

# THE EAGLET

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

Guild Hall



100 years of Memories

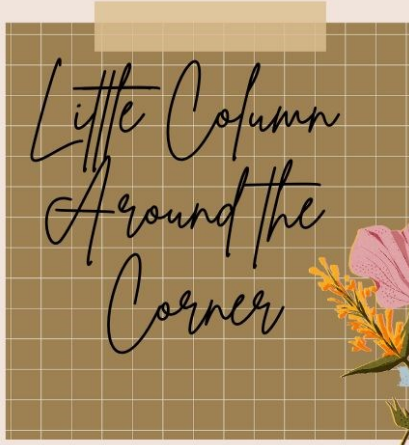


# Table of Contents

Click on the title of a story below to be taken to the corresponding page.

- 3 **Little Column** *Karen Lehman Foster*
- 4-5 **Members' Favorite Guild Hall Memories**
- 6 **DIY DEI** *Chris Chinn*
- The Archives** *Eric Stamm*
- Two on the Aisle** *Jerry Vermilye*
- Beyond the Fourth Wall** *Mervyn Kaufman*
- 7 **Turnley's Turns** *EAG Members Appear on Stage & Screen*
- 8-9 **Coming Soon** *EAG's Events Calendar*
- 10 **Welcome, New Members!**





I have so many fond memories of **Guild Hall**, it would be impossible to choose just one.

Certainly, my proudest moment is forming the **Actors Pantry** in 2014 and being able to provide food to the performing arts community on a regular basis to those in need.

**The Artist's Way** group that started in 2019 also holds a piece of my heart. People coming together to talk about their creative processes is so uplifting.

I have never laughed as much as I did while hosting **The YO PRO Show** with **Matt Roberson (2009-2015)**. Thinking about his skit about the ghost of Guild Hall still makes me smile.

I have loved meeting new people and new theatre companies through our **Open Stage** grant and seeing each of them utilize the space in ways I never dreamed – like **Theatre in Asylum** doing theatre in the round with a three-piece (plant) band on stage.

I love that **the Guild is my family**

and that my family is part of the Guild. **Nova** loves to stock the pantry and **Ahron** does the headshots. He is also chairing our 100th anniversary gala (below).

But I think I learned the most about our organization when there was no Guild Hall, which has happened twice in my career. Guild Hall was closed from 2006-2008 for construction and again from 2020-2021 for the pandemic.

**In those times I learned that the Guild is not a space. It is a vibrant community.**

In the absence of a Guild Hall, we met on Zoom and socially distanced in parks. We produced events at Local 802 and the Friedman. In the absence of a Guild Hall, we still helped all the people who needed our help.

And while we are glad to be back in our beautiful home of 100 years, **Guild Hall will always be about the amazing people that embody it and the dedicated work we do.**



*(A Family Affair: Nova and Ahron volunteer at EAG!)*

**Karen Lehman Foster, Executive Director**



**The Episcopal Actors' Guild of America**  
 1 East 29th Street New York NY 10016  
 212.685.2927 | [info@actorsguild.org](mailto:info@actorsguild.org)  
[www.actorsguild.org](http://www.actorsguild.org)

**Officers**

- Anthony Newfield | President
- Father John David van Dooren | Warden
- Jennifer Fouché | Vice President
- Peter Von Berg | Vice President
- Eric Stamm | Treasurer
- Bernadette Fiorella | Recording Secretary

**Staff**

- Karen Lehman Foster | Executive Director
- Rebecca Lovett | Assistant Director
- Jamie Soltis | Charitable Programs Associate

