



March 2023

©TRC

[www.rehearsalclubnyc.com](http://www.rehearsalclubnyc.com)

Kate West, Editor

---

## Dramatic Results from The New York Times Sunday, 1/29/23, Feature Article on The Rehearsal Club

Results are still unfolding from the New York Times feature article on TRC in the impressive three page, color spread below.



Left to Right: Alumnae Cynthia Darlow, Kathleen Conry, Andrea Frierson  
All photos © Rachel Vanni



RACHEL VANNI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

# Where You Sing for Your Supper

The Rehearsal Club, and its inexpensive housing for aspiring female performers, is back.



By JOANNE KAUFMAN

Those attempting to rent an apartment in New York City complain about the indignity of it all—the long days they spend in fruitless searches; the raft of financial documents they must provide; the very large checks they have to write for very small spaces; the broker fees.

Perhaps a bit of perspective is in order. Would-be residents of a particular wing on the 12th floor of the Webster Apartments, a building on West 34th Street, must first give 'em the old razzle-dazzle—a song, a dance, perhaps a monologue. They have to audi-



BEN MARTIN/GETTY IMAGES

Above, a wing on the 12th floor of the Webster Apartments on West 34th Street houses the members of the reconstituted Rehearsal Club. From left: a poster promoting the movie version of "Stage Door," a 1937 film inspired by the club; and Carol Burnett and Blythe Danner, two of its more famous residents.



RON GALELLA COLLECTION, VIA GETTY IMAGES

tion for the privilege of a roof over their heads.

Welcome to the Rehearsal Club, an artist residency and the one-year-old reincarnation of a nonprofit organization founded in 1913 by Jane Harris Hall, an Episcopal deaconess, and Jean Greer, the daughter of New York's Episcopal bishop. Their ambition was to provide an affordable safe haven in the big city for young women embarking on a career in the performing arts.

In 1926, the club took over a pair of brownstones on West 53rd Street, thanks to the beneficence of John D. Rockefeller Jr.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

We received 123 responses to the article, which beautifully captured the spirit and mission of our organization. Also received were multiple inquiries from documentarians, over forty applicant inquiries for the Residency Program, offers from willing volunteers and mentors, and donations that will help sustain us short term.

We are eternally grateful for the magical spread of “pixie dust” that conspired to make another TRC dream come true!



Gale Patron, President

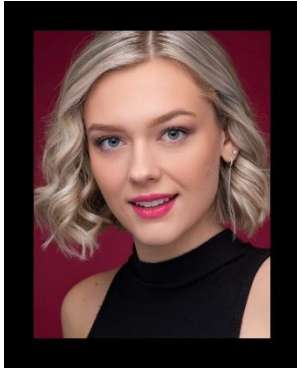


Left to Right: Alumnae Andrea Frierson Cynthia Darlow and Kathleen Conry;  
Residents Shawnee Fierros Casas Richberger, Megan McCarthy, Zoe Smith  
All photos © Rachel Vanni

Congratulations to everyone involved in bringing this amazing effort to fruition! The images of these young women pursuing their dreams in a safe and nurturing environment thanks to the hard work and generosity of so many of us is satisfying beyond words.

---

## Meet Kelsey Lepesko TRC Resident



Kelsey Lepesko was a member of the first group of women accepted into the TRC residency program upon its reopening in January 2022. Her first two months at TRC were spent taking advantage of the classes offered by TRC, auditioning for many projects and exploring the city. Soon, she got her first professional job offer, from Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, to play the role of Marty (and understudy Rizzo and Sandy) in the musical production of *Grease*.

Kelsey talks about the experience: My contract with Royal Caribbean was not only the “launching” of my professional career, but also my first experience on a cruise ship. I joined a talented cast and a stellar creative team at Royal Caribbean’s Entertainment Studios in Miami, Florida, to prepare. Before I knew it, I was in the middle of the Atlantic, heading to the Bahamas. By the end of the 10-month contract, we had completed 122 performances of *Grease* and 65 performances of our production show *Invitation to Dance*, and entertained thousands of guests. I developed a higher caliber of work ethic/performance quality, which will carry over as I grow as an artist and individual.

