

Summer circus salon in Evanston

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The Actors Gymnasium kicked off its 15th anniversary year with a Summer Circus Salon on Saturday, July 31. In addition to experiencing eight stellar circus performances, guests were be among the first to learn the names of The Gym's new ten-member Advisory Board. Distinguished celebrities from theater, film, comedy, television, print journalism, education, advertising and circus lent their "star-power" to The Actors Gymnasium in this important milestone year; many of the Advisory Board members were in attendance.

Post-Salon update:

Members of The Actors Gymnasium's Advisory Board include:

- Tony Adler
- Ana Belaval
- Cindy Gold
- Tim Kazurinsky
- Lorraine Morton
- Bello Nock
- Ralph Rydholm
- David Schwimmer
- Mark Stevens
- Mary Zimmerman

Other Highlights of the Evening: Linda Kam, Fundraising Chair and Evanston resident, served as the evening's Mistress of Ceremonies. Three outstanding friends of The Gym were inducted into a new giving society: Stars of the Center Ring. Evanston artist and Salon host, Joseph Taylor, designed a unique visual piece to commemorate the occasion; the artwork was awarded to the honorees by Board President, Peggy Nelson. One lucky person went home with four tickets to Lookingglass Alice, the Lookingglass Theatre smash hit produced in association with The Actors Gymnasium and starring Gym-trained, student-turned-teacher, Lauren Hirte as Alice.

Joe and Patt Taylor's incredible Prairie School-styled home was once again the setting for this annual celebration. Costumed acrobats, up on aerial rigging in the candle-lit yard, astonished the guests with their artistry, grace and daring. Flames from the fire juggler flashed and dazzled against the dark summer sky. Inside the house, invitees mingled, sampling delicious fare from Fraiche Cafe and Pompei Pizza while admiring original art in a number of media created by Joe Taylor. Joe's art was available for purchase.

Scheduled professional performers for the Summer Circus Salon included: Jill Heyser and Nicole Pellegrino – on Rotating Lyra from Science Fiction, An Experiment in Circus (The Gym's popular Spring 2010 show); Dharmesh Bhaghat - Fire Juggling; Michael Montenegro - Old Man Puppet Act; Nicole Pellegrino, Rachel Kam and Alison Tye - Contortion Act from Science Fiction, An Experiment in Circus. Rachel Kam and Alison Tye are members of the second generation of The Gym's Teen Ensemble. (The first generation made their

professional debut in Lookingglass' smash hit, Hephaestus.) Additional performances are planned.

The Actors Gymnasium is a circus and performing arts school founded by theater writer and Evanston resident, Tony Adler; Chicago actor, Caryl Coash; actor, director, Northwestern alumnus and Lookingglass Theatre co-founder, Larry DiStasi; and circus performer, choreographer and master teacher, Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi. Since its founding in 1995, The Actors Gymnasium has made Evanston its home; The Gym is part of the thriving arts community in Noyes Arts Center, owned and managed by the City of Evanston. In March 2010, Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl honored The Actors Gymnasium with the 2009 Mayor's Arts Organization Award.

Co-Artistic Directors Larry DiStasi and Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi, are active creators, performers and teachers of physical theater art. Their critically acclaimed collaborations with Lookingglass Theatre (La Luna Muda, The Baron in the Trees, Hard Times, Lookingglass Alice and this season's Icarus) have been recognized with Joseph Jefferson recommendations, nominations and awards. They have created and produced over a dozen shows, including the highly inventive Flying Griffin Circus, described as "down-home magic" in the Chicago Reader.

For additional information on The Gym's innovative programming, please www.actorsgymnasium.com.

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