**Council**

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Glauco Silva Araujo  | Sondra Lee           |
| Margot Astrachan     | Rachel Leslie        |
| Teri Black           | Laurel Lockhart      |
| Sergei Burbank       | Patricia McNamara    |
| Anstice Carroll      | Leslie Middlebrook   |
| Chris Chinn          | Mierre               |
| Ruthann Daniels      | Richard Olson        |
| Dr. Claudia Dumschat | Bob Ost              |
| Meryl Goodfader      | Reynaldo Piniella    |
| Maggie Goodman       | Rev. Gerardo Ramirez |
| Steven Hayes         | Betsy Ross           |
| Tyrone Mitchell      | leslie Shreve        |
| Henderson            | Gary Sloan           |
| Joan Kane            | Jo Yang              |
| Mervyn Kaufman       | JoAnn Yeoman         |

**Advisory Board**

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Elizabeth Ashley | Swoosie Kurtz      |
| Jim Dale         | Campbell Scott     |
| Elizabeth Franz  | Frances Sternhagen |
| Rosemary Harris  | Richard Thomas     |
| Dana Ivey        |                    |

*The Eaglet* is a publication of EAG and may not be reproduced without permission.

Mervyn Kaufman, Anthony Newfield | Editors  
 Rebecca Lovett, Jamie Soltis | Layout and Content  
 Karen Lehman Foster | Cover  
 Mervyn Kaufman, Anthony Newfield, Jerry Vermilye | Publications Committee

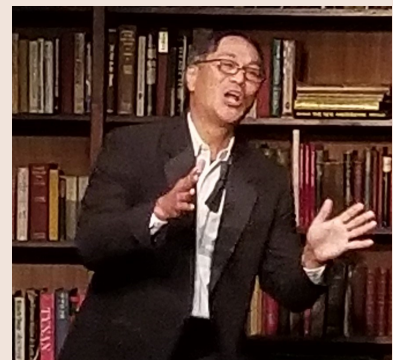


EAG is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council and New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Gov. Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.



What **Guild Hall** means to me? Well, when I first walked thru those doors in the spring of 2015 to read stage directions for Dara O'Brien's *Early Sunday Morning*— it felt like Home! I was welcomed in by Karen Lehman Foster (and back then Matt Roberson) and I immediately felt the warmth and caring and kindness— and I immediately knew and understood what sort of an organization EAG must be, just by the (and there's no way around using this word!) *love* I felt the minute I walked thru those doors. And that feeling has only grown stronger. And many EAG people I now call *family*.

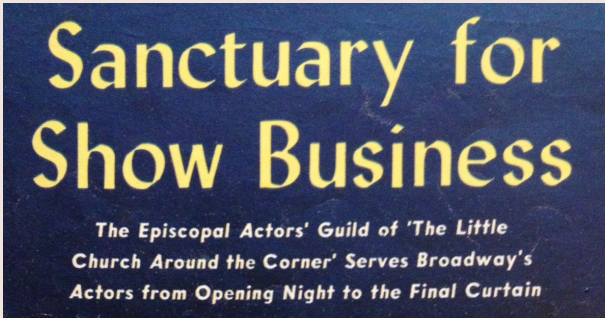
—Chris Chinn



Chris Chin performing a monologue from *PRAY FOR SURF* by Deanne Stillman, as a part of Small Plates at Guild Hall in May 2019.

In his essay *The American Theater*, Arthur Miller says that “The production of a new play, I have often thought, is like another chance in life.” I couldn't agree more, especially after the great experience I had in the **Guild Hall** being a part of a new play reading titled *Memories of the Lost Acres*. The opportunity to present with you, the enthusiastic EAG attending members, and the audience response to the talk-back— all have given me a memory I will always treasure.

—JoAnn Yeoman



Helena-Joyce Wright performing her solo show *All The Parts I Ever Wanted to Sing But Couldn't When I 'Wuz' Black* at Guild Hall in May 2019.

I came to **Guild Hall** to perform in a show. What fortunate casting! I gained appreciation for our impressive mission and friends, friends, friends!

—leslie Shreve

In February 2001, to conclude the church's annual talent show on Fat Tuesday, all the chairs in Guild Hall were moved back to encircle a thrilling performance by Ukrainian dancers. Afterwards Mart Hulswit said that, when he got older, this was how he would like to remember the Episcopal Actors' Guild, never imagining how relevant that memory would become now!

