

# THE EAGLET

THE EPISCOPAL ACTORS' GUILD | EST. 1923 | FOR ALL FAITHS AND NONE

I want to help my fellow actor, NYC's performance community is so important. Because the Episcopal Actors' Guild is a critical lifeline to performers in need. The archives committee preserves incredible history from the Guilds' 100+ year history. Actor's Night is such a special community. Because EAG helped me when I was in need, and I want to pay it forward. The Open Stage grant was an incredible opportunity for my company to share work right in the midtown Manhattan. Because I visit The Actors' Pantry every week and I'm so grateful to have access to it. The Actors' Pantry keeps me and my family fed!

Because we all have to do our part, whether that means donating a few dollars or bringing a few cans to Guild Hall. The Annual Memorial service is always so moving. After Covid-19 and the strikes, the industry just hasn't bounced back yet. EAG helped me stay "in it". The Headshot Project helped me keep my headshot up to date for auditions. Because the Emergency Aid was a lifesaver! I love reading the Eaglet and Turnley's Turns and staying connected to my fellow Guilders! EAG helps so many people: actors, dancers, singers. For over 100 years, The Episcopal Actors' Guild has been there for performers in need. I support EAG because EAG supports me. Especially now, when grant and public funding is so uncertain, we have to step in and keep this vital organization afloat! I have always dreamed of being an actress, but there are inevitable gaps in an acting career. EAG was there for me to keep me in the business. Because no more starving artists! Because where else can you find a performer-specific food pantry? Because I want to know that organizations like EAG will be there strikes, pandemics, and other blows come to our industry. I believe in EAG's mission and want to help performers in need. Because I want to help my fellow actor, NYC's performance community is so important. Because the Episcopal Actors' Guild is a critical lifeline to performers in need. The archives committee preserves incredible history from the Guilds' 100+ year history. Actor's Night is such a special community. Because EAG helped me when I was in need, and I want to pay it forward. The Open Stage grant was an incredible opportunity for my company to share work right in the midtown Manhattan. Because I visit The Actors' Pantry every week and I'm so grateful to have access to it. The Actors' Pantry keeps me and my family fed!

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# WHY WE DO IT

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Council on  
the Arts

EAG is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

## THE LITTLE COLUMN AROUND THE CORNER

By KAREN LEHMAN FOSTER, EAG Executive Director

This issue looks at **why we do it**. Inside you will hear stories from members, volunteers, and Council about why and how they got involved. After hearing from so many wonderful people, I found I was asking myself the same questions:

### Why I champion artists every day:

- I believe that art and artists create necessary conversations. We have the ability to shine a light on areas that need it, and that, as a result, impacts changes large and small.
- As such, if people stop making art, we will all suffer the consequences.
- I have witnessed it getting increasingly harder to make a living as a professional performer in NYC. Inflation coupled with the pandemic and strikes in recent years have made it nearly impossible for those we serve to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table.
- It is particularly difficult for those who are seniors, those with young children, or those that suffer with long-term chronic illness, like HIV/AIDS. I am proud that EAG dedicates funds and programming in each of these critical areas.
- EAG responds quickly to clients. We also keep a close eye on larger issues like homelessness, hunger, illness, strikes, and equity and inclusion, and we respond in real time to mobilize support.
- I am deeply moved by those I work with who overcome trials and go on to flourish. Every Broadway show I have seen this year featured performers who have been helped by EAG in the past, and now they are thriving in their chosen profession! What a rewarding feeling!

### Why I work at EAG:

- I love working with my team of amazing EAG employees. We all are artists, too, and that shared history informs our work.
- We have a beautiful space to work in, thanks to the Church of the Transfiguration, who gifted us the space in 1923.
- EAG treats its employees right! We receive fair pay in line with the industry standard, health/dental/vision insurance, paid holidays, and paid family leave. EAG takes care of us, so we can take care of the community.
- EAG members are the best. The involvement of artists like you makes the Guild a vibrant community. It is wonderful to see volunteers coming together, food being donated, and group activities and initiatives taking place.
- The collective energy is wonderful!

Sincerely,  
Karen Lehman Foster  
karen@actorsguild.org



## TOGETHER WE'RE STRONGER

BY DENISE PENCE BOOCKVOR, EAG Council

Our family motto for the past 52 years has been “Together We’re Stronger.” Who would have thought we’d be trending in the big time now?!

