

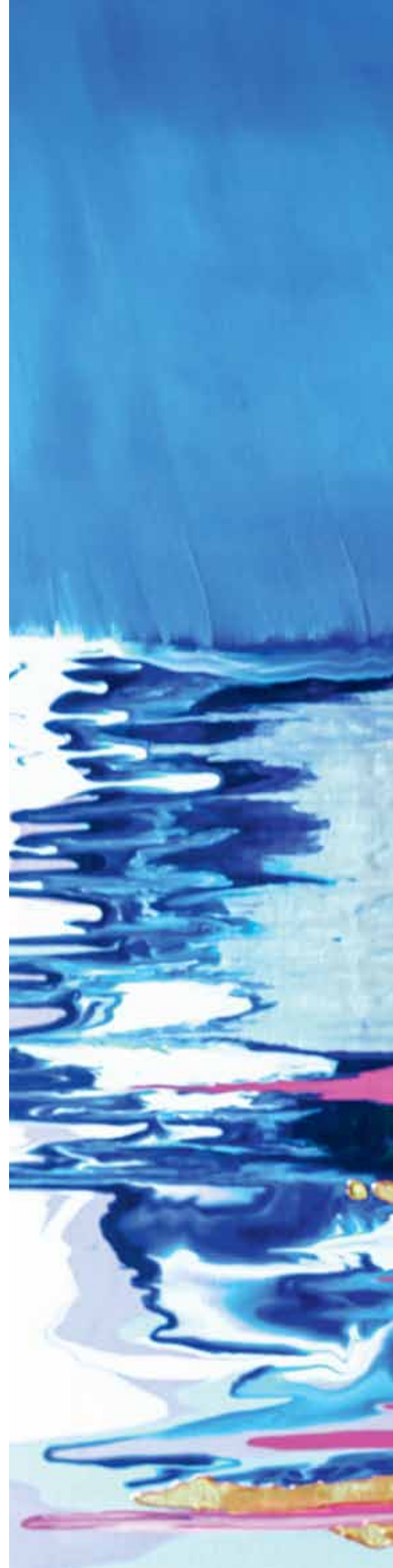
# THE MANY FACES OF REBECCA GRANT

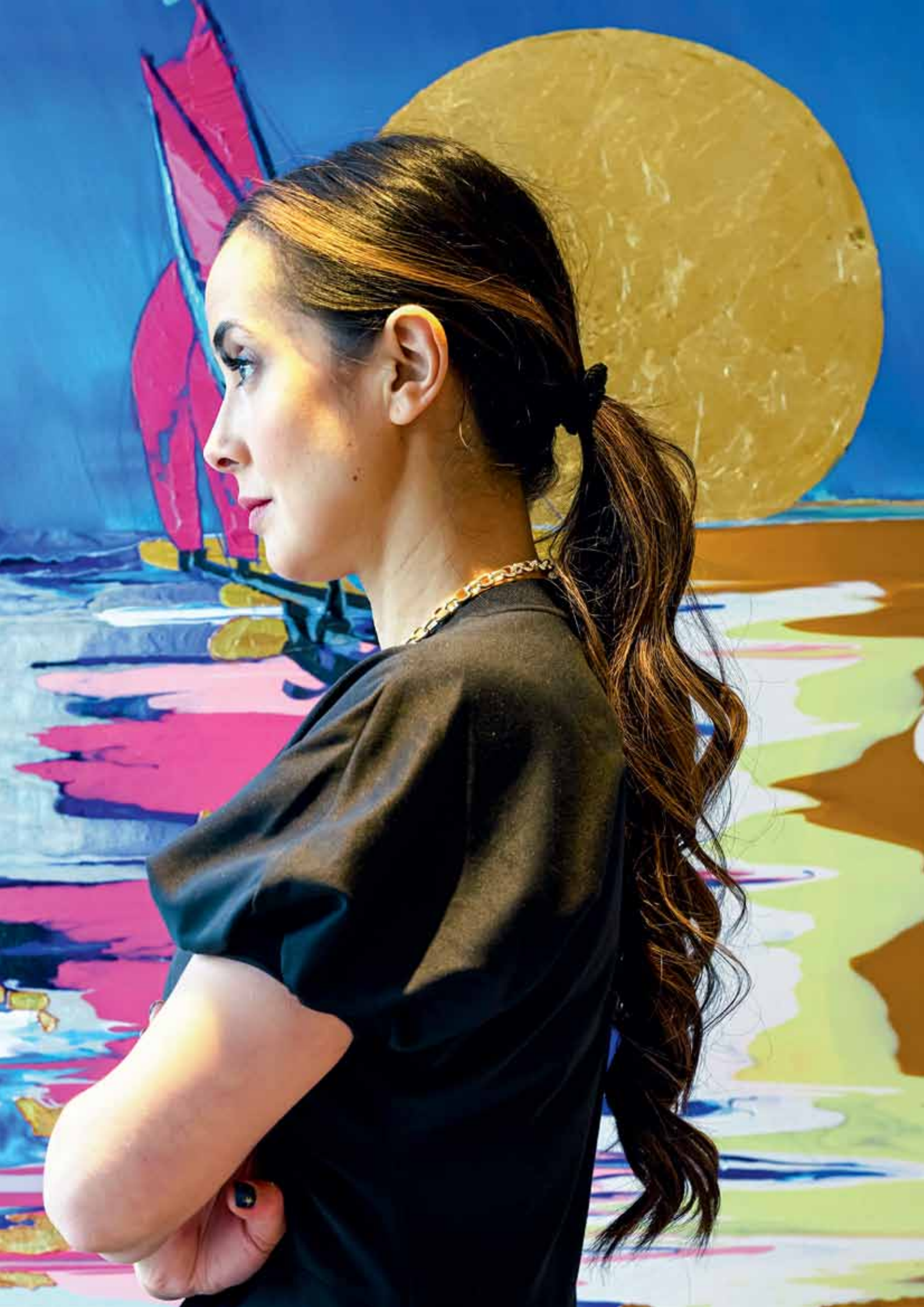
**Angie Adams** meets polymath,  
Norfolk resident and Royal  
relative, **Rebecca Grant**