—Richard Olson

I, obviously, have many memories of Guild Hall. However, my first was when I was a little girl and both of my parents were on the Council. I remember their going to meetings. Also, I have a very vivid memory of my mother pouring tea from the silver samovar when they had afternoon teas!

—Anstice Carroll



Anstice's mom, Elizabeth Council is pictured in black above rehearsing a scene in Guild Hall in this photo featured in the *Sunday Mirror's* piece "Sanctuary for Show Business" in February 1957.

**Upon arriving** in New York City in the early 1960's, fresh from studying at the Pasadena Playhouse, I was eager to get on the stage. My mother had a good friend in Chicago, where I was born and raised, who was involved with a local theatrical group. My mother asked her if she may have some advice for her young-actor son. The friend spoke to the organization, and though they were not able to provide any kind of assistance as they were in another city they immediately directed her to the Episcopal Actors' Guild. My mother proudly provided me with The Guild's phone number, and I enthusiastically called out to them. A woman answered my call and as I explained that I was a young actor who was referred to The Guild, she introduced herself as Lorraine Sherwood and immediately welcomed me with an invitation to one of their meetings. This was my introduction to the New York theatre world, and it opened many doors for me.

When I ascended the stairs and opened the door to an overflowing room of people, the great dancer Odette Valdemar Carey greeted me and said "I hear you can sing." "But I don't have any music" was my gut response, filled with nerves. "Don't you worry about that— talk to the pianist, and you'll be set" was her response to me. So I did it, I sang "Tonight" from *West Side Story* and got a great round of applause. A huge lift for this young actor and was I thankful for it! After my performance, Claire Strakosch, the opera singer (I had no idea), pulled me aside and told me she was a voice teacher and that I had a wonderful voice but wasn't using it to my ability and that she would love to coach me. As a young, struggling actor I sprang back with "but how much will this cost?" \$5 an hour—not chump change in those days.

As we parted, Lorraine Sherwood came to my side to introduce herself and welcome me to the Guild which she was running at the time. She also said that she noticed I was speaking to Claire Strakosch. I told her about the voice lesson offer which I was thrilled for but concerned about financially. Lorraine, in true Guild fashion, told me to become a member and the voice lessons would be taken care of. And The Guild provided me with this terrific opportunity to be coached by Ms. Strakosch at her studio at 34 Gramercy Park East— the very same building where I live today, thanks to this introduction. This gift from the Guild also led to many leading roles, including the road show of *Funny Girl*, where I got the role of Nicky Arnstein and was actually able to support myself as an actor.

The Guild has always provided me with a great sense of community and working for a greater cause. Whether acting in a Guild production in *The Little Church* alongside Virginia North under the direction of Sidney Blackmer, simply attending a potluck dinner and commiserating with fellow actors sharing our hopes and dreams, or contributing to food drives for artists in need, the Guild has always been a vital and stable life force for actors being actors in times good and bad.



Nicholas Pavlik—smiling, top left—and the cast of the Episcopal Actors' Guild Players' April 1962 production of the morality play *The Awakening*, in *The Little Church*.

I've been active in the Guild for well over 50 years now, and am always extremely grateful for the real support they provide and important work they do in enhancing and elevating the lives of us show people. Thank you, EAG and Happy 100th! I wear my EAG cap with great pride daily!!!

—Nicholas Pavlik



Cornelia Otis Skinner (right) and Frances Starr chat with Don McHenry at tea hour.





*Home* and *Family*. Those 2 words have been on my mind a lot lately. I just returned from Hawaii where I scattered Frankie's ashes. Frankie was my partner of 24+ years, my best friend, and the love of my life. Growing up in New York City, his boyhood dream was to go to Hawaii—we traveled there 22 times...now he is forever in Hawaii.