Super-celeb Hugh Jackman and Sonja Friedman recently announced they’re teaming up to create “intimate and accessible” live performances for their theater company, TOGETHER. In the based-on-a-true-story film *Lilly, in theaters May 9*, Lilly Ledbetter, a self-professed “granny” who fought for equal pay for women, is shown speaking in Washington, D.C. with “STRONGER TOGETHER” boldly displayed behind her podium. And, on our home front, EAG’s Council is made of individuals working TOGETHER to keep EAG fiscally strong so the organization, in turn, can continue helping actors thrive while pursuing their dreams.

Last month, EAG’s New and Prospective Member Reception brought long-time EAG members TOGETHER with lapsed Guild members and potential new members from fellow theatrical organizations The Rehearsal Club, Break A Leg Productions, The Lambs, and Theater Resources Unlimited (TRU). What a party it was!!

EAG President Rachel Leslie and Membership Committee Chair Joanne Newman led the festivities with Director of Operations Rebecca Lovett saying a few words about the work that the Guild does. EAG members Angelo Aon, Thomas Cahill, Chris Chinn, Stephen Cornine, Jenny Green, Jon Luc, Julien Jobson-Larkin and Marilyn Duryea, Cynthia Shaw, and Jo Yang created an evening of performances to remember! EAG Council Member Bob Ost and TRU stepped up to donate some wine, and I baked a few cookies. Special thank-yous to EAG Council Members Ruthann Daniels and Teri Black for manning the check-in table and making sure everyone got a raffle ticket, and to EAG Member Joanne Dorian for manning the refreshments table.

By the end of the night, new connections had been made, and we had ten people take advantage of our special one-night-only \$10-off pricing to join EAG or renew their dues.

No telling what our STRONGER TOGETHER magic will create for EAG and its thriving community in the future!

### Welcome, new members!

Kenneth Bridges  
James M Brosseau  
Cynthia Crane  
Jessica Elkin

Jessica B. Harris  
Kelsey Lepesko  
Graylyn Roose  
Rosemary Weiss

## WHY I APPLIED FOR AN EAG SCHOLARSHIP

BY ISABELLA ADDISON PERRONE, Winner of the 2025 Claire Strakosch Scholarship

My family and I first reached out to The Episcopal Actors’ Guild because I really loved what the organization does for artists. Being an artist is such an important job because we help people express themselves, but it also requires hard times and rejection. The Guild believes in the arts, and so the minute I saw their ad in a brochure at Ripley-Grier, I was interested in how my 501(c)(3) could partner with this amazing organization.

My public charity, en pointe bels, donates theatre wardrobes to young performing artists in DC and NYC. We reached out to EAG to see if we could in some way help one another when I was awarded Claire Strakosch Scholarship. I was so surprised and honored. I was awarded \$1,500, which went to my ballet classes at Kolotov Ballet Studio.

Having the ability to continue my theatre education means so much to me. But I think what I am most grateful for is the way in which EAG gave so generously and so freely and surprised me with their selflessness. **I think that is what artists do every day.** They give of themselves to share stories with the world that connect us. That is what EAG did for me that day when they gave me the scholarship—they told a story of selflessness.

Classical voice and classical dance are beautiful art forms, but they require so many years of training—and patience. When you offered me that scholarship, EAG, it felt like the universe was telling me that my patience and hard work meant something to you. Thank you for believing in me.



## WHY I JOINED

BY JENNIFER FOUCHÉ, EAG Vice-President

When I think of why I became a member of The Guild, I'm immediately reminded of the scholarship I received while I was a student at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. I remember the tour of The Little Church, the discovery of the wonderful history of The Guild, and the incredible kindness of the EAG members who were so proud of all of the graduates—and their enthusiasm for us. As a recipient of the Guild scholarship, I received a one year membership to EAG. Upon attending my first event, **I was moved by the feeling of community and by the warm welcome I received from every person I met.** These are the things that come to mind when I think of those early days as a member.



However, when I think of my deep love for this incredible organization, what truly resonates with me are the years I spent serving on the Council and being a part of the decisions that affect the community we work so hard to serve...the service of the faithful and inspiring members who are no longer with us, the unwavering support of my art that I have always received by my fellow members...the call that came from Karen when she found out I'd had a fire and lost everything and her telling me to come in to the office to get some much-needed help...and hugs.

What resonates in me are all of the little moments of conversations with the beautiful souls who make up this family of artists, lovers of art, and supporters of both. What I realize, when I stop to think of why I remain a member of EAG, is that there is a true kinship here. There's a connection...an understanding...that whether we're sharing our time and talent or being a port in the storm for those who need us, we are a unique family, and it's been that way from the beginning. The fact is, I'm so very honored and proud to serve in this family. The fact is, The Guild has my heart...and always will.

