



March 2024

©TRC

www.rehearsalclubnyc.com

Kate West, Editor

Dear Members and Friends,

Jump on board TRC's spring calendar of activities as we emerge from our winter cocoons.

Our April 7th matinee showcase by TRC residents promises a show-stopping glimpse of young TRC talent. We are honored to have The Professional Children's School as our exclusive event sponsor, especially significant during March, Women's History Month, in honor of Jane Harris Hall and Jean Greer Robinson, the visionary founders of both of our institutions well over a century ago.

The launch of the new Cinderella's of West 53rd Street audiobook will be celebrated on May 7th with a musical cabaret featuring TRC talents from the book and others at The Green Room 42 in New York City. See more below.

The Rehearsal Club continues to grow and flourish through your support. Please let me know if you have interest in joining a committee or the Board of Directors. We are eager to welcome you!

With grateful appreciation.



Gale Patron

Gale Patron, President

Professional Children's School

By TRC General Member Janet Stilson



Dr. James Dawson, Head of School



Professional Children's School

It takes a special kind of person to found The Rehearsal Club, only to turn around the following year and establish another organization that's focused on the educational needs of young performers. And it's only natural that the second venture, the [Professional Children's School](#) (PCS), has become the exclusive sponsor of TRC's Residents showcase at Don't Tell Mama on April 7th.

PCS was launched almost exactly [110 years ago](#) after TRC founders Jane Harris Hall and Jean Greer Robinson visited an actor friend who was performing in *Daddy Long Legs* on Broadway. While backstage, the duo saw young performers playing cards and expressed surprise that they weren't in school. The kids explained they weren't welcome. "At the beginning of the 20th century, acting was considered an unsavory profession, particularly for children," says PCS's Head of School, Dr. James Dawson.

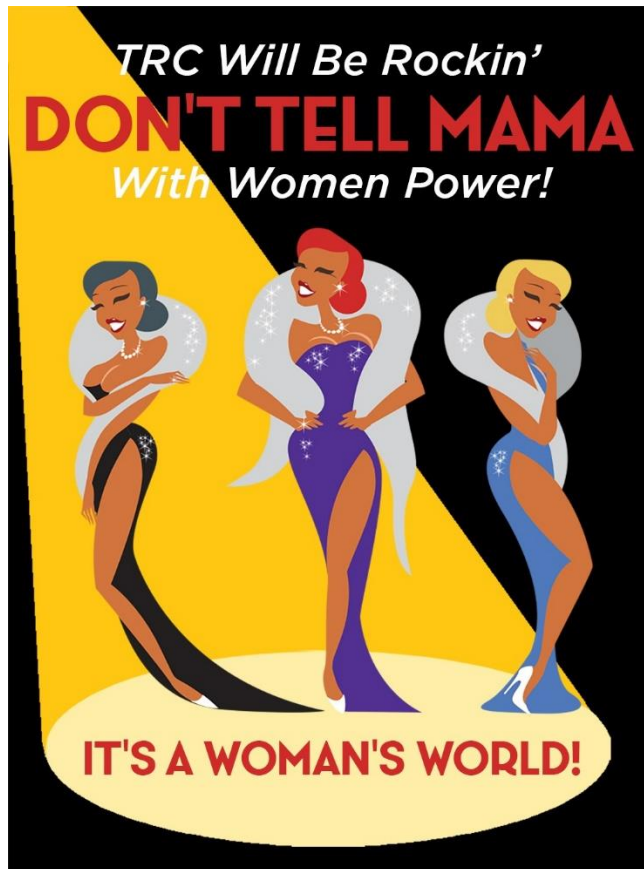
Hall and Robinson became more concerned when they realized that child performers were eating meals at TRC, which had opened its dining room to actors in need of a little extra support. The dynamic duo began the school by renting space from TRC over the first couple of years.

Today, PCS owns its own seven-floor building. The kids who attend are actors, ice skaters, musicians, dancers, circus performers—you name it. Among the [many notables](#) who have passed through its doors are Scarlett Johansson, Marvin Hamlisch, Yo-Yo Ma, and Milton Berle—all benefiting from the school's ability to stay flexible and provide distance learning as needed.

"We have amazing kids here. They are extremely talented and are really busy," Dawson says. "We have a very strong academic program. Kids who apply to colleges get into the best ones."

The upcoming Don't Tell Mama showcase isn't the first instance when PCS has given TRC its support, and it's not likely to be the last. After all, the two organizations are "family," in the best sense of the word.

TRC Residents Showcase At Don't Tell Mama



JOIN US Sunday, April 7 @ 3 pm for some seriously un-serious vamping and camping. Directed and hosted by **Francine Mancini** and **Michele Mais**. Our Musical Director is **Clare Cooper**.