I was born and raised in Hawaii. While the house that I grew up in is now only that, a house, not *home*, Hawaii will forever be *home* because Frankie is there. Frankie was born and raised on the Lower East Side. I still live in our studio apartment—it is filled with all our memories... and much Love. So New York City is also *home*. "How fortunate are you and I whose *home* is *timelessness*..."

I began to think about what *home* means to different people. And what that means and feels like when *home* is no longer *home*. And on a larger scope and scale, I thought about Hawaii - and how the Hawaiians Homeland was stolen from them. And I thought about the Native Americans and how their homeland was stolen from them. And I thought about the "Drowned Towns".....

So this month, our DIY recommendations all deal with *home*... and those whose homes were stolen from them.

 **READ:** ["True Native New Yorkers Can Never Truly Reclaim Their Homeland"](#) in *Smithsonian Magazine*.

 **WATCH:** [The Descendants](#) 2011 film by Alexander Paine. More than just George Clooney, who is quite good and believable as a Kama'aina— this film touches on the deeper, darker historical note of the Hawaiian people and the land stolen from them.

 **LEARN:** ["5 Black American Towns Hidden Under Lakes And Ultimately From History Books"](#) online at *Travel Noire*.

Guild Hall— The Church of the Transfiguration, our Little Church, first opened its doors on March 10, 1850. The congregation grew rapidly and the Church expanded—it was called "The Church of the Holy Cucumber Vine" due to its rapid and unplanned expansion (it never had an architect).

Soon a school for the parish boys was started, requiring a new room which within two years was needed for pews so a gabled attic was built over it to serve as the school – this became Guild Hall. It is believed to have served as a safe house on the Underground Railroad and almost certainly was the location of the first Sunday school in NYC for black children.

When the Guild was started in 1923, Rev. Ray gave us Guild Hall. It was a lively place, with tea being served six days a week and events regularly scheduled. On March 23rd, 1925, the "Little Theater at the Little Church" opened, including a proscenium and a curtain. Thus began a long history of performances and events in Guild Hall that continues to this day.

Possibly my favorite Guild Hall event was a talk by Jackson Beck, a notable radio actor. At the conclusion, he was joined on stage by then Executive Secretary Lon Clark, and they began telling stories of their days working in the Golden Age of Radio, each trying to outdo the other.

While Jackson Beck had sworn he would not recreate his Superman introduction, as the evening grew late we all ended up outside the front door. Needing to top Lon, we all heard him quietly begin – "Look, up in the sky..."

It was a memorable night at Guild Hall.

## **Beyond the Fourth Wall | Mervyn Kaufman**

## **Two on the Aisle | Jerry Vermilye**

I've been a committed theatre-goer since childhood, when my mom first began taking me to young people's live performances. Since then, I've remained an eager and attentive audience member, happy to experience whatever appears on a stage after the house lights dim.

Similarly, my first visits to Guild Hall, EAG's East 29th Street home, were shaped by what I felt each time I climbed to the second floor within the Church of the Transfiguration complex. In recent years, that institution's landmarked site has been surrounded by a rash of Manhattan skyscraper constructions that have turned a once-quiet community into a bustling, noisy urban site. Even so, each time I approach the church, I begin to feel its undeniably peaceful aura.

Once I'm upstairs and moving into the serene space EAG inhabits, that aura persists, and I feel removed from the din of car-horn honkings and street drilling I'd just endured. Every visit becomes a kind of homecoming; I always feel welcome. For me, there is no fourth wall in this experience. Each time I climb those stairs and open the inner door, I begin to sense the energy and earnestness in whatever is taking place inside. Thus I think the fact that EAG has thrived and flourished here, in this historic setting, since 1923, gives our organization's centenary even greater reasons to be celebrated and saluted.

In days of yore, when "state prompting" was still prevalent, there appeared in *The New Yorker* magazine a theatrical cartoon depicting a distraught actor in doublet and hose seated on a stool. From behind an adjacent curtain comes a stage manager's words, breaking the imaged silence with "... or not to be!" If nothing remotely similar ever happened to you, dear reader, consider yourself lucky.

