

# THE EAGLET

The Episcopal Actors' Guild | Est. 1923 | For All Faiths, and None

WE ARE  
HERE FOR  
YOU

Stories of help, resilience and  
creativity during COVID-19





*I know that today is another day, and you are still working hard on my behalf. I still can't thank you enough for what you've done so far. Yesterday, you truly gave me hope, and that blessed me real good!*

*You have NO idea what a difference EAG has made in my life, so if you don't mind, AGAIN, a million thank-yous to you for everything!!!*

—EAG client

**NYC** Cultural Affairs

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“I miss the Guild,” my 4-year-old Nova told me this week. “When can we go there?”

It has been hard to come up with an answer to this question. But if I could, I would say that the Guild is not a place. It is a spirit of generosity that lives in our hearts.

We may have temporarily closed the doors at 1 East 29th Street, but our work continues.

You may have guessed that our charitable services are in great demand at this time. In fact, we saw more applicants in the first week of the office’s closing than we normally see in 3 months.

Our small but mighty team is working to get financial relief to performers impacted by this great pandemic, paying rent, utilities & medical bills.

But what about those who need food from our Actors Pantry? Especially those who are unable to leave their homes to buy food? We have a plan for that, too. We have been having food delivered by grocery stores and also by volunteers. And when we

can’t find one of those, Office Manager Jamie Soltis hops into her car and personally delivers them.

But it is not merely staff that is keeping the Guild spirit alive. It is also YOU, our community. We appreciate each and every dollar you have contributed. You are making a difference in the performing arts community. **THANK YOU!**

We appreciate our friends from Broadway who came together to sing a cheerful “Tomorrow” ([click here to watch](#)). We also want to thank everyone who has volunteered to make phone calls and spread some cheer.

And our eternal gratitude to United Way NYC (\$35,000) and to the Sermoonjoy Fund, Howard Gilman Foundation, and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, each of which donated \$25,000 to our COVID-19 relief efforts.

Hopefully, we will see each other soon in Guild Hall. Until then, be well and stay safe!

**Karen Lehman Foster**  
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We may still be at least partly housebound, due to the continuing coronavirus threat, but that needn't mean being shut off from the world—or from theatre. Tap into the internet, and you'll discover a vast world of offerings geared to enliven and enrich our stays at home.

- Watch and hear Josh Groban singing [\*What a Wonderful World\*](#) (Josh Groban on Instagram), one of his singing-in-the-shower performances (fully clad, of course).
- Enjoy Kristen Chenoweth and Shoshana Bean performing [\*Happy Days Are Here Again and Get Happy\*](#) simultaneously—but from two different sites.
- Sample one of soprano [\*Victoria Robertson's Social Distance Concerts\*](#), performed from her plant-strewn California porch to an audience on the street below (YouTube). Her program is varied and capably sung. Watching her is really a treat.
- Tag along as Seth Rudetsky and James Wesley meet remotely with Renée Fleming and her director and costars in the recent Broadway revival of [\*Carousel!\*](#) The event concludes with a vividly choreographed al fresco production number from the show, *June Is Bustin' Out All Over* ([playbill.com/category/benefits-and-galas](http://playbill.com/category/benefits-and-galas)).
- And [Playbill.com](http://Playbill.com) really does win the prize for variety and consistency of interest. Sign up at no charge, and you'll receive daily bulletins, covering a wide range of interests. One of my favorite entries featured [\*Stephen Colbert \(at home\) interviewing Nathan Lane\*](#) (also at home), who points out some of his collected memorabilia, which includes a pair of Eugene O'Neill's monogrammed boxer shorts—clean and appropriately framed, of course.

Whoever coined the phrase “The show must go on” could not have anticipated this viral spring of 2020. Indeed the thought of packing into the average Broadway gathering of playgoers at a time when masked audiences are required to maintain a distance of six feet between themselves suggests the need for cordoning off alternate rows of seats, while removing every *other* seat throughout all theatres. Considering the consequent loss of revenue, audiences might expect yet another raise in ticket prices.

At this writing, Broadway playhouses are closed indefinitely, and we're informed that a number of their current shows,



Jerry Vermilye (center) and the Seabrook Village players

including some still in preview, will *not* go on.

Here at Seabrook Village, home to some 1,400 seniors near the Jersey shore, we're presently living under virtual quarantine conditions in our apartments, thus cancelling any possibility of rehearsal gatherings for our biannual musical productions. Our spring show has been postponed until autumn, when our 250-seat auditorium is tentatively scheduled for a facelift! And so, this could be the year *without* a show. It's a possibility that our 101-year-old director doesn't want to think about. Nor do our “young senior” performers, an enthusiastic group not destined to see 80 again.



Photo by Rebecca Lovett



Photo by Jamie Soltis



Photo by Hidetaka Ishii

**Events at EAG:** (left to right, top to bottom) *Bill Schneider* in *My Fair Ladies*; mentalist *Sam Eaton* with *Christina Britton Conroy* following his show *The Quantum Eye*; *Neil Cole* and students during his *Artist Afternoon: Intro to Playwriting* workshop; director *Eugene Ma* and playwright *Cherry Lou Sy* of *Leviathan Lab* in rehearsal for the *Barbour* reading of her play *Panic Room: An Unkindness of Ravens*; *Craig MacArthur* in *Marrow*, presented by *Resolve Productions* as part of EAG's *Open Stage* grant.



