



July 2024

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Kate West, Editor



Describes the weather as well as The Rehearsal Club's NEW Board of Directors effective July 1st, 2024. Please scroll to the end of this newsletter for a listing of the members and terms.

Numerous projects will unfold in the coming months, one of which is a new communication, *Just Among Us*, dedicated exclusively to active members. We hope to add performance opportunities collaborating with other companies, schools and venues. The third week of November is being named "TRC Gratitude Week," with a variety of events during the week celebrating the past and future of The Rehearsal Club. Stay tuned!

We continue to depend on you for our accomplishments and sustained growth. As always, we are filled with appreciation for your

support.

Warmest regards.

Gale



Gale Patron

Gale Patron, President

A Busy Month For Our Founding Benefactor!



It's been a busy month for Honorary Board Member and Charter Member Carol Burnett. On June 6, Carol received the Vanguard Award at the IndieWire Honors event for her acclaimed performance in the AppleTV+ series *Palm Royale*. She was one of thirteen honorees in the television category.

On June 20th, Carol put her hands and feet in cement outside the TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, complementing her nearby star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Her castmates from *Palm Royale*, Laura Dern and Bob Odenkirk, were there to support her. Carol spoke of growing up a few blocks away and walking to Grauman's Chinese Theatre with her grandmother to see the prints of stars - never thinking the day would come when hers would be with them.

No U-Turns A.D. Free Staged Reading



Charter Member and former TRC Board of Directors VP and Chair of Strategic Projects Francine Mancini has written a musical. Francine invites her TRC community to attend a staged reading.

What do three women of a "certain age" do when going through a divorce? Form a Rock Band!

Written by Francine Mancini

Directed by: Rose Frontignano

Cast: Michele Mais (TRC Charter Member)

Francine Mancini, Annick Vasquez

The Family Repertory Theatre led by Marvin Felix Camillo, Jr. in conjunction with Peter Panayotoff and Annick Vasquez will present a reading of excerpts from the musical.

Date: July 20

Time: 5:45 PM

Location:

353 Studios

353 West 48th Street Studio 3

Free of charge. Wine and cheese reception following.

Limited seating. Please RSVP to rclub.francine@gmail.com

This Rehearsal Club Is a Work of Fiction!

The Rehearsal Club by Kate Fodor and Laurie Petrou will be released by

Groundwood Press on February 4, 2025. Written for girls 10–14, it is fiction, and will include a flyleaf at the end of the book which reads :

AUTHORS' NOTE

Dear Readers,

You might be wondering whether the Rehearsal Club in our book is a real place. The answer is yes and no – but mostly yes! We imagined this story and the characters you've just read about, but there really was a Rehearsal Club in New York City for many years. It opened in 1913 and, just like in our book, it was a safe and happy home for young women starting out in the theater. Our book imagines it never closed down, but sadly, the real-life club shut its doors in 1979.

The good news is that The Rehearsal Club is having a wonderful encore. After years of planning and fundraising, a hardworking group of supporters – including some of the actresses who once lived in the original club – recently opened a revival. The new Rehearsal Club offers its residents a safe, affordable place to live, a vibrant community and guidance from mentors. It's open to women starting out in theater, TV and film – not just actresses, but also writers, composers, directors, choreographers and more. Obviously, we're big fans.

For more about the real-life Rehearsal Club, old and new, you can visit: RehearsalClubNYC.com.

Kate Fodor is an American playwright and television writer. Her debut play, *Hannah and Martin*, opened Off-Broadway on March 20, 2004, by the Epic Theatre Ensemble. The play won the Roger L. Stevens Award from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays and a Joseph Jefferson Citation for New Work. It was also a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize.

Fodor followed this with the play *100 Saints You Should Know*, also Off-Broadway, at Playwrights Horizons, in September 2007, about a priest in the midst of his own spiritual crisis interacting with a small galaxy of people experiencing theirs as well. The play was called "one of the year's 10 best" by [Entertainment Weekly](http://EntertainmentWeekly.com) and TimeOut New York in 2007 and went on to productions in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and St. Louis, among others. The play won the Roger L. Stevens Award from the National Theatre Conference.

TRC Resident Spotlight

Shawnee Fierros Casas Richberger



Current TRC Resident Shawnee Fierros Casas Richberger grew up in Gilbert, Arizona. She was born in the Bay area of California and longed to return. However, until her dream of California came true, she made the best of her time in Arizona. She found a love of Folklorico dancing, taking after her father who is the best Folklorico dancer she knows! Shawnee devoted years to this art, using it as a platform to educate the public about immigration reform and the

beauty of the Mexican culture. She also spent many years in rock bands, touring the country and opening for rock legends such as Joan Jett and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Musical theatre was a backseat hobby...until it wasn't. Shawnee began applying to theatre schools. She realized she wanted to be on stage forever and that was that. She got a BFA in Musical Theatre from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, and knew that New York was where she needed to go. According to Shawnee, her life has been a bit of a roller coaster, but one that has happily set her softly down at The Rehearsal Club. She considers NYC and The Rehearsal Club as her HOME.

