



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

December 2025

Kate West, Editor



**Happy Holidays 2025**



Dear Friends of The Rehearsal Club,

This time of year reminds us how deeply we all need moments of joy — those small sparks that make us feel seen, valued, and connected. I felt one of those sparks when I read this message from our newest resident, Nylah, arriving next week:

*“What brought me to The Rehearsal Club was its promise to uplift young artists and the opportunity to join a network of women who live and breathe their craft.”*

Her words stopped me. They capture exactly why we do what we do. Because of your generosity and your belief in young women with big dreams, nearly forty rising artists have crossed our threshold in a few short years. You have given them safety, possibility, and the profound comfort of knowing they are not alone. That kind of impact cannot be measured — it is felt, deeply and enduringly.

As we enter this holiday season, my heart is full. Thank you for the compassion you've shown, the hope you've nurtured, and the futures you've helped shape.

Please join me in welcoming Nylah with the same open arms you've extended to every brilliant young woman who has found her way to our door.

With love, gratitude, and enormous pride in what we have built together,

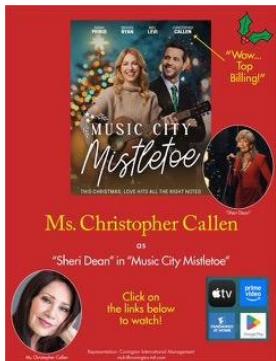


*Gale Patron*

Gale Patron, President



## Christopher Callen Headlines Christmas Movie



Alum Christopher Callen reports,

"My Christmas movie just launched recently, and I wanted to share the good news. There are links below to watch."

Happiest of Holidays,  
Christopher

*Music City Mistletoe* is a family-friendly holiday film that mixes mistletoe magic with the Nashville songwriting scene.

Apple

Google

Fandango



### Founding Benefactor Carol Burnett Establishes Scholarship at UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television



TRC Founding Benefactor Carol Burnett has made a significant donation to her alma mater, UCLA, giving an endowment to establish a scholarship to the University's School of Theater, Film and Television. She also donated her many awards, which include Emmys, Golden Globes, a Grammy, a Tony, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Kennedy Center Honor, and many more. The donation also included photos and memorabilia from Carol's career, including a boxed doll of her in her CBS variety show's iconic Scarlett O'Hara curtain hanger costume. Watch, at the link below.

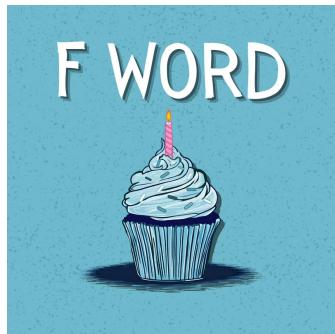
[Carol Burnett UCLA Endowed Scholarship](#)

Alum Patricia Hill reports that Carol also appeared on a recent episode of the podcast *Where Everybody Knows Your Name*, with host Ted Danson. She told her story of coming to New York as a young girl, and how much The Rehearsal Club meant to her. The episode also featured the recipe for Carol's favorite drink, a version of the Cosmo.



### Breaking News Resident Alyssa Payne's Musical *F Word*

Talented resident Alyssa Payne's musical *F Word* is part of the 20th Anniversary [Goodspeed Festival of New Musicals](#) January 16 - 18. With music and lyrics by Alyssa



Payne, book by Sara Mati and directed by TRC Resident Kate Willard, *F Word* is a coming-of-age story straight from the sardonic mind of a teenager racing toward adulthood. More information at the Goodspeed link below, and a YouTube link to Alyssa discussing the work.

[Goodspeed](#)

[Alyssa on YouTube](#)



Spearheading landmark children's environmental health protections as founder and executive director of California Safe Schools (CSS), Robina Suwol is a renowned environmental justice advocate. She founded CSS in 1998, driven to protect vulnerable populations. Robina achieved national prominence by leading the creation of the Los Angeles Unified Integrated Pest Management Policy. This policy remains the most stringent pesticide standard for K-12 schools nationwide. Its success spurred California's Healthy Schools Act and serves as an

international model. She also sponsored AB 405, a California law banning experimental pesticides, whose health effects are unknown, in K-12 public schools. Robina continues to lead CSS, emphasizing policy changes and grassroots efforts. Her work focuses on schools and environmental justice communities, creating lasting institutional protection for children.