Photo by Ahron R. Foster

# Coping with COVID

As the publisher/editor/critic of [TheaterPizzazz.com](http://TheaterPizzazz.com), my main objective during COVID-19 has been to find ways to keep my website intact, viable and visible to readers with the help of a wonderful group of contributing writers. I'm used to being at my computer for many hours, editing reviews, videos, interviews, and articles, and posting all of it.



With the daily input of press releases on virtual platforms and shows streaming, there's a lot going on.

I've put together a campaign [Performers Sing for Fans](#) resulting in many Broadway and cabaret singers sending me home-grown videos of themselves singing a song of choice to keep spirits up for fans—for everyone! Weighing in so far: Melissa Errico, Christine Andreas, Linda Purl, Julie Budd, Michael Feinstein, KT Sullivan/Jeff Harnar, Joanna Gleason, Marilyn Maye, Allan Harris, Nicolas King, Todd Murray, Walter Willison, more. Others in queue, more on the way. It's gratifying to know how much this is appreciated by so many.

And I've learned to cook! Something I never had time to do, rushing to review theatre and cabaret nightly. Very time consuming. My how things have changed!!

Exercising and an occasional walk in my mask and surgical gloves is a treat, zig zagging around people who don't seem to pay attention to "social distancing"—or wear a mask.

This is my life and all I can say to everyone—let's hope we can emerge from this nightmare safe, healthy and ready for whatever life holds in our futures. —**Sandi Durell**



For The Lambs, we have been maintaining our "Community" with continuing our weekly gathering, known as Low Jinks, in the virtual world via ZOOM. It's been a great way for us to keep each others' spirits up by telling jokes, sharing a "virtual drink," watching a YouTube video, and the singing of our Lambs song at the end.

For me personally, I've been using the time creatively—writing/editing screenplays, or working on updating materials to be used for investors in my comedy feature film, *MegaBall\$*. I've also been attending virtual classes on producing film, etc.

The hardest part is in the evening, when energy ebbs and the feeling of loneliness creeps in. Then I look to watch a funny movie, the cooking channel, or documentaries that will help in my research for a book I've been working on for years. I'm even putting together my thoughts to create a virtual talk on writing screenplays. For me it's all about being engaged and not being passive. —**Marc Baron, Shepherd of The Lambs**

## Members Share Their Stories

Of course I have no work because the Broadway shows I was working on have shut down. Luckily for me, I was working on *She Kills Monsters* up at SUNY Oswego the first half of March, which might have prevented me from getting the virus in the city when no one knew it was spreading here. The school was shutting down as I was finishing up. I gave three lectures when I was there and tried to explain, especially to the seniors who would not be able to appear in the postponed show or graduation, that sometimes in life monumental events totally disrupt our lives.



For me, it was the Moratorium in 1970 when protests against the Vietnam War were shutting down colleges across the country. I wasn't able to finish my final exams because my father pulled me out of school early, and I ended up leaving home at 18 and dropping out of college for a year. Eventually I transferred into University Without Walls at Skidmore to finish my degree in Theatre and Dance. Sadly, I didn't get to participate in their graduation ceremony with the classmates I had started out with; my degree came in the mail.

I explained to my current students that in the long run, even though I didn't get to walk across that stage to receive my diploma, it was much more important that I spent my career in the field that I was passionate about. —**Zoë Morsette**

Sequestered in the beating heart of New York City, I'm at my desk at home. Everyone I know is paying strict attention to the rules. Our entire sense of belonging has been uprooted, while the sense of our entire circle of society has been changed. Of course, you already know the drill: wearing a mask and gloves, staying six feet apart and when groceries arrive at the front door, cleaning the doorknob, as well.

At my desk, I'm happy to see winsome jokes arrive online from buddies across the world. We're joining lives in an altered way. I'm giving myself permission to slow down and, remembering Shakespeare's words, to "use the tincture of time and the powder of patience."

The other night, I phoned my friend Mary Scannell, who lives by Honora Bay. "There's a tranquility to this night as the pink moon reflects a trail upon the ice," she said softly. "This gives us our connectiveness, a connectedness to the universe while the pandemic goes on. I look up, and know my loved ones are looking at the same sky."

While there has been wind, rain and the water levels are up on Lake Huron, my dear friend, Father George Gardner of Little Current, has issued a powerful prayer: "We are in our boat and God is our captain. We ask our God to guide us to calmer waters, and we will get through this." You bet. —**Bonnie Kogos**

I have been in self-isolation since March 11. Neighbors gave me extra masks, hung friendship beads on my front door knob, call me to ask if I need anything. I need to stop being co-dependent on cable news channels about the latest number of confirmed cases and death toll. But, there will be some comfort down the road to developing a vaccine and a lessening of the 'curve.' My motto is "Where there's hope, there's Cuomo."