## WHY I VOLUNTEER

BY FRANCESCO PIREDDU, EAG Volunteer

I started to volunteer a long time ago. **It gives me immense joy to invest my time to help causes and people who need support and care.**

There are very specific reasons which made me realize that helping others should be a priority in my life, and I make sure that those reasons never fade away.

First thing first: plenty of people in my life volunteered to give me what I have and supported me when I needed it most. I didn't search for these wonderful people. They showed up uninvited, and they brought so much to my life that I am often in disbelief. The least I can do is give back as much as I can.

And then there is the ego, which is very powerful, seductive, and misleading. Volunteering helps me to understand that life is not about me and that it's important to put myself on the side because, after all, I am insignificant. That's humbling and quite healing.

Volunteering is part of my schedule. It's on my calendar, and I make sure it fits perfectly with the other commitments I have. If I am not able to give help when it's needed, I'll make sure to make that up at another time. I find opportunities to help at every corner, wherever I am. I grab them, remembering that if it wasn't for the others I would not have a comfortable life, nor would I exist.



## WHY WE RESIST

BY ARIEL ESTRADA

Chair, DEI Committee

Member, Executive Committee

*This opinion reflects the views of the author and not necessarily those of the full EAG board or organization. This article details federal policy impacts on EAG's membership and program recipients and is for educational purposes only.*



See online version to access underlined links.

### Where We Are

Initiatives that support equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility—and those who champion them—are under extreme attack by the Trump regime. In his first week back in office, Trump signed two racist and transphobic executive orders (EOs) dismantling DEI under the guise of “merit” and “biological truth.” These orders are part of a decades-long effort to undo civil rights gains and suppress a diversifying electorate.

On February 6, the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) shuttered its Challenge America program—a vital source of grassroots arts funding—and issued guidelines enforcing compliance with Trump’s anti-DEI and anti-trans EOs. A lawsuit by the ACLU and Theatre Communications Group was denied preliminary relief. The NEA is expected to announce EO implementation plans by April 30.

On February 7, Trump seized control of the Kennedy Center board, effectively censoring “woke culture” and replacing it with jingoistic nationalism. Alongside Elon Musk and his so-called DOGE, Trump gutted the National Endowment for the Humanities, laying off 80% of staff and canceling most grants.

New executive actions now target foundations and climate justice nonprofits—and will likely expand to groups like EAG. While legal challenges loom, the administration has signaled an eagerness to ignore the courts and flout the separation of powers. As Rep. Jamie Raskin warned on April 19, “We are witnessing the authoritarian takeover of America.”

As artists, we are particularly vulnerable to authoritarian regimes.

### Why EAG Must Defend DEI

DEI is not about special treatment. It is a proven strategy to remove systemic barriers, and it improves outcomes for everyone.

Trump’s assault on DEI is a campaign to eliminate women and minorities from the competitive workforce and reaffirm white men as the protected hiring norm. As economic and social policy researcher Heather McGhee said in an April 17 interview, these attacks aim to “...return to a privileged-based economy, so that they and people like them can be the only ones to thrive.”

The entertainment industry is still reeling from the pandemic and economic instability. For artists of marginalized identity, these challenges are even more acute. And, despite some gains, the sector still overwhelmingly favors whiteness in its hiring and artistic practices, underscored by multiple annual reports by Actors’ Equity, The WGA, The DGA, and the Asian American Performers Action Coalition.

At EAG, we respond to these injustices directly. 64% of those we serve come from historically marginalized communities. This isn’t by design—it’s the result of decades of systemic inequity. EAG has always stood in the gap. The DEI Committee simply formalized the advocacy EAG has done for generations.

### DEI and the Mission of EAG

I’m a direct recipient of EAG’s care. The child of working-class Filipino immigrants, I came to NYC in 1999 with \$200 in cash and \$400 on a credit card. In 2016, I lost my job, my gigs dried up, and I was facing eviction and hunger. I was days away from leaving New York.

The Entertainment Community Fund referred me to EAG. They helped with rent, utilities, and groceries and got me back on my feet. Since then, I’ve worked Off-Broadway three times, snagged a good notice in *The New York Times*, and, through Leviathan Lab, commissioned two plays now seeing regional productions—including Learning How to Read by Moonlight, the 2023 recipient of EAG’s Open Stage Grant.

None of this would have been possible without EAG’s commitment to reparative justice.

