, a host mother, share their opinions about the former player's dream deferred.