All of us have discovered a new language that defines our current crisis. Who knew that last January and February we would be hearing and repeating such phrases as: The New Normal, Community Spread, Herd Immunity, lessons on how to wash our hands, endless sanitizing, social distancing, and staying in place. Wearing masks to protect us and them. Long-winded briefings, misinformation about potential cures, and trying to stay safe and sane in our quarantines. New Yorkers are cheering and applauding healthcare workers, medical professionals, and first responders, appreciating the sacrifices and daily challenges they face and giving them virtual hugs. We should hug ourselves as well.

It is difficult to deal with a remote universe. Saw a sign on one of my local restaurants, "We will stay open until the Zombie Apocalypse!" Okay Boomer is now Okay ZOOMers or ZOOMbies. What keeps me going is a sense of humor and offering prayers for me and those who are dear to me. —**Mari Lyn Henry**

When as an actor I noticed I wasn't getting many auditions anymore for younger parts, I realized I needed to find something else to do as I didn't want to be cast as somebody's grandmother. I started to write, and kept that up for many years, but last year I decided that was enough. I had no more ideas.

Now, during the lockdown, an idea came. I suddenly thought of asking actors or writers to write a 2- or 3-page monologue, submit it, and the two winners would get \$100 each, plus videos of actors performing the winning monologues. Then it could be posted online for agents and friends to see. *Then* the thought occurred to me, if the winner was an actor, they may want to video themselves acting it. After all, most of us have iPhones at home, and it would be wonderful to see them actually acting out their monologues and/or sending in the scripts.

Is this something that would lead to more creativity? It certainly did for me! After writing two of them, my writer's block opened up and I'm back at writing a novel about my favorite playwright, Somerset Maugham. *Playing Tennis on Somerset Maugham's Court*. A dream never realized. —[Elizabeth Sharland](#)

Winners of the *Sharland Monologue Challenge* and \$100 each are... drum roll please...

**SHukura and Davon Williams!**

Congratulations to you both!

Click on the winners' names above to watch their monologues on YouTube.

I don't have the nerve to shave my head. I am in my running shower with a hair full of dark brown dye, but it's only roots! Of course, I have no gloves. They were gone (and these days I have a huge box of 'em... like I never envisioned) from my shelf 16 minutes ago after I applied with my little brush (felt just like my beloved Katie Engelhardt when I emptied my little tubes in the bowl).

The brown is streaming down my body with the water... black hands. I think back: how do they do it in the salon? Ok, at this point I would be sitting at the sink with my head back and somebody washing my hair wearing GLOVES. Damn. I need to be creative. I kneel down in the tub doggie-style (I am 67) and stick my head under the shower faucet... grateful for yoga.

As I grab a towel, I inspect my hands and my white tub to see if I am permanently dyed all over. (The Clairol box said permanent.) I can't look... It washed off!!! I am saved and young again and completely transformed back to my pre-pandemic vital self. Thank the universe... now I am ready for action. No disrespect to all the sadness and loss...you gotta admit it's a funny visual. —**Mary Goggin**



Aloha. On February 25, 2020, at six o'clock in the morning, I locked the door to my apartment in Murray Hill and we rolled our suitcases to the elevator. A car service waited for our trip to JFK. and, what a trip we planned! One whole month in a little apartment in Maui! A pool, a little beach nearby, gas grills outdoors and swaying palm trees.

A dream come true was about to start. I didn't pack a lot of clothes. What would I need? A few bathing suits, some cooking utensils, a few bags of spices from Kalustyan's, my iPad. It was just a month. We arrived 16 hours later and the world was my oyster. Until it wasn't.

Two months have gone by. At the end of the first month, our flight was canceled. New York had become the epicenter of a virus no one ever heard of. The not-so-cute little apartment was rented to someone else, we had to get out, and we didn't want to go home in such a hurry either.

Sheer luck, fortuitous timing, the generosity of a friend, and we relocated to an apartment in a different part of Maui.

Since I locked the door on February 25, thousands of people have died, the city is a different place, Hawaii is a different place! It's not the same place from one day to the other. The news is astounding. It's a sci-fi world, even in Paradise. Shopping for groceries in a mask! Staying indoors most of the time. Movies in the afternoon. One of these days, we'll get on a plane and shelter in place in Manhattan.



This has been one long "month," except it's now over two months. Maybe it'll be three months. What day is it today, anyway? —**Camille Savitz**

Trane, the most gentle, affectionate, human-expressed cat I ever knew, finally said goodbye about 6pm today.



He fought harder than I've ever seen anyone fight—shocking me even this morning as he followed me from the bed I'd just laid him in after finding him collapsed in his litter box, too weak to move. Yet there he was, wavering a bit but walking on his own. Defying what had just been. And so it went all week, every day. One moment saying "goodbye," but the next, "here I am!"

His spirit simply ignored his frail skeletal frame as he continued to leap up to the high windowsill and bed without the help of the chair nearby. Many times we said our goodbyes - even his rambunctious brother cuddled him as he lay in weakened stillness. Then by some miracle Trane would revive, amazing us all!

Today, one of his nine lives gave in. He fell from his favorite windowsill. There was a soft ottoman, a table, and an overstuffed chair that could have cushioned his descent, yet somehow we heard a loud thud and found him on the floor. He didn't move as I laid him on the bed. Did he do it on purpose knowing we hadn't the heart to do what we finally did a few hours ago?