### **Renew Your Membership Today!**

The holidays are here, bringing memories and gratitude for all we've accomplished together. This year, TRC members achieved so much, and our most exciting milestone is our long-awaited return to a brownstone home in 2025. Your dedication made this possible. As we look ahead, we invite you to renew your membership for 2026. Simply use the link below or mail your check to:

**The Rehearsal Club c/o Mancini  
2350 Broadway, Suite 934  
New York, NY 10024.**

**Warmest wishes for a peaceful, joy-filled holiday season.**

The Membership Committee  
Margaret Strom and Cameron Taylor, Co-Chairs  
Sarah Caroline Billings, Sheryl Foster, Erin Kennedy,  
Michael O'Malley, and Gale Patron

[Renew Your Membership](#)



## TRC Member Fiona Davis' Latest Bestseller



From Egypt's Valley of The Kings in 1936 to the 1978 Met Gala in New York City, Fiona Davis takes us on another fabulous adventure.

Fiona will appear at the Savannah Book Festival February 5-8, 2026 and the Southwest Florida Reading Festival in Fort Myers on March 7. Learn more at Fiona's website at the link below.

[Fiona Davis](#)



## Residency News

### Introducing New Resident Nylah Strong

Hi, I'm Nylah! I'm a film and theater actress trained at Stephens College Conservatory, where I earned my BFA in Acting in May 2025. I'm deeply drawn to work that explores stillness, softness, and quiet complexity.

I've loved acting since I was young, but it was in high school that I really found my voice as a performer. From there, I went on to train intensively in acting and have experience both for theatre and film. What brought me to The Rehearsal Club was its promise to uplift young artists and the opportunity to join a network of women who live



and breathe their craft. I believe artistry isn't just welcomed here, it's required. And that kind of environment is rare and beautiful. I'm excited to grow, connect, and build lasting relationships in the heart of New York City, the original birthplace of American storytelling.

**Welcome, Nylah!**



## Ella On Stage

Resident Ella Brisson, pictured at right, has been busy studying at Circle in the Square and is currently a cover in their production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



## Pre-Holiday Gathering

Thanks to Denise Pence for an "Early Bird" holiday gathering in celebration of The Rockettes 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which coincided with a visit from TRC Alum Dottie Belle! What a whirlwind week for all, and the gathering brought many TRC women spontaneously together. Emma Lillian and Kate Willard, two of our Residents, joined bearing gifts of homemade desserts. Everyone contributed a little something, creating an amazing feast, and Amanda shared her piano skills.



BACK ROW: Emma Lillian, Kate Willard, Amanda Trees, Cameron Taylor, Leslie Middlebrook, Maisie Mais, Diane Findlay & Linda Cool

SEATED: Francine Mancini, Dottie Belle, Kristin Larkin, Denise Pence and Judith Curcio



## From The Archives of The Rehearsal Club



A Rehearsal Club resident, living at the Club during World War II, often wandered the streets exploring the City. One evening she ventured into Times Square the very night the war was officially over. As she stood leaning against a lamp post, studying the Square, suddenly all the lights came on! Times Square had been totally dark during the war years. Truth or Fiction? Did the lights really come on the very moment our TRC resident was standing in Times Square?

True! The Club resident was Lenka Isacson Peterson O'Connor (Resident in 1945). Lenka wrote about this experience in the book CINDERELLAS OF WEST 53RD STREET. "All of a sudden the lights went on everywhere in Times Square! My whole body aches every time I think about it...how thrilling and unimaginably amazing that was. Isn't that funny? There are whole years that go by and I can't remember much about what went on in them, but that moment, my God, I can remember what the post felt like when I leaned against it and everything."



Lenka, pictured at left and right, passed away on September 24, 2021. The book Cinderellas of West 53rd Street was written by Rehearsal Club residents who lived at the Club from its beginnings in 1913 to its closing in 1979. The book can be obtained from the publisher, Bear Manor Media, or at Amazon.com.