Finally, I am so excited to be back at The Rehearsal Club and to continue the adventure I started a year ago. I am especially looking forward to getting back to the various classes offered at TRC, where I have been inspired by meeting casting directors, coaches, and women from the original program. I love the range of topics we cover, from professional workshops to discussions about the theatre and film business to workshopping monologues, and the mentorship program. I love the TRC community, and being surrounded by likeminded people in the arts is very motivating. It helps me to stay driven. We are supportive of each other. The TRC community feels like a family, and I am so excited to make new memories with these girls. From movie nights, to helping each other with auditions, to late night jam sessions, the women of The Rehearsal Club are a part of my NYC dream...and now a reality.





## West Coast News From Ambassador Patricia Hill,

### Spotlight On Robina Suwol

Robina and Steve Martin in *The Lonely Guy*, 1984

In 1971, with the help and guidance of TRC's ever generous and talented Annie O'Donnell, Robina Suwol arrived at 47 W. 53rd St., eternally grateful for a bed in Room 10, likeminded artists, great food, and a roof over her head – and all for only \$36.00 a week! She had just finished working at the Asolo Theatre in Sarasota, Florida and, prior to that, performing in San Diego in James Burrows production of *Victory Canteen* with Patty Andrews and Marsha Kramer. In New York, Robina continued her acting and voice lessons.

Eventually, several national commercials caught the attention of a manager and agent who encouraged her to move to Los Angeles, where she began to work in television, film and theatre. Among her many credits are appearances in *The Rockford Files*, *Hunter* and *Murder She Wrote* on television, and in the films *Punchline* and *The Lonely Guy*.

In 1998, Robina's life changed when her younger son was accidentally sprayed with pesticide at his school. Thankfully, he recovered, but Robina determined that this would never happen again. She founded California Safe Schools, an environmental health non-profit that has facilitated changes at both the policy and grassroots levels. UTNE Magazine named Robina one of “50 Visionaries Who Are Changing the World.” She produces an annual Environmental Symposium called “Your Life is Now,” where TRC Alums Patricia Hill, Donna Inglima and Kathie Kellogg-Taxe continue to support her work.

\*\*\*\*\*

Patricia Hill would love to hear from TRC West Coast Alums with news of your life, career and what drives you to stay in touch with us today. Send news to:  
[camopmom@mac.com](mailto:camopmom@mac.com)

---

## Breaking News of Our TRC Alums



### NBC To Air Birthday Special for TRC Founding Benefactor Carol Burnett

NBC will pay tribute to comedy icon Carol Burnett with *Carol Burnett: 90 Years of Laughter + Love*, a 2-hour special celebrating Burnett's 90th birthday. The special will air Wednesday, April 26 at 8pm ET/PT (streaming next day on Peacock).

*Carol Burnett: 90 Years of Laughter + Love* will look back on some of the most memorable moments of Burnett's legendary career, from her Broadway debut in *Once Upon a Mattress*, to her iconic role as Miss Hannigan in *Annie*, to her acclaimed sketch comedy series *The Carol Burnett Show*, which ran for 11 seasons on CBS.

Joining Burnett for the television event will be a lineup of A-list celebrities, including musical performances by Bernadette Peters, Billy Porter, Jane Lynch, Katy Perry, Kristin Chenoweth and more. There will also be guest appearances by Aileen Quinn, Amy Poehler, Bill Hader, Bob Mackie, Cher, Ellen DeGeneres, Julie Andrews, Kristen Wiig, Laura Dern, Lily Tomlin, Marisa Tomei, Sofia Vergara, Steve Carell, Susan Lucci, Tracee Ellis Ross, and Vicki Lawrence, among others.

"I'm so excited NBC decided to throw me a birthday party and invited all of my closest friends," Burnett said in a statement. "I can't wait to look back at so many wonderful moments throughout my career, I feel so lucky to share this night with everyone."