I don't know, but I asked him that as we waited for the compassionate doctor to bring him pain-free sleep. I managed to sing his song as he drifted off "Trane, Trane that is your name, Trane is your name yes it is... we're so glad you came, we gave you Trane as your name... Thank you for coming to live with us."

No Grammy-winner, but the tune loops round and round in my head. I never stopped stroking his head as we spoke and sang our last goodbyes. Dom had waited in the outer room, the vet allowing only one 'pet-parent' inside.

He fell asleep quickly and peacefully—hopefully grateful to be free of whatever caused him to go from 11 to almost 1 pound. His spirit, however, never shriveled—it seemed to strengthen.

Goodbye my friend, my brave, brave gentle companion whose beautiful face and spirit will never leave our hearts.

Thank you for coming to live with us. —**Carol Mennie**

*I can't believe you all went above and beyond for someone in such need. My heart is TRULY warmed. God bless. You are true angels of mercy during this very dark moment in all our lives. Thank you, thank you.*

—EAG client

*Words cannot fully express my gratitude. If I recover from this and am at some point in a financial place to do so, I will absolutely donate to the EAG. The financial assistance is a godsend and the sense of hope is very badly needed right now.*

—EAG client

*Thank you Karen!! I'm flooded with relief. You've given me my first smile since this stressful insanity has started. —EAG client*



# Poetry and Song *During the Pandemic*

Quarantine Query | Mary Jo Mecca

How do I stay engaged as an artist?  
I make stuff.  
I have to make stuff with my hands.  
I have to continue nurturing ideas and then I have to create them with my hands.  
Years ago I moved to Los Angeles and found myself idle as I navigated new territory....slower pace...disengaged from a support system....miles away from my natural NYC habitat.  
I felt Quarantined.  
One disenfranchised day I found a discarded potted Palm tree in the alley. I dragged it to my tiny yard, dug a hole and planted it. I gathered rocks and pieces of broken bricks and created an island around it.  
I would add additional plants to the island and soon I had landscaped the entire yard. One small detail at a time....during a time in my life when time seemed endless.  
Time seems endless now and the circumstances of this PAUSE reaches far beyond my island...it reaches further than I had ever thought possible in my lifetime.  
I struggle with all the emotions this epidemic has unearthed in myself...in all of us.  
Ironically I am on an island, the island of Manhattan.  
And I want to landscape this island with love  
I am making stuff.  
I am making Masks,  
with my hands.

*This is incredible.  
I can't tell you how grateful we are to you and EAG for this help. We can both breathe better now.  
EAG truly is a savior.*

—EAG client

## There's No Business Like Health Business

lyrics co-written by Michael Colby & Leslie Middlebrook (with a little help from Irving Berlin)

To the tune of "There's No Business Like Show Business"

*Thank you very much. This email gave me back some peace.*

*Please, please, please extend my thanks to everyone on staff.*

*It means a lot to have any support when you feel helpless.*

*I hope you are all taking care of yourselves and feeling well.*

—EAG client

*Thank you so much for being so efficient and swift*

*in this support.*

—EAG client

The butcher, the baker, the grocer, the clerks  
Are such essential folks and that's because  
The nurses, the doctors, the teachers, the cops  
Are so heroic they deserve applause.  
They've gladly done their noble jobs and how  
And we applaud them all at seven now.

Hoo-RAY workers, who STAY workers, who brave illness & strife.  
Fireman, postman, pharmacist, physician  
While we're safe indoors, they're out right now  
Helping heal the world without condition  
Until their mission  
Is won somehow.

We PRAISE workers, to-DAY'S workers, our best friends now in life.  
Dedicated workers from police to press,  
Now toiling hou-rs through miles of stress  
Doing all they can until we beat this mess,  
Let's show thanks we all owe.

There's no business like health business like no business we know.  
Everything about it is amazing,  
Anything that Cuomo will allow  
Nowhere can you get that happy feeling  
When we are cheering at seven now

There's no people like these people, they smile through such dismay!  
Even with the COVID that we know has slowed,  
They may be stranded out in the cold  
Still you wouldn't change them for a sack of gold  
Let's cheer them ev'ry day, lets cheer them ev'ry day.

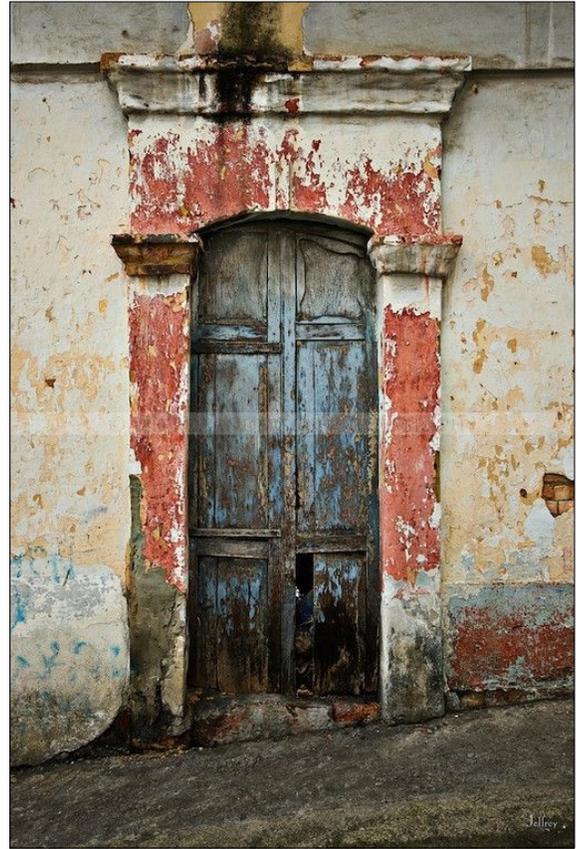
"The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Psalm 31

