

Larisa Oleynik

⚠ This is an old revision of this page, as edited by 146.90.73.132 (talk) at 19:56, 26 March 2019 (→ Personal life: Typo in previous correction.). The present address (URL) is a permanent link to this revision, which may differ significantly from the current revision.

Larisa Romanovna Oleynik (/ləˈrɪsə oʊˈleɪnɪk/[1]; born June 7, 1981) is an American actress who became a teen idol in the 1990s. During her period as a teen idol, she was described as "one of America's favorite 15-year-olds", [2] and "the proverbial girl next door". [3][4]

Born in Santa Clara and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area of California, Oleynik began her career as a child actor, first appearing onstage as young Cosette in a national touring production of Les Misérables (1989–1991). She was subsequently cast in the titular role on the Nickelodeon sci-fi series The Secret World of Alex Mack from 1994 to 1998. She also began a film career, starring in an ensemble cast as Dawn Schafer in the film adaptation *The Baby-Sitters Club* (1995), and in a lead role in the teen comedy 10 Things I Hate About You (1999).

Oleynik subsequently had a supporting role in the comedy 100 Girls (2000), after which she starred opposite Nastassja Kinski and Scarlett Johansson in the period film *An American* Rhapsody (2001), and the independent drama Bringing Rain (2003). She later had supporting roles in *Atlas Shrugged: Part* II (2011) and the horror film Jessabelle (2014). From 2010 to 2015, she had a recurring role as Cynthia Cosgrove on the AMC series Mad Men, and as Icy on the Italian animated series Winx Club (2012–2014).

Larisa Oleynik



Oleynik in 2015

Larisa Romanovna Olevnik **Born**

June 7, 1981

Santa Clara, California, U.S.

Alma mater Sarah Lawrence College

Occupation Actress

Years active 1989-present

Early life and education

Larisa Romanovna Oleynik was born June 7, 1981 in Santa Clara, California, [a] to Lorraine (née Allen), a former nurse, and anesthesiologist Roman Oleynik (1936–2003). [6] Her father was of Ukrainian ancestry, and she was raised in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Oleynik was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. She graduated from the <u>Pinewood School</u> in <u>Los Altos, California</u>, in 1999. As her acting career flourished, she would "divide her time between normal childhood experiences in Northern California and auditions in Los Angeles."

After the success in her role as Alex Mack, Oleynik decided to attend college, [11] enrolling at <u>Sarah Lawrence</u> College in Yonkers, New York, which she later described "the best decision I've made". [12]

Career

1989-2002

Oleynik began acting in a <u>San Francisco</u> production of <u>Les Misérables</u> in 1989 after seeing an audition ad in a newspaper when she was eight years old. She obtained two parts in the production (young <u>Cosette</u> and young Eponine), both with singing roles. After appearing in the musical, she was referred to an agent by her *Les Misérables* co-star, <u>Rider Strong</u>, and began to take formal acting lessons. I'll remember being 10 years old and thinking, *I want to be good at this*, she recalled. It wasn't about, *I want to be on TV*. It was more looking around at the other kids and being like, *I'm not good at sports*, *I'm not really smart*. *I think I could be good at this*, though."

Her onscreen acting career began at age 12, in a 1993 episode of the television series $\underline{Dr.\ Quinn,\ Medicine}$ $\underline{Woman}^{[13]}$; the same year she also appeared in the made-for-television film $River\ of\ Rage$: $The\ Taking\ of\ Maggie\ Keene$, and provided the voice of young Odette in the animated feature film $\underline{The\ Swan\ Princess}$ (1994).

In 1996 she made a cameo on the series <u>The Adventures of Pete & Pete</u> as a nurse at the beginning of the episode "Dance Fever". [15] Later in 1993, she was subsequently cast in the lead role of the series <u>The Secret World of Alex Mack</u> where she portrayed a teenage girl who receives <u>telekinetic</u> powers as the result of an accident. She won the role of Alex Mack over 400 other aspirants. The series ran on <u>Nickelodeon</u> from 1994 to 1998 and was one of the network's top three most watched shows, [3] becoming quite a favorite among the child and teen audiences and turning Oleynik into a <u>teen idol</u>. During the show's heyday, children who met Oleynik (and were too young to understand special effects) would often ask her to "morph" for them. Rather than try to explain things, she would quickly glance around, then tell them "Not here — everybody would see!". Oleynik reprised the role in an <u>All That</u> sketch, although the name was changed to "Alex Sax". She later made an appearance in the 100th episode of the show.