*Carol Burnett: 90 Years of Laughter + Love* will air on NBC on  
Wednesday, April 26.  
(© Chris Haston/NBC)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆



Honorary TRC Board Member Chita Rivera has a new book coming out April 25 – *CHITA: A MEMOIR*. Ms. Rivera originated the Broadway roles of ANITA in *West Side Story*, ROSE in *Bye Bye Birdie* and VELMA in *Chicago*. She is the winner of 2 Tony Awards as well as a special Tony Lifetime Achievement Award. As part of her book tour, Ms. Rivera

will travel through the tri-state area, including a visit to The Drama Book Shop in NYC. She will be discussing her book with theatre notables Nathan Lane, Harvey Fierstein and Laura Benanti. The Rehearsal Club wishes Ms. Rivera great success with her new book. It will be an important “must read” for our residents and members.



TRC Member **Sarah Burke** is starring in “Grand Horizons” with the Moonstone Theatre Company at the Kirkwood Performing Arts Center in St. Louis, MO. For more information, click on the following link:

<https://moonstonetheatrecompany.com/season/grand-horizons/#horizons-tickets-schedule>



TRC's Own Diane Findlay has been nominated for Best Actress in a Short Film for *Ball and Vase* by the First Glance Los Angeles Film Festival. Congratulations, Diane!



---

## TRC Governance News

TRC's Nominating Committee met recently, and a letter will be going out next week to all TRC paid Members asking for recommendations for possible Board of Directors candidates for the new term beginning July 1. Please watch for this letter and send us your recommendations. We are looking for people who have good management/organizational skills!

We are also continuing our search for a Part Time Executive Director with fundraising and non-profit leadership experience. Anyone interested should contact the search committee for a job description at [RCGovernance@gmail.com](mailto:RCGovernance@gmail.com)

---

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Calling all TRC Members

We are in the throes of all kinds of activities and we NEED volunteers from among our membership to serve on our many committees. If you have any time, or ideas or enthusiasm to spare, please contact Margaret Strom at [voicemargaret@verizon.net](mailto:voicemargaret@verizon.net) and she will get back to you with many options right away!

**TRC is in all our hands and we need yours! Please Help!**

---

# SAVE THE DATE!

## Sunday, March 5, 2023



**Join us** Sunday, March 5 @ 4 pm for some seriously un-serious vamping and camping. Hosted by the legendary **Michele Mais** and starring the current crop of lovelies residing at New York's one and only Rehearsal Club, incubator of the performing arts' next-gen headliners:



- Shawnee Fierros
- Casas Richberger
- Grace Ingves
- Abiageal Mangum
- Megan McCarthy
- Karina Pomales
- Sophie Sarnacki
- Zoe Smith
- Chelsea Weaver

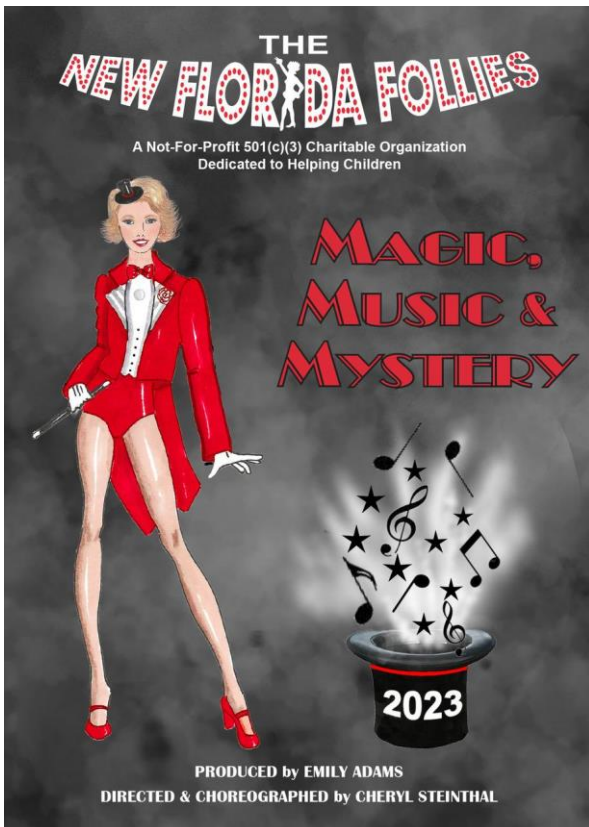
Doors open & seating begins @ 3:15 pm, Showtime at 4:00 pm | \$20 cover,  
\$20 minimum, CASH ONLY (must include 2 drinks) | Dining menu available  
Reservations: [www.donttellmamanyc.com](http://www.donttellmamanyc.com)