PHOTOS: Angie Adams

**L**et me introduce you to Rebecca Helena Grant De Longueuil – actor, artist, singer, producer, wife, mother and humanitarian (in no particular order). Maybe best-known for her long-running roles in BBC medical dramas *Holby City* and *Doctors*, Rebecca Grant has also enjoyed an illustrious singing career as Rebecca Swing, alongside appearing in film and on stage in numerous musicals, monologues and dramas. She lives in Norfolk in a beautiful Gothic-styled home with her husband Ivan and their two children. ▶

**RIGHT:**  
Art is an important  
part of Rebecca's life







Polymath Rebecca is related to the Queen

**{AA}** Your most recent role on screen was in BBC TV's *Show Trial* – how did you prepare for the role of Crown Court lawyer Nisha Baria?

**{RG}** Throughout filming, I continuously consulted a friend who is a top London lawyer. She patiently answered my multitude of questions surrounding the swings and roundabouts my character Nisha took to prove her client's innocence. I also channelled my late grandfather Ceferino Padua, a prominent lawyer in the Philippines, who was a Harvard scholar and a fighter for, and defender of, human rights. His passion was to represent the underprivileged, the homeless, slum dwellers and labourers. I'm proud to say he won most of his cases.

**{AA}** I'd love to hear about your singing career with The Jive Aces and your one-woman cabaret *Some Like It Hot*?

**{RG}** Performing with the Jive Aces followed hot on the heels of me playing Holby City's Filipino nurse, Daisha Anderson; it was a bit of a crazy time! I attended a wedding and ended up crooning the night away with UK's number one jive band – The Jive Aces. Soon after and completely out of the blue, I received a call from their manager asking me to join the band singing live at The Royal Albert Hall.

It was a monumental and sparkly moment, singing *I Want To Be Loved by You*, to 3,000 jivers! A string of tours and gigs followed, one of which was performing at Buckingham Palace, another stellar opportunity. I cannot thank The Jive Aces enough for a glorious decade of fun,



adventure, singing at the most prestigious gigs - they're my soul brothers.

During my time with the band, I fell in love with the 40s and 50s, so worked on developing a fun cabaret, *Some Like it Hot*, with RADA Vocal Coach and former Musical Director of the musical *Chicago*, Tom Wakeley. The cabaret was produced by Gavin Rankin, owner of Restaurant and Oyster Bar, Bellamy's in London. I performed at Gavin's restaurant to all sorts of interesting people, from London's financial CEOs to Eartha Kitt's Personal Agent. Oh, and Bryan Ferry!

**{AA} When did your love of dance begin?**

**{RG}** I remember the exact moment as clear as day; aged three when I was watching my sisters in ballet class. I leapt off my mother's lap, took hold of the handles of

a nearby filing cabinet and very seriously and meticulously imitated every gesture, step and bend of the ballerinas. Little did I know that my ballet teacher, Miss Morrison, would become my life mentor; she encouraged my interest in dance.

**{AA} Tell me about the Grant Academy of Bollywood Dance**

**{RG}** I've been teaching dance since the age of 14 and love my students to feel good about themselves, whatever their level. Dance is about bringing the best out in you, not about anyone else in the room!

I was lucky enough to be cast as one of the principal dancers in Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Bombay Dreams* and was taught Bollywood dance by the top stars in Bollywood cinema – Farah Khan, Geeta Kapur and Feroz Khan.