The Man drives his donkey cart  
Stealing mud from open graves  
Giving it to farmers sowing seeds  
Watering them with the blood of sacrificial lambs  
Once painted on portals to save the first born  
Filling the grail with a sacred promise  
Growing opium to quiet the wounded earth  
Scourged with gashes from the ten plagues  
Pestilence, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes,  
Radiation, volcanoes, fracking, mining, drilling,  
Scorching fires that blackened the earth  
Unleashed by demonic rulers  
Profiting from false prophecies

The Man ploughed a pathway  
With walls dividing dark from light  
Freeing slaves awaiting the Promised Land  
Delivered to a new earth that bore a savior

Centuries later men were slaves again  
Then the Man dug a worldwide trench  
Bridging continents with a web of illusion  
As men plundered the earth for her riches  
Peering with orbiting eyes into her intimate secrets  
Unleashing her venomous revenge

Then the slaves asked - When will we be free?  
The Man said - The more you know the less there will be for you to know.  
The Slaves said - Then there will be nothing to know,  
The Man said - No, when you know everything the unknown will destroy you.  
The Slaves said - Then we should strive to know nothing. Now the quiet earth awaits resurrection.



*The reduction in stress is making me more physically able to cope and live and seek work, and I am not afraid of not making rent for April. Thank you. If there's anything I can do for EAG—volunteer work in the future when we're allowed to leave our homes, for example—please let me know. I've applied for 25 grants/loans/funds and this is the only one I have been approved for. I will always remember EAG as being there for me during this. —EAG client*

*Thank you to all of you at EAG for being there when I needed you most, and unbelievably calling me to check up again today, making sure I had food supplies, during this pandemic. —EAG client*

I recently offered a morning prayer video showcasing Transfiguration’s dear tower bell dating back to the 19th century. In the video, I climbed up the ladders and rafters in our church tower leading to the bell at the very top. One of the great blessings was the journey through the Actors’ Guild Hall and archives, and all the nooks and crannies that lead to the bell.

In a sense, I feel it right that the journey to our bell takes us through the present and the past of the Episcopal Actors’ Guild. The dear and abiding connection between the parish and the Guild is felt with every step of the way up to the bell. Through the many years, this bell has called people to worship, tolled for the dead, chimed in cheer for weddings, and been rung for all sorts and conditions of human need.

Now in this present pandemic, it finds yet another connection to our neighborhood in the midst of our present day pandemic. Every night at 7:00 pm our single tower bell joins neighbors on balconies, those hanging from high-rise windows, and folk lining the sidewalks applauding in support of all the health care workers who are placed in harm’s way.

Please know that all members and friends of the EAG remain in the parish’s daily prayers and heart! The bell that we share and the common walkways leading to our doors remain cherished symbols of our shared mission and life.

If you’re interested in seeing the Morning Prayer, please click the image below.

With loving wishes, Fr. John David



**Welcome, New Members!**

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Murphy Cross       | Shirlene Joseph     |
| Irina De Alexandra | Timothy Keir        |
| Craig Doležel      | Benja Little-Thomas |
| Melissa Firlit     | Eugene Ma           |
| Silvana Franzetti  | Joseph Small        |
| Gabriela Gowdie    | Pernell Walker      |

Like so much of life in this time of COVID, the third Saturday Archives meetings have had to be canceled and this column written based on what’s in my briefcase at home. So here goes.

Perhaps the most significant collections in our Archive are the scrapbooks of The Actors Church Alliance and of the Episcopal Actors’ Guild. From its founding in 1899 through the Alliance’s transition to the Guild in 1923 until they stop in 1976 (another story perhaps best left untold), it appears that clipping services were used to create an incredibly rich and detailed record of our history. None of us on the nascent Archives Committee in 1998 knew these scrapbooks existed—oversized albums of yellowing paper with mostly small news articles, dried and crumbling, crammed on pages which deteriorated every time they were moved. So fragile they are rarely moved.

My earliest involvement with the Guild (1989) came through my love of, and the Guild’s heavy involvement in, Old Time Radio. Many of us knew about the Guild’s role in the 1948 radio show ‘Great Scenes From Great Plays’ (CD copies and printed materials are in the Archive) but it was the scrapbooks and my love of OTR which led to my making a copy in 1998 of an Album page with 11 different newspapers’ clippings from June and July 1927 about ‘The Episcopal Actors’ Guild Players’ radio show broadcast every 2nd Sunday on WOR. A NY Herald review of ‘The Dickey Bird’, less than positive, informs us that the EAG Players “did much better with its WGBS series last year” so we learn that the Guild’s already known to be significant relationship with the golden age of radio goes back even further to at least 1926, very early in the history of commercial radio. I could go on about the Guild and radio, and would appreciate member feedback on interest in this significant aspect of our history, but want to return to the scrapbooks.