As a treasured resident, Shawnee has volunteered her time and talent into many TRC projects. Her work is so appreciated by all of us.



Spotlight On TRC Charter Alum Mary Jane Houdina



By TRC Member Debbie White

Mary Jane Houdina wanted to be a dancer from the age of twelve. Arriving in NYC in 1965, she quickly became a member of The Rehearsal Club. The members became her family, and the Club was a place where she felt safe. MJ's talent led her to be chosen for the national tour of *Funny Girl*, and given the role of Bubbles, a dancer. After rehearsing for two weeks, she embarked on her first job. What followed was a romance with the arts. The list of her accomplishments is long. She performed in eleven Broadway shows, including *I'm Solomon* (1968), *The Fig Leaves Are Falling* (1969), and *Georgy* (1970).

MJ was an assistant to Michael Bennett on the original production of *Follies* (1971), and then assistant choreographer to Peter Gennaro on the original *Annie* (1977). She then started directing and choreographing. She did many different shows – *Sugar Babies*, *Oklahoma*, *Showboat*, *Anything Goes*, *Cabaret* and *Can Can*, just to name a few.

MJ also shared her talent in the world of television. She danced on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, served as the choreographer on *Captain Kangaroo*, was assistant choreographer for the *Dames at Sea* television special starring Ann Margaret, Ann Meara and Ann Miller. She restaged Lucy and Jessie from *Follies* for Alexis Smith for the 1975 Tony Awards. In 1976 she was Assistant Choreographer for the *Miss America Pageant*. As Tap Consultant for *The Peter Allen Show* at Radio City, she directed the opening ceremony for the Marine Midland Arena in Buffalo, NY. She was Assistant Choreographer for *The Great Gatsby*, starring Robert Redford and Mia Farrow, and was nominated for three Barrymore Awards at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, winning one for her choreography for *Crazy For You*. In 2017 she had the honor of receiving The Legacy Award from Dancers Over 40.

Mary Jane has spent her time in the arts as a dancer, actor, singer,

director and choreographer. Dance is her passion, and she has continued to teach dance to eager students. Mary Jane feels gratified and happy that she has had the opportunity to do what she loves. She is currently playing in a steel drum band named *Steel Passion*. On June 20th of 2024 Mary Jane restaged and choreographed *Follies in Concert* at Carnegie Hall.

Throughout the years, Mary Jane has kept in contact with her friends from The Rehearsal Club, and she has also worked with enthusiastic gals who lived there after her departure, with whom she feels the same warm connection known as The Rehearsal Club.



Congratulations to Charter Member Christopher Callen and *Grey's Anatomy* actor Hahn Cho on their heartwarming performances as a couple with Alzheimer's Disease in Chalk Repertory Theatre's world premiere production of *Pang Spa* by David Johann Kim. The brilliant ensemble cast gave truly compelling performances of this fascinating and gut wrenching story of the aftermath of the riots and looting in Los Angeles' Koreatown in 1992.

Our own Annie O'Donnell has a quick piece in the new film *Thelma*, starring June Squibb and the late Richard Roundtree. Annie also shoots next week on the CBS reboot of the Andy Griffith series *Matlock* with Kathy Bates! She keeps on cooking.

New TRC Member Michael O'Malley

Michael is an AEA member and has worked primarily as a Stage Manager in Los Angeles and Palm Springs for more than 30 years. Michael connected with TRC when his mentor, Susan (Suzanne) Shaute,

passed away, and he submitted her obituary to the TRC website. Susan opened him up to the theatre world and helped set the foundation for his success. He is proud to support TRC in honor of Susan Shaute. Michael wrote the following appreciation of Susan.

In Memoriam



Suzanne Shaute, July 15, 1931 — June 15, 2023, (also known as Susan Shaute or Susan Terry) was a resident of The Rehearsal Club in the mid 1950's to 1960's. She had a great career in show business, and when she gave up that career after thirteen years, she returned to her childhood hometown and taught singing and dramatics at our high school. She was a beloved, amazing teacher and affected so many lives, including mine.



Memorial Planned For TRC Charter Alum Judy Jenson



TRC Sisters are planning a memorial for TRC Charter Alum Judy Jenson in New York City in November. We will provide more information as it becomes available. Click the button below for a clip of Judy appearing in an episode of *Dragnet* in 1967.