343 West 46th Street | Hell's Kitchen | NYC 10036 | (212) 757-0788

---

## Alliance News



The New Florida Folies  
Presents  
**MAGIC, MUSIC & MYSTERY**

Countess de Hoernle Theatre  
at Spanish River Community High School  
5100 Jog Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33496

Sunday	January 15, 2023	2:00 PM
Sunday	February 5, 2023	2:00 PM
Sunday	March 19, 2023	2:00 PM
Sunday	March 26, 2023	2:00 PM

Tickets: <https://newfloridafolies.yapsody.com/> or call (305) 596-7394

Township Center for Performing Arts  
2452 Lyons Rd., Coconut Creek, FL 33063

Sunday	January 29, 2023	2:00 PM
Sunday	February 26, 2023	2:00 PM

Tickets: <https://boxoffice.townshipcoconutcreek.com> or call (954) 970-0606

Lillian S. Wells Hall at The Parker  
(the reimagined Parker Playhouse)  
707 NE 8<sup>th</sup> St., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33304

Sunday	February 19, 2023	2:00 PM
--------	-------------------	---------

Tickets: [www.parkerplayhouse.com](http://www.parkerplayhouse.com) or call (954) 462-0222

Tickets \$35 each. Discounts for groups of 25 or more.  
Proceeds go to local children's charities.

## MAGIC, MUSIC & MYSTERY!

The New Florida Folies proudly presents their brand-new show for 2023 – MAGIC, MUSIC & MYSTERY! – a Broadway-style extravaganza of song and dance performed by the forever young Folies ensemble!

Audiences will be entertained with wondrous magic, great music, Rockette-style tap dancing and Folies production numbers, with mysterious surprises along the way.

The Folies cast includes former professional dancers, including Radio City Music Hall Rockettes, June Taylor dancers, NFL cheerleaders, Las Vegas and Latin Quarter showgirls, and more! Also featured in the 2023 show are the dynamic singing talents of Don Stansfield & Carolyn Smylie, and the intriguing illusions of magician Ian Michael.

The New Florida Follies is directed and choreographed by our dynamo Rehearsal Club Alumna and former Rockette, **Cheryl Steinthal**. The more than 35 Follies dancers, who range in age from 55 to 94 years young, donate their time and talent to help children in need. Each year, the proceeds from ticket sales are donated to local children's charities in South Florida.

There will be seven performances throughout January, February, and March 2023. All performances are 2:00 p.m. Sunday matinees.

The Florida Follies performers create a unique entertainment experience not to be missed! Buy your tickets at one of the links below, or contact Cheryl Steinthal at [cher5678@aol.com](mailto:cher5678@aol.com).

**Boca Raton**

**Coconut**

**Fort**



Our Shakespeare Alive Company wrapped a fabulous *Romeo & Juliet* in February. You can check out a reading excerpt below of Erika Rolfsrud's "Juliet."

*Richard II* is up in March, with *All's Well That Ends Well* following close behind. Additionally, our Shakespeare Alive "company" will also be reading an adapted version of *Antigone*, by Katie Sparer, featuring Page Clements, our Shakespeare guru, and Erika holding down the leads.

As we wind down this past year having completed another 23 plays since COVID, we plan to take a break over the summer and start up again in September with *Two*

*Gentlemen of Verona*. Visit our website for videos of past readings, and contact [denise@denisepence.com](mailto:denise@denisepence.com) for more information on joining our group.

## A Rose By Any Other



### CINDERELLAS OF WEST 53RD STREET



The Castle clock is slowly ticking down to the witching hour, when we can announce a publication date. Since signing the contract with Bear Manor in February 2021, our Publishing Committee went to work perfecting every nuance, adding new material, including a story from TRC Historian Maria Mallman on the 50th Anniversary, and creating what has become more than a just a memoir, now charting TRC's history thru the voices of our women to where we are today.