History was saved, our history, on this one out of hundreds of pages crammed with newsprint. Recognizing their significance, preserving the scrapbooks was an early priority of the Committee only discontinued prematurely after 2 years, coinciding with my brief tenure as Treasurer, due to the high cost of supplies (\$500 for the 2 ACA Albums alone) to preserve items larger than standard letter size. We were able to dismantle and reconstruct the two ACA scrapbooks and 2 or 3 of the 8 EAG scrapbooks before we focused on less expensive projects. The remaining scrapbooks are extremely fragile and kept in strict ‘social isolation’ with rich future promise as the Archive Committee moves forward.

*For more information or to be added to the Archives Committee email list, feel free to contact Eric at [ericstamm@aol.com](mailto:ericstamm@aol.com) or 917-405-9287.*

We hope you are enjoying this digital issue of The Eaglet! Did you know you can now opt out of receiving future hard copies in the mail and opt in to receive a link to a downloadable PDF version in the future? Just email EAG’s Office Manager Jamie Soltis at [jamie@actorsguild.org](mailto:jamie@actorsguild.org).

# Theatre *In the Time of Coronavirus*

## One More Dawn, One More Day, One Day More | Anne Buelteman

When speaking with friends over ZOOM and cocktails recently, our conversation turned to the array of productions now being offered for viewing online—from the National Theatre in London to Broadway shows. Although this is fine for all of us who love theatre and are staying home, I was somewhat alarmed to hear a friend rhapsodizing about a future in which we will all attend theatre performances from the living room couch.

As someone who has earned a living as an Equity actor and who regularly attends local theatre, the idea that the living room screen might come to be regarded as equivalent to a live theatre venue is chilling to me.

Live theatre requires being present in the same space as other human beings, present with all your senses on the alert to observe and listen as you are told a story in a particular way. It is

the ultimate cooperative creative endeavor, made up of so many components of imagination and skill, of multiple designs coming together in the present moment—and coming together with the heartbeat of the actor, the stagehand, the dancer, the musician, all seeking some answering rhythm from the people in the seats.

As I confront my mortality, the vitality of live theatre seems a timely treasure—there is nothing more alive. We may, all of us—participant and observer—survive with bodies more or less intact, but I believe with all my heart that our souls face starvation without live performing arts.

(Anne Buelteman lives in Santa Cruz, CA. An expanded version of this piece was originally published in *McSweeney's* as a part of their series [A Force Outside Myself: Citizens Over 60 Speak.](#))

## Producing the 20th Anniversary of a Theatre Festival in Your Slippers | Jenny Green

Way back in the Free World of February, I was asked to co-produce the short plays for the 20th Anniversary of the EstroGenius Festival. I have done my fair share of putting on shows-on-a-shoestring in New York's black boxes, so it felt like I was about to slip into a pair of old slippers. Little did I realize I would be producing the plays from my actual slippers, as the COVID pandemic shut down New York City.

A day after our great Governor Cuomo mandated the closure of the Broadway houses, the EstroGenius Festival was postponed with “possibilities of some digital offerings.” I for one was not enthusiastic about any kind of recording of plays with the budget that we had; I was thinking it would be a long way from ‘The National Theatre Live.’ But this was before I appreciated the possibilities of ZOOM.

One week in my bedroom bunker—in my slippers—and several positive ZOOM adventures later, I was beginning to change my mind. I recognized that vital human and artistic connections could be sustained via video conferencing and that we could support our community, at least through conversations. And so, on March 27th we celebrated our real-world ‘Opening Night’ with a ZOOM party and launch of our ‘estro-talk’ strand,

interviewing participants about their work in theatre. At time of writing, we have recorded some 15 inspiring artist-talks and live-streamed half a dozen of the short plays, as [‘estro-reads.’](#)

COVID-craziness and techno-limitations aside, it has been an honour to keep this EstroGenius alive, providing a platform for wonderful theatre, for audiences of hundreds of people; which is more than might have joined the audience in the intended black box!



## Play Readings on ZOOM | Richard Alleman

About six weeks ago, at the beginning of serious social distancing, my Maine-based playwright friend, Chalmers Hardenbergh, invited me to a virtual reading of his new two-hander, based on the twilight days of Ulysses and his wife, Penelope. I must admit I was skeptical of how he was going to pull this off, what with his being in Maine, the two actors each in different New England towns, plus several other spectators, including myself and husband Tony Newfield, all in other locations. But thanks to ZOOM, it worked. Indeed, it worked in a whole new way, with the actors in constant close-up, giving their

interchanges an intimate, Ivo Von Hove quality. Interestingly, in the Q and A afterwards, the audience was much more affected by the play than by the technology.

Impressed by this brave new way of staging a play reading, I talked Chalmers into producing a ZOOM evening of two of my own one-acts. The cast included actors in New York as well as in various spots in New England. It went so well that these readings have now become a Sunday night ritual, not to mention a productive and satisfying way to make use of our shelter-in-place time. The show must go on!