As an actor/stage manager, I can recall a lifetime fear, inspired by the very word "monologue"! Two incidents stand out.

At the age of 22, in a summer drama-school play, the second act began with myself alone on stage, coping with a page-long soliloquy during which, inexplicably panicked, I went silent until rescued by an off-stage prompt. Five years later, contending with pages of champagne-bubble speeches in an obscure British comedy, I stumbled through several nights of boring voices with an off-stage book-holder before finally mastering my dialogue for my two final performances.

In my early dotage, years of experience eventually helped build the confidence to take the Guild Hall stage for a varied pair of monologues for which no prompting was available... or necessary! All hail our Guild Hall and its supportive audiences.

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

### FEBRUARY 2023...

**Eric Kuzmuk** appeared in *Ada: An Evening of Extraordinary Feminist History* February 16-March 5 at The Theater for the New City.

**Stacey Robinson** performed his one-man show *The Story, The Songs* at the Little Church on February 26.

### MARCH 2023...

**Amelia V. Anderson**, **Sam Fortenbaugh**, and **Betsy Ross** were in the cast of The Snark's *She Stoops to Conquer* presented at the Amateur Comedy Club March 13-19.

**Cynthia Shaw** sang in the C4 (The Choral Composer/Conductor Collective) concert, *A Parable of Choices*, at the Little Church on March 16. She also appeared in their *Sea Change: The Works of William Shakespeare* concert on May 18 at Saint Peter's Church and on May 20 at St. Luke in the Fields.

### APRIL 2023...

**Paul Bedard** toured the Northeast with Bread and Puppet Theater's 60th Anniversary Spring Tour and their latest show: *Inflammatory Earthling Rants with Help from Kropotkin*, making a stop in Manhattan at Judson Memorial Church on April 12.

**Mike Roche** played Gustav in a new translation of Strindberg's *Creditors* at Theater for the New City April 27-May 14.

### MAY 2023...

**Eric Kuzmuk** appeared in *The Real Inspector Hound* at the Amateur Comedy Club May 1-13.

**Katharine Pettit** and the multidisciplinary collective of performing artists **KPC-"Keeping People Connected"** (seen in Guild Hall in April and May of 2022 in *Untitled Girl Narrative*, presented as a part of EAG's Open Stage program) brought their dance musical workshop for people dealing with mental health and substance use disorders (*Pathway to Wellness through Movement: I COULD NEVER LOVE ANYONE...*) to the Crown Heights PRIDE Center on May 3. **Pettit** also directed *R.E.D. Hat Fight Club* at The Green Room 42 on May 14.

**Ariel Estrada** and **Leviathan Lab** (last seen in Guild Hall in February 2023 with their workshop production of Learning How to Read by Moonlight, presented as a part of EAG's Open Stage program) produced staged readings of (*Immigrants'*) *Love Stories* at Prime Produce on May 7-8.

*One Life, Live It!*, a new play written and produced by **Stephen S. Miller**, had its world premiere at the American Theatre of Actors' Cullum Theatre on May 8, 12, and 14.

*Glory to Ukraine*, a fanfare celebrating Ukraine's spirit of resistance to the Russian invasion, received its world premiere when performed by the Pennsbury Community Band on May 11.

**Alan Tongret** commissioned Ukrainian composer Iryna Aleksyichuk to create the piece to raise awareness among freedom lovers everywhere.

**Jenny Green**, **Nancy Simpson**, and **Kirsten Skrinde** lent their

voices to The Art Mob choir's spring *Rue D'Awakenings* concerts on May 12 at St. John's in the Village, on May 13 at Westbeth Community Room, and on May 14 at Tenri Cultural Center. Directed by **Cynthia Shaw**.

**Mary Goggin's** *Runaway Princess* was at The Artist on City Island on May 21 and will be at the Cincinnati Fringe in June and back at the Rochester Fringe in September.