Starring the current crop of residents at New York's one and only **Rehearsal Club** – incubator of the performing arts' next-gen headliners:

- Kaylan Bradford
- Shawnee Fierros
- Casas Richberger
- Jaimee Lee Gaston
- Abiageal Mangum
- Alyssa Payne
- Sophie Sarnacki
- Oksana Veres
- Chelsea Weaver
- Genevieve Wisdom

Generously Sponsored By



132 West 60th Street
New York, NY 10023
pcs-nyc.org

Doors open & seating begins @ 2:15 pm, Showtime at 3:00 pm | \$25 cover, \$20 minimum, **CASH ONLY** (must include 2 drinks) | Dining menu available

Reservations: www.donttellmamanyc.com



AT



343 West 46th Street | Hell's Kitchen | NYC

[Make A Reservation](#)

Don't Tell Mama Performer TRC Resident Alyssa Payne

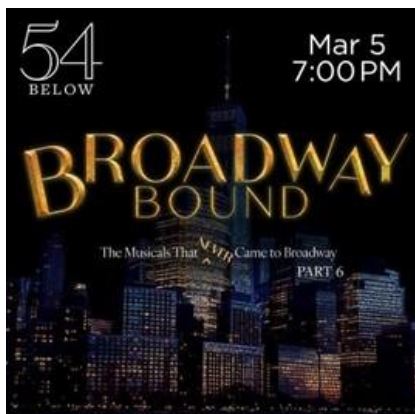


TRC current resident Alyssa Payne is a singer, dancer, actress, composer and lyricist. She moved from Atlanta, Georgia, to New York City last August to be a part of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Writing Workshop. Alyssa is about to start working on the upcoming 2024 Broadway musical *SUFFS* as writer Shaina Taub's personal assistant. She is also currently cast in a reading of a new Elyssa Samuel/Kate

Anderson musical. Christopher Newport University will be producing her passion project, *F WORD*, a musical she wrote about aging out of the foster system. This March, a selected group of Alyssa's songs will be featured in the new works showcase at 54 Below! She will have her first artist residency in Maine and is excited to be a part of the Johnny Mercer Foundation Songwriting Intensive at Snow Pond Center for the Arts. In addition to her very busy schedule, Alyssa leads worship every Sunday in Jersey City that, she says, along with the Club residency, helps ground her life. Alyssa expresses gratitude to TRC for the opportunity to be in New York City pursuing her professional creative work and for the support and friendship of The Rehearsal Club community.

TRC Founding Benefactor Stars in New Apple TV+ Series

TRC Alum and Honorary Board Member Carol Burnett will be featured in the new comedy series *Palm Royale*. Premiering on Apple TV+ on March 20, the series also stars Kristen Wiig, Laura Dern, Allison Janney, Ricky Martin and others.



Do not miss Diane Findlay!
MARCH 5, 2024
at 54 BELOW

"BROADWAY BOUND"

**The Musical That NEVER
Came to Broadway**

New Florida Follies Is Back!

The New Florida Follies is directed and choreographed by Rehearsal Club Charter Alum, 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.

The Follies cast includes former professional dancers, such as Radio City Music Hall Rockettes, June Taylor dancers, NFL cheerleaders, Las Vegas and Latin Quarter showgirls, and more!

THE NEW FLORIDA FOLLIES

PRESENTS

Featuring
a Follies
Tribute To The
Armed Forces

Guest Stars
Michael Kessler
&
Melinda Jackson
Direct from Las
Vegas

SONG
& DANCE

THE BROADWAY BEAT!

DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY CHERYL STEINTAL
FORMER RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL ROCKETTE

Staying healthy, vibrant and relevant into the golden years may be a dream for some, but a reality for us in The New Florida Follies. We are dancers, 55-95 years young, staging shows for the benefit of children's charities. We are the walking, talking, tap dancing example of giving back!

2024 SCHEDULE

★ All Shows are 2:00 PM Matinees ★ Tickets \$35 each ★ Discounts for 25 or more ★

Countess de Hoernle Theatre

Spanish River Community High School
5100 Jog Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33496

Sunday, February 4
Sunday, February 18
Sunday, March 17
Sunday, March 24

Tickets:

<https://newfloridafollies.yapsody.com>
or call (561) 619-6408

Township Center For Performing Arts

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

Sunday, January 28
Sunday, February 25th

Tickets:

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

Lillian S. Wells Hall At The Parker

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

Sunday, March 10

Tickets:

www.parkerplayhouse.com
or call (954) 462-0222

You can buy tickets and learn more about our organization at our website: thenewfloridafollies.com



Scan me!

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS NOW!!

Don't miss this unique entertainment experience!

Join us in supporting children in need in South Florida.
Proceeds from ticket sales go to children's charities.

