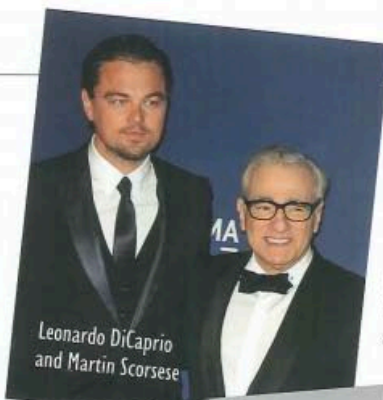


When he's not in front of the camera, DiCaprio is busy doing his share to maintain our planet. His Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation works at preserving the world's oceans - and to that end he's donated \$3 million. I'd go to see his movies just to help him keep up the good work.

The unflappable

Broadway, Hollywood and TV star **Elaine Stritch** returned to Manhattan from her "retirement" in Michigan to celebrate the HBO documentary of her life and times entitled *Elaine Stritch: Shoot Me*. The proceedings, at Manhattan's Paley Center, began with the appearance of **Alec Baldwin**. You may recall that Stritch played his mother on *30 Rock*. Also featured in the film are **Tina Fey**, **Cherry Jones**, **Nathan Lane**, **Tracy Morgan**, **John Turturro**, the late **James Gandolfini**, and the great **Hal Prince**.

I first met "Stritchie" — as some of her pals call her — at one of **Liz Smith's** landmark birthday parties. I remember Miz Liz telling me that once upon a time she had been Stritch's secretary. Hey, we all have to start somewhere. I also remember one of the guests at that party mentioning something about her wearing a hat — "Oh yeah," Stritch shot back, "well, get over it!" We all knew that she was just kidding; but she seemed to love being able to say it with such gusto! Maybe it's a little something called "acting."



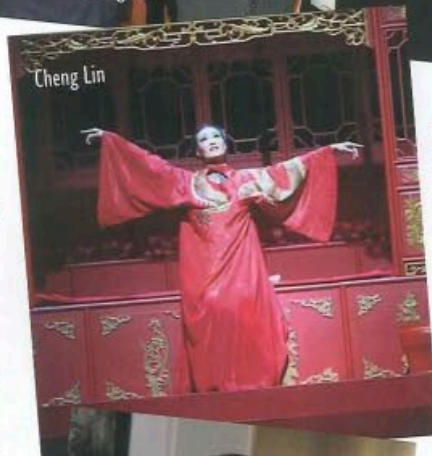
Leonardo DiCaprio and Martin Scorsese



Elaine Stritch



James Whiteside, Herman Cornejo and Charles Askegard



Cheng Lin



Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

Dance enthusiasts

Kamie Lightburn, **Heather Georges**, and **Stephanie Foster** hosted a luncheon at Le Cirque to announce the upcoming Youth America Grand Prix Gala that they're chairing at Lincoln Center. Guests of honor included American Ballet Theatre principal dancers, **James Whiteside** and **Herman Cornejo** as well as New York City Ballet's former principal dancer **Charles Askegard**. Only a very few have the ability to fly through the air with the greatest of ease like these three.

Feasting on Twice Baked Goat Cheese Souffle, Salad 'Le Cirque', and Dark Chocolate Mousse were such staunch supporters as YAGP Founder **Larissa Savelliev** as well as — alphabetically — **Suzie Aijala**, **Dr. Lisa Airan**, **Kate Allen**, **Paige Betz**, **Dr. Tevor Born**, **Phil Chen**, **Jenny Frank**, **Melissa Gibbons**, **Paige Hardy**, **Judith Hoffman**, **Sharon Hoge**, **Sharon Hurowitz**, **Tracey Huff**, **Nathalie Kaplan**, **Lisa Klein**, **Nyssa Kourakos**, **Pam Ludwick**, **Jonathan Marder**, **Lisa Morse**, **Elyse Newhouse**, **Ramona Norton**, **Kate Peck**, **Kathy Prounis**, **Dana Sciff**, **Jean Shafiroff**, **Margot Tarkian**, **Evelyn Tamanda Tapiero**, **Kari Tiedemann**, **Evelyn Tompkins**, and **Alexis Waller**.

Some of you may that know that New York City Ballet lists all of it's principal dancers alphabetically which prompted a once annoyed **Maria Tallchief** to declare, "I don't mind being listed alphabetically, but I do mind being treated alphabetically." Let's hope she took Elaine Stritch's advice and "got over it."

Those who

enjoy a peek through the keyhole at other cultures were probably enraptured by the recent production at Lincoln Center of *The Red Dress*. It was presented by the China Arts and Entertainment Group for the first time in a major city outside of China. It tells the story of a young couple who fall in love as children, become separated and are eventually reunited. It featured colorful costumes, lavish sets and 45 dancers including the extraordinary **Cheng Lin** who gets to dance in a number of colorful outfits including a certain red dress — which actually turns out to be a wedding dress. Interesting how traditions differ from country to country. In The States, if a girl chooses to wear a red wedding dress it's usually assumed that she's been around the block a few times and doesn't dare to wear white.

Moving right

along, does anybody remember Manhattan's original Pennsylvania Station which was considered an architectural masterpiece when it was built in the early 1900s? Sadly, it was torn down in the '60s amid a controversy that included a small army of protestors. As a result, we now have the Landmarks Commission to prevent the loss of similar gems. A fascinating PBS special, *The Rise and Fall of Penn Station*, was recently screened before a packed audience...and you could hear the proverbial pin drop. As the story of the station unfolds, we are made aware of the pride fellow New Yorkers had in its very existence; the vastness of the structure (two city blocks), the towering height, the magnificent beaux-arts style architecture. However, due to the increase of air and auto travel, the station began to lose money and was demolished — despite all the protesting. The result is the underground Penn Station we have today — described by many as an *embarrassment* — the same word, incidentally, used to describe the nearby Port Authority Bus Terminal.

But do not fret: we still have Grand Central. This, in case you're not aware, is largely due to the efforts of **Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis**. Although she preferred not making public appearances at that point in her life, she was afraid that if she didn't speak out publicly, Grand Central might be demolished as well. When I spoke to her about how thrilled we all were by her efforts, she simply said, "I honestly felt that I didn't have a choice." For more on the former glory of Manhattan - pick up a copy of **Nathan Silver's** *Lost New York* — about which the New York Times said, "Two kinds of people should have this book — those old enough to remember how New York once looked and those too young to know the New York they missed."

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