### JUNE 2023...

**Teri Black** will be directing *Synchronicity* as a part of Break A Leg Productions' The Art of Science Reading Series on June 3 at the C. G. Jung Center.

Don't Tell Mama will welcome back VANGARI, NYC's favorite mother/daughter cabaret duo: **Evangeline** and **Ariana Johns** and Musical Director **Darryl Curry**, with their new show *Moon Tunes & Mad Things* on June 4 and June 8.

**Fran Sisco** is bringing her show *Trans Fran Sisco: Still the Same Inside* to Pangea NYC at 9:30pm on June 17.

Don't miss The Public's Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *Hamlet* at the Delacorte Theater June 8-August 6. **Tyrone Mitchell Henderson** is playing Osric/Priest.

One of **Ahron Foster's** photographs was selected to be in Photoville, June 3-18, in Brooklyn Bridge Park. [photoville.nyc](http://photoville.nyc)

It's a boy!

We are thrilled to announce the arrival of **Henry Ruxin Soltis-Ducey**, born on April 30, 2023. Congratulations to EAG Charitable Programs Associate Jamie Soltis and husband Eamon Ducey.

Wishes may be sent to Jamie c/o EAG, 1 East 29th Street, NYC 10016.

In memoriam

Joanne Joseph

# COMING SOON TO EAG

Go to the link listed to purchase tickets/register/RSVP.

More info at [actorsguild.org/calendar](https://actorsguild.org/calendar)

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

## Barbour Playwrights Award 2023

Wednesdays, June 7, 14, 21 at 7:00pm ET in Guild Hall

Pay-What-You-Will Tickets at [ticketstripe.com/eag-barbour-award-2023](https://ticketstripe.com/eag-barbour-award-2023)

EAG's festival celebrating new work for the theatre is back, featuring readings of three new plays nominated by our 2023 partnering company, **The Skeleton Rep(resents)**.

First up on **Wednesday, June 7: Emily Claire**

**Schmitt's *Confessional***. When the unsolved shooting of a Catholic high school girl rocks the tight-knit community of Staten Island, New York, Abby, who has begrudgingly moved back after years of living in Manhattan, finds herself inexplicably drawn back to the people and patterns of her youth. Is her creeping sense of guilt merely a byproduct of her Catholic upbringing, or are the persistent memories of sinister encounters with her own brother pointing her toward a darker truth? *Confessional* is a story of the questions we avoid asking and the secrets we keep from ourselves.

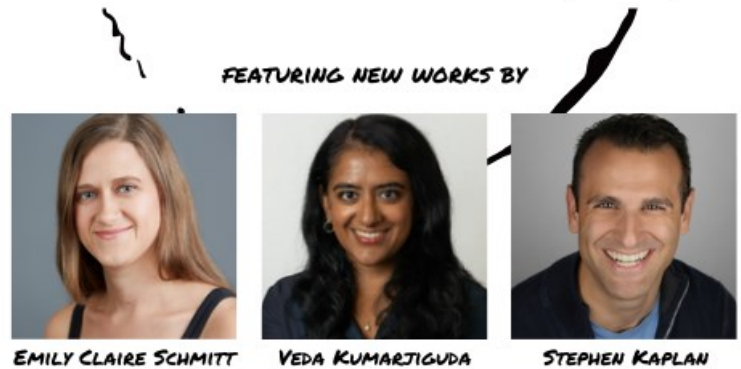
Next, on **Wednesday, June 14: Veda**

**Kumarjiguda's *Abhinaya: A Dance Play***. Avni is preparing for her arangetram, her Indian classical dance debut. Her training grounds her, even as her family falls apart. Money struggles, divorce, secrets, and the failed American dream combine with stories from the Ramayana and Mahābhārata. *Abhinaya: A Dance Play* explores the role of classical arts in the modern world.

And closing out our festival on **Wednesday, June 21: Stephen Kaplan's *Un Hombre: A Golem Story***.