Since moving to Norfolk I've wanted to



*‘I’m in a place where I’m happy with my life. A place where art takes precedence’*

pass on the joy and inner strength I was given through dance, especially in the realm of Bollywood dance, so my academy of dance was born. I tutor the very steps and routines I was taught for my performance in Bombay Dreams at The Garage in Norwich. It’s such a joy to see students leaving my classes with smiles on their faces and spring in their step.

During lockdown, I received lots of messages asking me to teach dance online; I felt it was my duty to do so. My Bollywood dance classes were well received nationally which made me want to teach live again when it was safe to. Keep an eye out for The Grant Academy of Bollywood on Facebook for future classes.

**{AA} You’re also a recognised artist following in the footsteps of your other late grandfather, tell me more?**

**{RG}** I’ve always painted and sold my work. I currently have two collections; the first, Set Sail portrays boats using mixed media – acrylic, coloured ink, gold leaf and coloured pencil, and was influenced by my late grandfather, Raymond David Grant, 11th Baron de Longueuil, a prolific artist in the South of France. I started the second collection, The Yellow Brick Road, 24 years ago, when I almost lost my life to a severe asthma attack. Soon after, I won a competition to discover budding artists – Britain in its 21st Century – run by The Prince’s Trust and received the award from HRH Prince of Wales – the painting was exhibited at Hampton Court Palace.

The current addition to this collection, Humanity Unplugged, represents our world today in all its beauty and truth; the truth is not always easy to accept but I’m done trying to please and play to a gallery.

My work comes from the depths of my mind and its purpose is beauty and truth.

This year sees me working alongside some very interesting and influential people who want to give me a platform not only in the material world but in the digital world too. I love what’s happening to the culture of the arts; with digital universes out there, the boundaries are as limitless as the mind. I created six large scale paintings during the last lockdown; this year I plan to produce 20!

**{AA} How did you become involved with the charity Unseen?**

**{RG}** Since performing Eve Ensler’s one-woman play, Avocado, at the West Yorkshire playhouse. This intense monologue revolved around a girl being trafficked from the sex slave industry in the Far East to Britain. It tore me apart that slavery still existed and is growing; I wanted to know more and help fight this global crime.

When I met the CEO of Unseen, I was blown away by their work aiding survivors of human trafficking, so became an ambassador. I then produced and starred in Ben Hyland’s short film, Safe Space, which he wrote and directed. I’m proud the film won numerous international awards which in turn created a huge awareness of the work undertaken by Unseen.

**{AA} What’s your involvement with Red Boot Productions?**

**{RG}** I formed Red Boot productions after a chance meeting and conversation on the tube with former colleague Steve Scrivens. We’d worked together previously at the Royal & Derngate Theatre in Northampton, Steve was Programming Manager. The ethos behind Red Boot Productions ▶

FAMILY TREE

Rebecca’s intriguing ancestry warrants a television series of its own. Her grandfather, Raymond Grant, 11th Baron De Longueuil of Navarrenx (a town located at the foot of the Pyrenees in France)

was the son of Ernestine Hester Maude Bowes-Lyon. Ernestine was born at Glamis Castle in Scotland and was the first cousin to the Queen Mother, making Raymond second cousin to Queen Elizabeth II. The De

Longueuil line of Barons originated from Charles Le Moyne, a French Officer and Merchant who administered Montreal in Canada and was appointed Lord of Longueuil by Queen Victoria.



Rebecca Grant, actor, dancer, singer... and more

is to tell stories that embrace female multiculturalism, without objectification or corporate colonisation. We aim to create a conduit to preserve our foremothers' life experiences, battles and creative missions. Our first production will feature the life of Artist Frida Kahlo. This month sees us commence script development with Latin American Writer, Gael le Cornec, also a talented actress and producer. To say I'm excited about this project is an understatement!

**{AA} Television, film, theatre; do you have a preference?**

**{RG}** That's a tough question; preference in passion, pay or career-enhancing? That said, if a television piece was theatrical enough, I would go with television.

**{AA} Do you have a favourite past role or one you'd love to feature in?**

**{RG}** I would love to dance for film. Something along the lines of a Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds film made for today's world. I'd also love to play someone like Cid Cerise.

**{AA} You have a flair for languages, speaking French, Spanish and Tagalog...**

**{RG}** Oh no, I don't have a flair for languages. Who said so? They are very kind. I do speak some French and it improves when I'm in France, the same goes for Tagalog and Spanish.

**{AA} What's the best thing about living in Norfolk?**

**{RG}** The boundless colourful skies! And I'm in a place where I'm happy with my life. A place where art takes precedence – followed closely by dance, acting and singing. ♦

**CREDITS**

**Clothing:**  
John Lewis & Partners.  
Personal stylist Andrea Ferguson dressed Rebecca in Ted Baker, Ro & Zo, Carvella, Dune, Tutti & Co.

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**Location:**  
Joe Cozens Wiley's Passivhaus home for the future, The Octagon Park, Norwich.

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