By early September, we were dancing in the castle ballroom, having submitted our book to the professional editor, Stone Wallace, who had this to say, *"As I told you previously, the composition was smooth and practically flawless, the narrative itself most enjoyable – and evocative of the setting and the era – and so revealing in the personal experiences provided. Again, major kudos to all the great gals who contributed."*

Special thanks to TRC Alum Lee Kelley, who brought us a bit of early history on TRC resident and silent film star Claire Adams. All of us are now just holding our breath, staying tuned for when the clock strikes 12!!

Denise Pence  
Publishing Committee Chair  
Boockvor Productions

Publishing Committee: Olyve Abbott (TX), Diane Findlay, Charla Hayan (VA), Patricia Hill (LA), JoAnn Yeoman (published writer)

Publishing Consultants: Kathleen Conry, Michele Mason, Melinda Tanner

# TRC Workshops



## Meditation & Mindfulness

Hosted by RC Alum: Michele Mason

Thursdays 2:00 – 3:00 pm EDT

Highly recommended to reduce stress and help to bring you into a state of true Zen.

Meeting ID: 831 9967 9596

Passcode: 963856

Thank you, Michele, for sharing your amazing gift with us every week! This Workshop is a special place to collect, reflect and commune.

[March Zoom](#)



## There's Still Time to Catch 2 of Jen Halpern's 3 Workshops

Jen Halpern primarily casts commercials, branded content videos and print. She works with advertising agencies and production companies to get them the talent they need per project. She also has a professional production background as a Line Producer for Independent Film and Television. Her unique skill set has allowed her to understand the needs of producer, director and actor, although she loves working with actors to get the best performances possible from them during an audition! Jen also coaches actors one-on-one to help improve commercial technique or for audition prep, does resume

consultations and offers affordable headshots to actors. Please reply to [jenhalperncasting.com](mailto:jenhalperncasting.com) so that she knows how many attendees to expect.

**Workshop 2: Tuesday, March 7, 6:30 pm**

Best ways to prepare for auditions, from knowing copy to learning how to become present in the moment.

**Workshop 3: Tuesday, March 14, 6:30 pm**

Review of Workshops 1 & 2. How to move forward with finding an agent or manager, and auditioning regularly.

Meeting ID: 859 0933 2796

Passcode: 756565

**[Zoom Link for Jen Halpern](#)**

---

## Getting Your Foot In The Door



In February, author and career coach, **Brian O'Neil**, offered tailor-made monologue coaching to our TRC Residents, and also included handy tips on self-promotion, getting a “foot” in the door, and a “leg up” on the competition.



---

**Thank You!!!**

A special and heartfelt Thank You! to Charla Hayen for her generous contribution of the proceeds from the sale of her gorgeous handmade Valentine cards.

---

## **Amazon Ends Smile Program OneHope Wine Offers Alternative**

As you may have heard, Amazon has ended its Smile Program, which allowed shoppers to specify a charity or organization to receive a percentage of their spending on Amazon. But don't despair – **OneHope Wine** to the Rescue!

Join them on their mission to give back to local and global organizations with 10% of every purchase donating directly to a cause of your choice. With over \$9 million donated to date, they continue to change the world one glass at a time.

Check out OneHope at the link below.

Please consider The Rehearsal Club in your estate planning. Gifts of this nature have long term tax benefits. Speak with your financial advisor.

[OneHope](#)

---

## **Explore! Engage! Enjoy!**

**Visit TRC Website – Click: [www.rehearsalclubnyc.com](http://www.rehearsalclubnyc.com)**

We had a good turnout during our 2023 Membership Drive, which ended on November 30, 2022. If you missed it or know someone who would like to become a member, we will always “throw up the sash” to welcome you in or back!

If you have any doubts or questions about your dues or gifts to The Rehearsal Club, please write Jackie Gautreaux, our finance whiz, who will send you a list of your contributions during the last few years. Reach out to Jackie at [RCFinancecom@gmail.com](mailto:RCFinancecom@gmail.com).

Thank you for your continued support of TRC.  
We can't do it without you.

[TRC Dues](#)

---

Join our Facebook Group,  
follow and support TRC and our Sisters on social media.



The Rehearsal Club  
2350 Broadway – Suite 934  
New York, NY 10024  
Email not displaying correctly?  
[View it in your browser](#)  
[Unsubscribe](#)