## Turnley's Turns...EAG Members Appear on Stage and Screen | Rebecca Lovett

### JANUARY 2020...

In January, **Elizabeth Bove** directed *The Piazza* by Barbara Anderson at The Gallery Players' 23rd Annual Black Box New Play Festival.

### FEBRUARY 2020...

**Jo Yang** made her New York Theatre Workshop debut playing Sook Ja in the Off-Broadway production of Celine Song's *Endlings*. The show started previews on February 19 and opened on March 9. The run was cut short due to coronavirus closures.



Wai Ching Ho, Jo Yang and Emily Kuroda in *Endlings* (Chad Batka)

On February 19 at the Little Church, **Claudia Dumschat** performed in concert a selection of new music for organ by members of New York Composers Circle.

**Zoë Morsette's** work was included in the themed show, *Night and Day*, curated by Local Project Art Space, partnering with Departure Studios Gallery. The show ran February 20 through March 14.

**Eric Kuzmuk** directed *Small Portions*, a fundraiser event for St. Rita and Archangel Metareon Arts League, on February 23 at The Producers Club Royal Theater. In addition to directing, he also appeared in one of the pieces. **Joanne de Simone** penned three of the four featured short plays: *Clowns Wear Ruffles, Too*; *An Encounter on Belle Chase*; and *Earthmen*.

On February 25, **Karen Eterovich** appeared as Jane Austen in her one-woman show *Cheer from Chawton: A Jane Austen Family Theatrical*, performed as part of the Women's History Solo Show Series at 14th Street Y.

**Jennifer Fouche** appeared as Baneatta in the launch production of Douglas Lyon's *Chicken and Biscuits* at Queens Theatre. The show opened on February 28. Although the initial run was cut short due to coronavirus, Queens Theatre does plan to reschedule the remaining performances to a future date.



Robert G. McKay and Jennifer Fouche in *Chicken and Biscuits* (Dominick Totino)

### MARCH 2020...

**Shana Farr** and **Sarah Ann Rodgers** starred in *Blythe Spirit*, presented by Theatre Fellowship at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in early March. Their run was cut short due to coronavirus.

**Paul Bedard** directed and **Katie Palmer** choreographed Theater in Asylum's recent workshop production of Willie Johnson's *Hephaestus* performed at LPAC March 11-13 as part of the Rough Draft Festival. Paul also directed *Becky Knows What Sex Is* as a part of Brunch Theatre's *Donuts & Holes* produced at Caveat in March.

**Peter Von Berg** is currently doing a season of Shakespeare Rep in his living room.

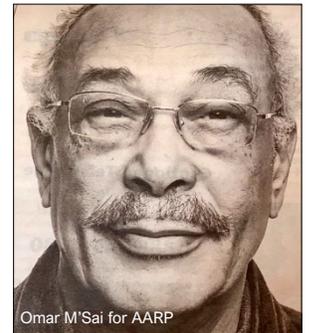
### APRIL 2020...

**Leslie Middlebrook** starred in *Creary's Quarantine: The Opera*, presented by The Producers Circle on ZOOM on April 26. All proceeds went to support Theatre 80.

**Patricia Angelin**, Master Teacher of Alba Technique in NYC, has launched her new website: [www.albatechnique.com](http://www.albatechnique.com). She hosted her first Alba Technique Virtual Open House via ZOOM on April 29, inviting those who were interested in learning more about the technique to observe students from around the world as they worked.

### COMING SOON...

**Omar M'Sai** is happy to announce that his print contract with AARP has been extended for two years! That means you are likely to see him on coffee tables from coast to coast in the AARP magazine and newsletter as the "Face of Poverty."



Omar M'Sai for AARP

**Theater in Asylum** has moved their *Cold Readings* series on to ZOOM, Wednesday nights at 7pm EDT. If you'd like to participate, RSVP at [bit.ly/TIA-RSVP](https://bit.ly/TIA-RSVP). Let them know if you would like to be a reader or a listener. And don't worry about finding a script! They'll email you one right before.

The Break A Leg Productions literary team (including **Teri Black**, **Eric Kuzmuk**, and **Susan Richard**) are hard at work doing play readings via ZOOM.



**Tulis McCall** invites you to perform in *Monologues and Madness* on May 21st at 6pm from the comfort of your own home! The requirements are simple: 1) YOU, 2) an *original, unpublished* monologue - your writing or someone else's, 3) four minutes, 4) an internet connection and the ability to record audio and video, and 5) you've emailed Tulis at [tulis@monologuesandmadness.com](mailto:tulis@monologuesandmadness.com) to request a performance spot. All proceeds raised from this online version of Pangea's long-running open-mic series will go to support The Actors Fund and EAG.