*"We are the older generation taking
care of the younger generation!"*



In celebration of Women's History Month, the Women in the Arts & Media Coalition will continue its yearly Women Arts Day in collaboration with member organizations including SAG-AFTRA, NYWIFT, The Rehearsal Club and WomenArts at the School of Visual Arts.

This year's event will be held on Saturday, March 23, at 2 p.m. at SVA Theatre at 333 East 23rd Street in New York. The films will include *Finding Her Beat*, a documentary about female Taiko drummers, and *Gone Before Your Eyes*, a scripted short about an aging painter.

There will be a talkback after the films with *Finding Her Beat*'s Director/Producer Dawn Mikkelson, Director/Director of Photography Keri Pickett, and Producer/Principal Participant Jennifer Weir, along with the Writer and Director of *Gone Before Your Eyes*, Cara Yeates.

After the films and talkbacks, there will be food, drink, and networking. As every year, the event will be free, sponsored by the Coalition and the participating organizations. Reservations can be made by clicking the link below.

[Women Arts Day](#)



Spotlight On TRC Charter Alum
Beth Ann Kennedy



Beth Ann Kennedy – I CAN DO THAT

Charter Alum Beth Ann Kennedy transitioned from a career in theater to ownership of Aunahil, a live event production company. She has produced, written, and/or directed over 170 theatrical productions, fund raising events and educational conferences for Lincoln Center, Birdland, BB King, Lamb's Theatre, Symphony Space and The Kennedy Center, among others. Beth Ann is a founding member of the Colorado Environmental Film Festival, and she launched the BZN International Film Festival in 2018.

I have such incredible memories of living at The Rehearsal Club. Melanie Mayron had told me about TRC, and I just dropped in one day to see if it was a possibility. There was a Board meeting ending, and it had been decided that day that anyone asking to live there had to audition. I said, "I can do that!" There was a question about my doing it right away. Of course, as a second-year student at the American Academy I was told to always have a monologue ready. I performed my monologue and immediately told I was accepted. I was in the Eastside building top floor looking over 53rd.

I could go through a list of fun times including (but not limited to) begging for tub time with the back unit – they had a special shower attachment connecting the hot and cold water to make warm to wash your hair. Our tub had two unconnected spouts, not fun. I also managed the pay phone in the back TV room, a paid position which I think included screaming up the stairwells or writing messages if someone was out. I ate my first bagel in the downstairs dining room. Suitemate Kim Cattrall was in major panic one night about her sister back home who had a Ouija Board. Kim had just seen The Exorcist, and I was the only person she knew at TRC that read a Bible on a regular basis.

Thank you for letting me muse about the days at TRC!



January 4th saw the happy return of our monthly TRC PJ Party. Five Charter Alums attended from New York City, Pennsylvania, Illinois and California. It was great fun sharing memories, with lots of laughter too. The next PJ Party was February 1st, with more fun and a new face joining us – a former Rockette and ballet instructor. It was terrific to hear her experiences at the Club.

The PJ Parties are wonderful for relating our shared history. It is remarkable how some things (i.e. the wall phone, the bulletin board) have stayed the same no matter when one was at the Club. It was truly an advantage that the building was never renovated...it was like it was stopped in time, and we were there! Fascinating! Our next PJ Party is March 7th. It is a very special event...please come!

Meeting ID: 826 4846 4413

Passcode: 036123

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

TRC Women Lunch At Gallaghers

Gallaghers, a historic old world restaurant in Midtown Manhattan opened over 90 years ago, was the site of our January luncheon. Women representing the full spectrum of TRC membership enjoyed laughs, memories and camaraderie.



Head of Table – Celia Weston

Left side: Leslie Middlebrook, Mary Lou Barber, Cynthia Darlow, Leslie Shreve, Donna Brooks Couteau, Debbie Andrews,

Right side: Cameron Taylor, Margaret Strom, Michele Mason, Ellen Zalk, Andrea Frierson, Francine Mancini

Photo Kaylan Bradford

Membership News

We are so happy to report the conclusion of a very successful Calendar Year Membership Dues drive for 2024. We are grateful to each of you for making your membership a priority.

For those who found the time slipped by, please renew today! This link will take you directly to the membership portal where you may pay with credit card or to the address to which you may send a check.

[Pay TRC Dues](#)

Welcome to TRC's New Members

Julia Adams: Julia lives and performs in New York City. She was a 2018 TRC Rising Star contestant and has participated in and helped out at many TRC events, most recently as a model for the silent auction at the 110th Birthday Gala. She will be performing in the Cinderellas of West 53rd Street audiobook launch Cabaret in May and is eager to participate in the Special Projects Committee. She was recommended by many Charter Alums!

Lia Esposito. Lia lives and works in North Carolina. She was our first intern through Tap Root Foundation, of which we are a member. She worked with Outreach and Communications under Margaret Darlow to create our social media program while she was a senior in college! She currently is the digital marketing manager for Michael Jordan at 23XINASCAR Racing Team. She is eager to work with the Development and Fundraising Committee as she happily returns to her first non-profit home. She was recommended by Gale Patron.