## TRC Alliances On The Move

### News From The Lambs



TRC Member Leslie Middlebrook, pictured at right, reports that The Lambs presented the second Gambol in their history at The Cutting Room for their 151st anniversary. At least forty members were involved, with thirty performing, including Leslie, who reports, "The Gambol was



unbelievable, it was like doing a full Broadway show in one night. We rehearsed for five weeks before and then four long days, including the day of the show. It was a huge success." A Noel Coward Celebration with Steve Ross and Friends, including Leslie, on December 8 is now officially sold out, two weeks in advance. All proceeds go to The Lambs' emergency fund.

Leslie reports, "Denise Pence is on our committee and has been a tremendous help to me on this event. Other new members of EAG from TRC, including Diane Findlay, will be there to help with the reception, which is actually a surprise birthday party for Steve Ross. Leslie is also working on a Noel Coward celebration with Steve Ross for EAG on December 8, a fundraiser for The Lambs' emergency fund for performers in crisis. On December 15, she will sing the Messiah with the National Chorale in Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center.

### From Our Friends at SAG-AFTRA

TRC Member Avis Boone reports that SAG-AFTRA begins its wages and working conditions meetings in December for Members prior to contract negotiations next year. You must RSVP to attend. Just click the link below. The SAG-AFTRA



holiday party is December 4th.

## Wages and Working Conditions RSVP



Beautiful Handmade Customized Holiday Cards

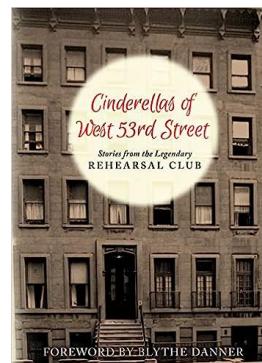


TRC Alum Charla Hayen, is now taking orders for two holiday personalized greeting cards — JOY ("5x7") and CHRISTMAS ("5 1/2 x 8 1/2"). Charla will hand-design in pen and ink your family name into her illustration. CHRISTMAS incorporates the many aspects of Christmas. Charla will design your family name as well as place individual members' names onto the packages underneath the tree. JOY is a celebration of the New Year with 2026 featured, as well as your family name. Each card is also highlighted in colored pencil and signed by Charla. The cards come with a mailing envelope and are suitable for framing. The cost is \$25 which includes sales tax and shipping cost. Charla will take orders until December 15th. Contact Charla at [charla1219@aol.com](mailto:charla1219@aol.com).



## A Meaningful Gift for Family and Friends

Our Cinderella book is available at Shakespeare and Company in New York City and at [Amazon](#). The book contains the history of TRC as told by many of the original voices. Both the book and the audiobook are available online at Drama Books and Blackstone, and at [Audible.com](#). If you've already read it or listened to it, drop a review on Amazon.com or Audible.com. Every little bit helps (and then tell Oprah)!





## THE REHEARSAL CLUB RESIDENCY PROGRAM

*Affordable Housing for Seriously Aspiring  
Women in the Performing Arts*

A Rare Opportunity with a Competitive Admissions Policy  
Apply at: [rehearsalclubnyc.com/residencyprogram](http://rehearsalclubnyc.com/residencyprogram)



### Become a TRC Member!

For those working or retired from the performing or fine arts, a \$50 annual fee to this historic organization supports young artists and sustains our nationally recognized legacy.

#### Benefits of TRC Membership:

- Monthly & Members-only Newsletters
- Invitations to Members' occasions & public events
- Extraordinary networking amongst like-minded spirits
- Workshops and seminars

#### Through TRC Alliances:

- Discount tickets to performances in NYC and other major cities.
- Special prices on hotels, airfares, rental cars.
- Special invitations to events

For arts lovers and believers in our mission, a \$100 annual fee as a TRC **SUSTAINER** provides most benefits of General Membership and supports our 110-year history of excellence.

For further information, please write to: [info@rehearsalclubnyc.com](mailto:info@rehearsalclubnyc.com)  
Go to: [www.rehearsalclubnyc.com](http://www.rehearsalclubnyc.com).

The Rehearsal Club is a 501(c)3 non-profit; all contributions are tax deductible.

[Donate to TRC](#)





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 Bi-Monthly**

Text submissions should be Microsoft Word documents, 150 words or fewer, and include photos, links and pertinent information. The deadline for the February issue is January 10, 2026.

Please note the address for newsletter submissions: [info@rehearsalclubnyc.com](mailto:info@rehearsalclubnyc.com)



Sent by The Rehearsal Club  
[Unsubscribe from this list](#)