In response to #BlackLivesMatter and the murder of George Floyd, EAG formed the DEI Committee to do this work more intentionally. Our majority-white board is learning to use its privilege to confront, not just mitigate, systemic harm. This work calls us to bravery, to sustained antiracism, and to foster revolution within ourselves.

*(continued on next page)*

## The Road Ahead

Now more than ever, EAG's work is essential. We must name and uphold the values of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Belonging, and Justice. These words matter. Erasing them is not an option. We must not comply in advance.

History has shown us what happens when people comply with authoritarian regimes. It also has shown us the power and necessity of defiance. We briefly considered renaming the DEI Committee to avoid retaliation. But fear cannot determine our actions. If we can't name who we serve and why, why does EAG exist?

Trump's dizzying "flood the zone" strategy has the nation overwhelmed and confused. His tariff promises are refuted by history and economics. The corruption that defined his first term escalates without restraint in his second. His regime's cruel policies are causing irreparable harm both here and around the world. Finally, Trump disappeared legal immigrant Kilmar Abrego Garcia without due process to a notorious Salvadoran concentration camp, belligerently, gleefully refused to

bring him back — then threatened to do the same to U.S. citizens.

Interesting times. Strange bedfellows. On April 15, conservative journalist Jeff Blehar warned, "A test of the rule of law is coming." Two days later, conservative *New York Times* columnist David Brooks called for, "a comprehensive national civic uprising."

Harvard's Erica Chenoweth affirms that 3.5% of the population engaging in nonviolent civil resistance can spark change. That's 11 million people—twice NYC's population. Difficult, but not impossible. Nonprofits like EAG and artists will play a crucial, galvanizing role. There's no guarantee resistance will succeed. We may face hard choices. Even so, we must stay grounded in our principles and remember who we are.

As liberal pundit Jon Lovett tweeted on April 16, "Capitulation doesn't save you. You torch your reputation and prove yourself to be a soft target. You willingly give Trump power he could not take. Fighting back is the only way. And the more who do, the weaker Trump will prove to be."

Let us be among those who resist.

## WHY AN ARCHIVE? BY ERIC STAMM, Chair, Archives Committee

Today it's hard to imagine a time in our country when theater was often prohibited (Connecticut repealed its ban on "theatrical productions" in just 1852) and the acting profession was considered somewhat (at best) sinful. The history of the Episcopal Actors' Guild is interwoven with the transition of actors and theater professionals moving from the underclass to social respectability, which is embedded in 19<sup>th</sup> century social change movements including the abolition of slavery, women's rights, and the social reform (charity) movement.

Our Guild Hall was used as a safehouse on the underground railroad, and it was Rev. Houghton's abolitionist devotion that led to Joseph Jefferson being directed to that "little church around the corner" when the Rev. Sabine refused to bury popular actor George Holland in 1870. Rev. Houghton's unquestioning acceptance led to the long association between the acting community and The Little Church. Former actor-become-priest Walter Bentley brought the Actors' Church Alliance (or ACA, founded in 1899) and its records here in 1923. The start of a long tenure of the Little Church's third rector, Rev. Randolph Ray—*theater aficionado* and Tallulah Bankhead's cousin—saw the transition of the ACA into the Episcopal Actors' Guild and of Guild Hall becoming our headquarters. Woven through this history are many of the great names of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century American theater. The Guild has a history, and, uniquely among the minor guilds, the physical history survived, in almost overwhelming quantity from the mundane to the truly sublime.

For the past 27 years an archive has been carved out by a small group of Guild members with an intense passion for theater history and the objects associated with it. So many theater luminaries have been associated with our history, and we have slowly sorted and assembled organized collections which we are beginning to display. We've also recognized the benefit of providing a context to Guild members and other visitors to Guild Hall, and we will be working to increase knowledge of and appreciation for the rich background that suffuses Guild Hall and the work of the Episcopal Actors' Guild. In so many ways, a community is created by its history. Losing that history diminishes our understanding of the present.

## TURNLEY'S TURNS

Continuing the tradition of Peggy Turnley, we love to let our community know when EAG Members appear on stage and screen. We post these both here in *The Eaglet*, and also on the Guilders Facebook Page, [www.facebook.com/groups/eaguilders](http://www.facebook.com/groups/eaguilders).