Our own **Annie O'Donnell** guest starred as Estelle in an episode of ABC's *Not Dead Yet* that aired on Wednesday, February 21. She is also reprising her role as June Wheeler from the original *Night Court* in an upcoming episode of the new reboot of the NBC sitcom.

In Memoriam

The women and friends of The Rehearsal Club mourn the loss, and celebrate the life, of the legendary **Chita Rivera**, who passed on January 30 at the age of 91. Chita Rivera was an Honorary Rehearsal Club Board Member and a supporter of the Club. Ms. Rivera originated the Broadway roles of Anita in *West Side Story*, Rose in *Bye Bye Birdie* and Velma in *Chicago*. She was the winner of two Tony Awards plus a special Tony Lifetime Achievement Award. She was a bright light on Broadway, in film, TV and Cabaret.

Dancer, singer, actress extraordinaire, Ms. Rivera was an inspiration to all of us who worked, and dreamed of, a career in the theater. We will miss her.



Beloved TRC Charter Alum **Judy Jenson** passed away January 9, 2023. Judy lived at The Rehearsal Club from 1963 to 1976. She was a treasured friend to many of the residents and maintained a close connection to TRC through the years. While living at the Club, Judy helped fellow residents navigate the sometimes overwhelming theater world. She had success early in her career, working as a stand-in on *The Patty Duke Show* where she had to learn both of Patty's roles in each episode. Judy continued extensive work in television and Broadway. She was a dedicated volunteer for Equity and SAG-AFTRA. Her memoir is featured in the recently published book *The Cinderellas of West 53rd Street: Stories of the Legendary Rehearsal Club*. Judy's closest and oldest friend, Judith Curcio, is narrating Judy's chapter for the audio version, available soon. Judy Jenson will remain a shining star for the entire TRC family, not only as a professional inspiration, but as a valued, beautiful friend.



Our Covid-inspired company has now gone through 25 of Shakespeare's plays, recently completing *Henry IV*, Parts 1 and 2. If interested in joining our merry band in gender-bending roles, contact denise@denisepence.com

The Cinderella Audiobook launched February 20! Available with the Cinderella book published in May, 2023, at Amazon.com. With amazing support from our Cinderella friends and our sound wizard, Sam Ventura, and incorporating Charles Leipart's *Good Girls Only*, WE BE AN AUDIOBOOK!

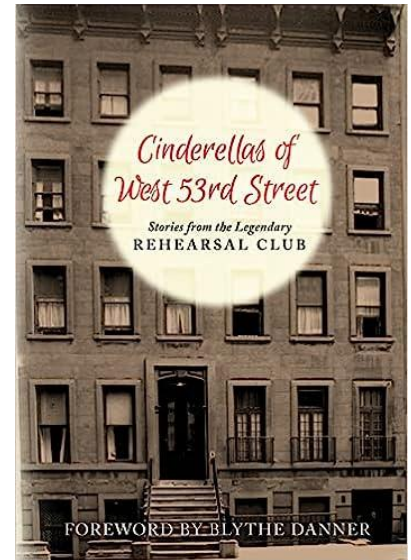
In celebration, we're planning a Cinderella Ball on May 7 at The Green Room 42, inside YOTEL in Times Square, featuring Cinderella writers Dottie Belle, Christopher Callen, Diane Findlay and Denise Pence, with surprise Broadway Cinderella friends including 2018 Rising Star Julia Adams, TRC Member Mary Lou

Barber and Israeli newcomer Sofie Hans. Choreography by Broadway Dance Center Instructor Sue Samuels, with musical direction by Mark York of the Ziegfeld Society.

Book Your Seat For The Cinderella Ball

Join our Cinderella cast and other Rehearsal Club members on Rehearsal Club "Recognition Day," Saturday, May 11, on a sightseeing cruise that circles Manhattan with a special group rate of \$40 through Boockvor Productions. Friends and family welcome.

Contact denise@denisepence.com to reserve your seat through Boockvor Productions.



TRC Workshops

Meditation and Mindfulness



**Hosted by Charter 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: 856 8181 6369
Passcode: 028211**

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 Link](#)

RAISE A GLASS TO THE REHEARSAL CLUB!



Join **One Hope Wine** on their mission to give back to local and global organizations with 10% of every purchase donated 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 One Hope at the link below. You can designate TRC as the recipient of 10% of your purchase by clicking the link at the top of the home page.

One Hope Wine

Goings On Is Now Bi-Monthly

Text submissions should be Microsoft Word documents, 150 words or fewer, and include photos, links and pertinent information.

The deadline for the May issue is April 10, 2024.

Please send to trc.newslettersubmissions@gmail.com

The Rehearsal Club
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