A modern-day golem story about Rebecca Wolfson, a recently widowed single mother, who makes a clay man that comes to life and serves as a Bar Mitzvah and Spanish tutor for her 12-year-old son. As mother and son get wrapped up in the distractions that this seemingly perfect solution to their problems offers, the clay man begins questioning his own existence and purpose, forcing all three to confront the truths they've all been avoiding.

One of these three playwright finalists will be awarded a \$500 prize. All proceeds from these readings will go to support future Barbour Awards.



## Artist Afternoon

### *The Personal Cabaret*

Wednesdays, July 12 and July 19 at 3:00pm ET in Guild Hall

Participants are required to register for and attend both 90-minute sessions.

**FREE. Space is Limited:** [ticketstripe.com/eag-aa-cabaret](https://ticketstripe.com/eag-aa-cabaret)

In this special two-part workshop, theatre professional and educator **JoAnn Yeoman** will help you begin to shape your own cabaret so that you can tell the story you want to tell. In the first session, she will give you a little history, include some hints, and discuss common pitfalls. Joining her for the second session will be musician/composer/performer, **Carl Danielsen**. During that session, you will learn about working with an accompanist for cabaret, making more nuanced choices with lyrics, and using patter for focus and transition.





## **Small Plates 2023**

**Thursday, July 20 at 7:00pm ET  
in the Little Church**

**Pay-What-You-Will Tickets at  
[ticketstripe.com/eag-small-plates-2023](https://ticketstripe.com/eag-small-plates-2023)**

This year's *Small Plates* will be back at in the Little Church with another satisfying serving of short plays. This summer's menu, curated by **Betsy Ross**, will feature pieces written by playwrights who are active in EAG. Stay tuned for more details! All proceeds from this one-night-only event will go to support the charitable programs of EAG.

## **FREE RECURRING EVENTS AT EAG...**

### ***Actors Night***

**Third Tuesday of the Month (June 20, July 18, August 15) at 7:00pm ET in Guild Hall**

**Register for each month's FREE class at [ticketstripe.com/eag-actors-night](https://ticketstripe.com/eag-actors-night)**

*Actors Night* with **Peter Von Berg** is a judgment-free zone, where EAG members can work on monologues, scenes, commercial copy, cold readings, their own material—anything!—before a group of supportive and talented fellow artists. "Whether or not you get constructive feedback is up to you."

### ***Sustainable Conversations***

**Mondays, June 26, July 31, August 28 at 7:00pm ET on Zoom**

**Register for each month's FREE forum at [ticketstripe.com/eag-sustainable-conversations](https://ticketstripe.com/eag-sustainable-conversations)**

Author/actress/EAG Member **Helena-Joyce Wright** and members, staff, and friends of EAG are continuing our monthly Zoom discussions centered around race and racism in America and in the arts.

### ***Yoga Mondays***

**Every Monday | 1:00pm ET on Zoom**

**Register for this FREE weekly class by emailing [reservations@actorsguild.org](mailto:reservations@actorsguild.org)**

Stretch, strengthen, and start your week right with some soul-soothing yoga with **Rebecca Ambrose**. (45 minutes)

### ***Pilates with Marla***

**Tuesdays at 10:30am ET + Thursdays at 2:30pm ET on Zoom**

**Register for these FREE classes by emailing [reservations@actorsguild.org](mailto:reservations@actorsguild.org)**

Stretch, work that core, and have fun with certified personal trainer **Marla Altberg**. (45 minutes)



**Sergio Mauritz Ang**  
**Angelo Aon**  
**Cheryl Asher**  
**Richard Birch**  
**Jennica Carmona**  
**Patrick Cornelio**  
**Alexandra Cremer**



**Kim Gardner**  
**Donna Daley Gentile**  
**Massiel Hernandez**  
**Francesco Pireddu**  
**Mignon Smith**  
**Peter Van Derick**



**The Episcopal Actors' Guild**  
**1 East 29th Street**  
**New York, NY 10016**