### PAST

- **Anna Theresa Cascio** and **Doc Dougherty** presented *Godzilla's Prince* at Guild Hall.
- **Craig Wichman** appeared in *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* for Project Audion.
- **Joanna Pickering's** new play *Lara's Journey* performed at The Spark Theatre Festival in NYC.
- **Martin Wallace** performed *BMRS Quartet in Concert* at Houghton Hall.
- **Steve Hayes**, our favorite "Tired Old Queen at the Movies" presented *Adam's Rib* at Guild Hall to raise money for EAG.
- **Evangeline and Ariana Johns** returned to *Don't Tell Mama* for an encore performance of *Wandering Hearts*.
- **Nancy Simpson** performed an *Irish Celebration* at St. Malachy's.
- **Joan Kane** directed *Remembrance* at Theater for the New City.
- **Anthony Newfield** appeared in Karen Zacarias's new adaptation of Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.
- **Jane Seaman** and other Guilders joined a "Sing in Solidarity" at The Little Church.
- **June Marie Davis** was featured in *TRAPPED*, which played at Angelika Film Center.
- **Gael Schaefer's** *No Better News* ran at The Chain as part of the NYC Fringe Festival with FRIGID New York
- The Bread & Puppet Theater's Spring tour, booked by **Paul Bedard**, concluded after 28 shows (including 2 at Judson Church).
- **James Rana** worked on a staged reading of three one-act plays by Yeats, presented at Guild Hall.
- **Ann Meredith's** *Forgotten Angels* performed at the LGBT Community Center on May 2.

### UPCOMING

- **Vincent Marano** is working on the Estrogenius Festival 2025. [estrogenius.nyc](http://estrogenius.nyc)
- **Mary Goggin's** *Runaway Princess* plays at Guild Hall May 9-11. [bit.ly/runawayprincessguildhall](http://bit.ly/runawayprincessguildhall)
- **Johnny Culver's** Equity Library Theater is presenting the Summer 2025 Play Festival. [pineforkpress.com](http://pineforkpress.com)
- **Richard Thomas** is doing a national tour of *Mark Twain Tonight!* He's the first actor other than Hal Holbrook to be doing this! [twainplay.com](http://twainplay.com)



**In the spirit of community, EAG and TRU are offering reciprocal, discounted memberships to each other's organizations.**

**Theater Resources Unlimited (TRU)** is the leading network for developing theater professionals, a thirty-two-year-old 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization created to help producers produce, emerging theater companies to emerge healthily and all theater professionals to understand and navigate the business of the arts. TRU publishes an email community newsletter of services, opportunities and productions; presents weekly Community Gatherings about the arts and ad hoc Town Halls about current social issues; offers a Producer Development & Mentorship Program taught by prominent producers and general managers in New York theater; and also presents Producer Boot Camp workshops to help aspirants develop business skills. TRU serves writers through the TRU Voices Reading Series, *TRUSpeak...Hear Our Voices!*, an evening of short plays about social issues, a writer-producer speed date, a practical playwriting workshop, a "How to Write a Musical That Works" feedback lab, and a director-writer communications lab.

Contact **Jay Chacon** at [TRUStaff1@gmail.com](mailto:TRUStaff1@gmail.com) to join Theater Resources Unlimited at the **discounted EAG rate of just \$75 for the first year**—that's \$20 off the usual price of \$95 for an individual membership.



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See all EAG's upcoming events at [www.actorsguild.org/events](http://www.actorsguild.org/events)

**Holly Hepp-Galvan's Lashmi Counts Her Arms and Legs**

• Monday, June 23 | 7:00pm ET | **Barbour Award Finalist Reading:**

• Tuesday, June 17, 2pm | **Pantry Parade:** RSVP

**Orlando F. Rodriguez's The Armando Project**

• Monday, June 16 | 7:00pm ET | **Barbour Award Finalist Reading:**

**Frazer's Radio Eulogy**

• Monday, June 9 | 7:00pm ET | **Barbour Award Finalist Reading: Kati**

*Other Name by Jodi Picoult (RSVP, buy the book)*

• Monday, June 2 | 2:30pm ET | **Broadway Book Club, reading By Any**

• Tuesday, May 20, 2pm | **Pantry Parade:** RSVP to [paul@actorsguild.org](mailto:paul@actorsguild.org)

• Saturday, May 17 | 11:00am-4:00pm ET | **EAG's Grand Bazaar**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Help us help performers in need!**

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We want to hear from you! Head over to our website and let us know what you'd like to see in a future *Eaglet*. [www.actorsguild.org/the-eaglet](http://www.actorsguild.org/the-eaglet)

## Have an idea for a future *Eaglet*?



**The Episcopal Actors' Guild**  
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