[Judy Jenson in *Dragnet*](#)

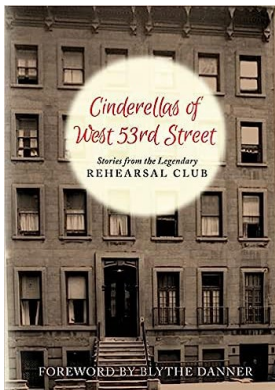
The Rehearsal Club

Truth



Or
Fiction

Oleg Cassini, fashion designer to the stars, dated a TRC resident... True? Yep, TRUE. He dated TRC resident Penny Ashton. Penny was a beautiful and successful fashion model. Charla Hayen, a fellow resident, answered The Rehearsal Club hallway phone, and on several occasions gave messages from Mr. Cassini to Penny. There was no doubt, they dated.



Circle of Cinderella Friends



When a group of TRC Charter Alums gathered at Kathleen Conry's encouragement in 2006, we had no idea where our creative energies might take us. Preserving the name and legacy of The Rehearsal Club was of primary importance to us.

And look at us now! New life, new website, increased membership! And *Cinderellas of West 53rd Street: Stories from the Legendary Rehearsal Club* captures it all. Even though multiple Cinderella writers came and went, those who stayed the course were eventually rewarded by holding something decidedly tangible in their hands. A book that celebrates not only individual histories, but also a lasting legacy for The Rehearsal Club.

Many Broadway friends joined TRC members Dottie Belle and DeBorah Sharpe Taylor, who flew in from Florida and LA respectively, to perform with TRC Board of Directors Member Mary Lou Barber and Charter Alums

Diane Findlay and Denise Pence at our very supportive venue, Greenroom 42, for our Cinderellas Cabaret on May 7.

Thank you to Charter Alums, TRC Vice President Margaret Strom and Meditation Leader Michele Mason who added vocal power for us, and along with Charter Alum Kathleen Conry led the champagne toast to our sisterhood.

Click the button below to see a taste of the Cabaret evening. Contact Denise@denisepence.com if interested in viewing the livestream. Otherwise, follow our Cinderella Facebook page to see excerpts from the evening.

Cinderellas Cabaret



Ready for a bit of a challenge? We're tackling *Rose Rage*, also known as *War of the Roses*, in September. *Henry VI*, all 3 Parts, should keep us all busy through the holidays. If interested in learning more about our motley band of players, contact Denise Pence, Denise@denisepence.com

Click the button below for an excerpt from our recent performance of *Troilus and Cressida*.

Troilus and Cressida

TRC Workshops

CALLING ALL TRC MEMBERS!

TRC is in all our hands, and we need yours! 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,

ideas or enthusiasm to spare, please contact Margaret Strom.
at voicemargaret@verizon.net.

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: 841 0092 0846
Passcode: 957901

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

July Zoom Link



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 July 11th, hosted by TRC Advisory Board Member Denise Pence and Board Member Dolores Gordon.

It is a very special event...please come!

Meeting ID: 826 4846 4413

Passcode: 036123

Vocal Techniques with Margaret Strom

Audio Book Narrator and Voiceover Artist

By TRC Alum Michele Mason

Margaret Strom, TRC Vice President and Charter Member, gave a vibrant, informative and experiential workshop for six of the young women of the TRC Residency program. It took place at Found Study on a lovely evening in early June. I was fortunate, along with Diane Findlay, to attend as an “observer.” It was a wonderful evening!

Margaret’s voiceovers have filled museums, halls, airports and chapels. She has instructed corporate CEO’s and schoolchildren, to name a few, and recorded over 1,000 audiobooks, from cookbooks to mysticism. She even shared her expertise on the *Cinderellas of West 53rd Street* audiobook. Margaret’s talent and caring, along with her passion for mentoring, created a marvelous workshop. She guided the women through the world of audiobooks and voiceovers, sharing her own experiences and expertise. She then directed the ladies, each reading a prepared piece. The Residents made wonderful choices of material and were eager for Margaret’s astute direction. It was wonderful to watch the talented ladies who were truly engaged and eager to learn.

Congratulations, Margaret, and to all TRC Residency ladies!
Nicely done!

CONGRATULATIONS!

The Rehearsal Club

Board of Directors 2024-2025

Term Ends June 2025

Andrea Frierson

Dolores Gordon

Susan Steiger

Margaret Strom

Mary Lou Barber

Term Ends June 2026

Allen Bomes

Donna Inghima

Magda Katz

Meredith Lynsey Shade

Chery Daly

Term Ends June 2027

Sheryl Foster

Gale Patron

Ellen Zalk

Janet Stilson

Cameron Taylor

Patrice Soriero

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](#)

Click below to Make a Donation to TRC,

and Thank You!

Donate to TRC

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 September issue is August 10, 2024.

Please note the new address for newsletter submissions: newslettersinfo@rehearsalclubnyc.com

The Rehearsal Club
2350 Broadway – Suite 934
New York, NY 10024

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