# Thank you, Donors!

When we say “every little bit helps,” we mean it! When the pandemic hit, we asked you for help. You delivered. And with your combined donations, EAG has raised **\$11,747!**

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Marla Altberg	Randolph Frew	Mary Beth Peil
Nahshon Anderson	Barbara Furman	Richard Peters
Thomas Bair	Steven Georges	Martha Pichey
Jean Callovini Barbour	Charles Goforth	Linda Porto
Willard Beckham	Mary Goggin	Rev. Gerardo Ramirez
Christian Beltran	Maggie Goodman	Martin Rapp
Sandra Benee	Amy S. Green	C. Claiborne Ray
Nanci Blaisdell	Jenny Green	Jessica Rispoli & Ted Rowlands
Judy Bliss	Tyrone Henderson	Maria & Matt Roberson
Charlotte Booker	Helen Hockney	Bernadette Roche
Eileen Boots	Winter-Lee Holland	Betsy Ross
Charles Brown	Betty Howe	Hana Roth Seavey
Sharon Catherine Brown	Dana Ivey	Julie Rothstein
Anne Danzey Burnham	Cynthia Jackson	Jasmine Rush
Dolan Byrnes	Zonya Johnson	Mauricio Salgado
Thomas Cahill	Evangeline Johns	Tracee Scott
Dr. Cecilia Cantrell	Miranda Jones	Jonathan Secor
Anstice Carroll	Mervyn Kaufman	Cynthia Shaw
Donald Carter	Rasa Allen Kazlas	leslie Shreve
Fr. Ronald Clingenpeel	Kathleen Kelly	Sherry Skinker
Terrence Clowe	Kristyn Koczur	Gary Sloan
Belinda Cooper	Caroline & Tom Lawson	Pam and Jim Soltis
Mary Cox	Richard LeComte	Kenneth Starrett
Murphy Cross	Gary and Julie Lehman	Courtney Sweeting
Mary Ellen Curley	Philip Leonard	Mary Telfeyan
Ruthann Daniels	Laurel Lockhart	Anne Tolpegin
Pam Dayton	Karen Madden	Richard Tschudy
Alessandro delConte	Arthur Makar	Costas Tsourakis
Solange DeSantis	Vincent Marano	Ray Vento
Robert Donohoe	Susan & Richard Maren	Ann Wakeman
Jonathan Dudley	James Markowich	Kathy White
Marilyn Duryea	Tulis McCall	Judith Wilde
Bonnie Eisenhardt	Gretchen Metzloff	Davon Williams
Christopher Faison	Amy Michelsen	Gary Williams
Letty Ferrer	Leslie Middlebrook	Dee Wilson
Henry deShields Fisher	Phoebe Farag Mikhail	Maryann Wlock
Donald Fowler	Juan Molano	Helena-Joyce Wright
Judy Frank	Laurence Orme	Lauren Yarger
Cynthia Franklin	John Paterakis	Anastasia Yuelys

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We are grateful to have received additional funding for our COVID-19 relief efforts from the following foundations:  
The Sermoonjoy Fund, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, Howard Gilman Foundation, and United Way NYC

Want to add your name to this list? Go to [www.actorsguild.org/make-a-donation](http://www.actorsguild.org/make-a-donation) and click on the donate button to give today!

*I love you guys like...*

*You already know!*

*I admit to feeling some guilt because I'm sure there are others with more urgent need. That said, I'm grateful for the love you have for me. Like... I'm in tears right now. WHY AM I SUCH A WUSS THO?!*

—EAG client

*You guys were always so special to me, so good to me, so affirming, providing important assistance and hope with dignity. I am wishing all at the Episcopal Actors' Guild the very best with blessings during this unrepresented time in history. We will prevail.*

—EAG client

*I miss you all and look forward to the time when we can all meet again at EAG.*

*Thank you for providing comfort and support to members of the community in this time of great uncertainty. Stay Safe! Stay Strong! Stay Well!*

—EAG Member

# COMING SOON

Click on the name of the event below to purchase tickets/register/RSVP.

## **Social Hour: Cooking Class with Carly**

Wed, May 20 at 5pm on ZOOM  
FREE, Registration Required

## **Artist Afternoon: Fitzmaurice Voice Work**

Wed, May 27 at 2pm on ZOOM  
FREE, Registration Required

## **Artist Afternoon: Intro to Audition Arts NYC**

Wed, June 3 at 2pm on ZOOM  
FREE, Registration Required

## **A Special Benefit Reading of *Adrift***

a short play by **Richard Alleman**  
with EAG Council Members **Anthony Newfield & Glauco Araujo**,  
two-time Tony Award-nominee **Alison Fraser**,  
and, all the way from London, **Karen Archer**.  
Thursday, June 11 at 7:00pm on ZOOM  
Tickets: \$15+

## **Broadway Book Club: *City of Girls***

Mon, June 15 at 2:30pm on ZOOM | FREE

## **Actors Night**

Tues, June 16 at 7pm on ZOOM | FREE, Members Only

## **Yoga Mondays**

Every Monday at 1pm on ZOOM | \$10

## **Pilates Thursdays**

Every Thursday at 2:30pm on ZOOM | FREE

**Please Note:** EAG's 2020 Council Elections and EAG's 2020 Annual Membership Meeting have been indefinitely postponed due to the coronavirus. They will be rescheduled as soon as it is safe to do so. We will keep you posted as the situation develops.

**Info:** [reservations@actorsguild.org](mailto:reservations@actorsguild.org)

**212-685-2927**

