

## **Robin Joy Allan**

### **Founder, and Ongoing Director**

#### **(Sundays-Cold Reading, Scene Study, Directing, Showcase Classes)**

Ms. Allan had a colorful and magical childhood, growing up in the unique environment of Gateway. Her fragile and heartfelt memories include climbing the windmill steps, watching *The Fantasticks* from the now vanquished barn balcony seats, learning fertilizing techniques from her grandfather's prized dahlia planting excursions, uncovering her grandmother's fashion design sketches, cracking up at her mother's comic performances, being coached by her D-J Dad, while recording voice-overs and taking direction from her Uncle David-David whilst playing Ngana in "South Pacific". (Not to mention her first holding hands experience- backstage with her co-star, "Jerome".)

These and so many more things resonate in her every day as she keeps youthful imagination alive by maintaining the Acting School Division at Gateway which sat dormant in her absence during the late 1980's thru 1993. Upon her return from Los Angeles in that latter year, she fueled a powerhouse of a school that has sent many lucky young performers on their ever evolving journeys in the performing arts. While running the Acting School - teaching and directing, (*Little Women*, *Spoon River Anthology*, *The Lottery*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Stage Door*,) she also spent the last 12 years casting close to a hundred productions on Gateway's Main Stage. More recently she became the Artistic Director at Gateway, which entails not only several Manhattan excursions to cast all productions, but coming up with advertising strategies for all productions (thanks, Dad), hiring creative staff (thanks, Uncle David) designing season ads, posters and booklets (thanks, Aunt Sally), overseeing the artistic aspects of each production, costumes, sets and wigs (thanks, Grandma) coordinating the Children's Theatre (thanks, Mom), and beautifying the Gateway property- choosing paint colors for actor housing and adding new perennial floral additions to the Gateway landscape (thanks, Grandpa). Prior to moving back home, she did thrive in Corporate America, and after her Manhattan spree acting, singing and playing keyboards, she gravitated to Los Angeles, casting several TV pilots, MOW's and feature films. You'll find her name on the projects; *Parenthood*-(Film and TV Series), *When Harry Met Sally*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Side Out*, *Ghost*, *Witness to the Execution*, *The Outsiders* (TV), *Knights of the City* and *Deadly Medicine*, *My Talk Show*, *Cutters and Me& Nick*. She loved and misses very much her early experiences in Los Angeles working with Jane Jenkins, whom she considers her greatest mentor and influence in casting. She brings her entertainment expertise to the Acting School and designs the training to be multi-faceted, in order for the students to be well versed in theater and television/film skills. Her treasured moments are spent teaching and seeing the spark of recognition and ignited potential in a receptive artist. She has been fortunate to have had some incredible students during her life, whom she keeps as friends, and now has the pleasure of watching- as their professional careers blossom. She thanks the stars above for her beautiful daughter, Hayley Lynn Gillman, who seems to be the happiest backstage-(thanks, Uncle Paul!)

## **Michael Baker**

### **(SUNDAYS- COLLEGE PREP, MUSICAL THEATER PERFORMANCE)**

Michael Baker is excited to be returning for another session at the Gateway Acting School. Beginning at the age of 8 as the Gander in *Charlottes Web*, Michael started in similar place as many of the students whom he currently teaches here at the Gateway Acting School. Believe it or not, his experience only got *more* interesting after that premiere performance at Bainbridge Performing Arts in the small community of

Bainbridge Island in Washington State. From there, he became a student in acting classes and working in community and professional theaters throughout the Northwest. Throughout his youth and teen years he was lucky to perform in many musicals and even in a USA network re-enactment television show entitled *Cased Closed*. After high school, he moved to New York where he earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Acting from CW Post Campus of Long Island University. Since college Michael has trained and work shopped with many great teachers including Uta Hagen (HB Studios, NYC) and Patrick Tucker (The original Shakespeare Company, London). Most recently, Michael assisted in Master Classes led by musical theater great, Marvin Hamlisch. Michael's love for performing and teaching has also led him around the country in national children theater tours and even performing in Europe on stage at the North Sea and Montreaux Jazz Festivals. Between his travels he has had the opportunity to teach as a substitute professor at Long Island University and other Long Island Camps and School Districts. Michael is more than grateful to have found an artistic home at Gateway Acting School shortly after his debut on the Gateway Playhouse Stage in 2001. Since then, his Gateway productions include *Jeckyl and Hyde*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Miss Saigon*, *A Christmas Carol*, and more. Michael is a member of Actor's Equity, the union for professional actors, and proudly continues to be a part of the working actor community in New York City.

### **Jessica Kerner**

#### **( Saturdays- BROADWAY SONGS, MUSICAL THEATER PERFORMANCE)**

As a young, curious, curly haired character on *Sesame Street* Jessica began her journey as an actress. Little did anyone know that one encounter with Big Bird and Jessica would be hooked on to the world of theatre. Subsequently, Jessica started taking part in her school's dramas, comedies and musicals until right before her junior year of high school when she got into the musical theatre program at the Professional Performing Arts School in NYC, beginning her professional acting studies. Jessica has trained at CAP21, PPAS, The Actor's Institute, TVI with Andra Reeve, and holds her B.A. in Theatre Arts-Performance from SUNY New Paltz. She is a proud member of the Screen Actor's Guild and AFTRA as she has appeared as NBC Page Amy on *30 Rock* and on many other NY based television series. She has been featured in numerous readings and plays in New York's theatre district. Some of her favorite roles include, Claire in *Guy Stuff* at the Times Square Arts Center, Marie 7 in *The Lunar Academy* at the Gene Frankel Theatre, Annie in *Who Stole the Light?* with her Jewish theatre company *Storahtelling* at the 14<sup>th</sup> St. Y, Hilda in *Room Service*, and Shirley in *Sweet Charity*. Jessica danced on the NY Titans Dance Team (NLL) at Madison Square Garden and has sung at Carnegie Hall. She has also directed productions such as *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *The Witching Hour*, and *Seussical*, as well as choreographed music videos and musicals. Most recently Jessica may be seen consistently on the TV Series GOSSIP GIRL. While Jessica loves to perform her greatest joy comes from sharing her gift with those who are eager to learn. Jessica taught acting throughout 4 years of college and now teaches theatre classes in the city public schools for special ed./inclusion classrooms/after-school programs, and teaches more advanced performance skills in the American Dance and Drama Studios of Queens, NY. She also teaches jazz, ballet, tap and hip hop. Jessica is so happy to be teaching at Gateway. After a short stint as a substitute teacher in the summer of 2007, Jessica fell in love with the atmosphere, faculty and students of Gateway. There is no better place for her to spend her Saturdays than at Gateway Playhouse sharing her passion with the gifted students that attend this lovely school.