Also during her time on *The Secret World of Alex Mack*, she played Dawn Schafer, one of the lead characters in the 1995 feature film *The Baby-Sitters Club* (1995), opposite Rachael Leigh Cook and Schuyler Fisk, [16] appeared in several episodes of *Boy Meets World*, wrote an advice column for *Tiger Beat* magazine, and was involved in Nickelodeon's The Big Help charity, *Hands Across Communication*, *Surfrider Foundation* and the *Starlight Children's Foundation*. She has also hosted the CableACE Awards, Daytime Emmy Awards, YTV Achievement Awards, The Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards as well as The Big Help. She has commented that she stayed "grounded" during her period as a teen star, mainly through the help of a "strong network of people" that she is close to. [18]

After *The Secret World of Alex Mack* ended its run, Oleynik had a starring role in the film <u>10 Things I Hate About You</u> as Bianca. The film was released in April 1999 and did fairly well at the box office, grossing a total of \$38 million domestically. From 1998 to 2000, Oleynik appeared in twenty-one episodes of the <u>NBC</u> series <u>3rd Rock from the Sun</u> as Alissa Strudwick. During 2000, she also appeared in two <u>independent films</u>: <u>100 Girls</u> (opposite <u>Emmanuelle Chriqui</u>, <u>Katherine Heigl</u> and <u>Jonathan Tucker</u>) and <u>A Time for Dancing</u> (opposite <u>Shiri</u> Appleby); neither film received a theatrical release in the United States.

Oleynik had a supporting role in the independent drama film *An American Rhapsody* (2001), opposite <u>Nastassja Kinski</u> and <u>Scarlett Johansson</u>, which follows a young woman whose parents are forced to leave her behind in Communist Hungary while they flee to the United States. [20]

2003-present

Oleynik had a supporting part in <u>Bringing Rain</u> (2003), a low-budget teen drama starring <u>Adrian Grenier</u> and <u>Paz de la Huerta</u>, which premiered at the <u>Tribeca Film Festival</u>. In 2005, she appeared as a guest star on the series <u>Malcolm in the Middle</u> as <u>Reese Wilkerson</u>'s lesbian army buddy who develops a crush on <u>Lois Wilkerson</u>. Oleynik was cast in a supporting role in the series <u>Pepper Dennis</u>, which began airing on <u>The WB</u> in April 2006, but was not picked up by The WB's successor <u>The CW</u>. The same year, she starred in the independent drama <u>Pope Dreams</u>.

In March 2008, Oleynik guest-starred in episode 13 of <u>Aliens in America</u>. In 2009, she provided audio commentary for the *10 Things I Hate About You* 10th Anniversary Edition Blu-ray. In March 2011, Oleynik started appearing in a recurring role on <u>Hawaii Five-0</u> as <u>CIA</u> analyst Jenna Kaye until her character was later killed off. She was subsequently cast in the <u>Ayn Rand</u> adaptation <u>Atlas Shrugged: Part II</u> (2012), as Cherryl Brooks, a store clerk who becomes acquainted with the protagonist, Dagny Taggart (portrayed by <u>Samantha Mathis</u>). John Tammy of <u>Forbes</u> praised it as a "must-see" film. Oleynik also guest-starred as <u>Ken Cosgrove</u>'s girlfriend (and later wife) <u>Cynthia Baxter</u> in several episodes on the <u>AMC</u> television series <u>Mad Men.</u> Men.

In 2016, Oleynik starred in the one-woman show *I Loved*, *I Lost*, *I Made Spaghetti* at the <u>Hangar Theatre</u> in <u>Ithaca</u>, <u>New York</u>. Beginning 2017, Oleynik began starring in the <u>Off-Broadway</u> musical comedy <u>Baghdaddy</u>. Baghdaddy.

Personal life

In January 2013, according to <u>TMZ</u>, Oleynik was granted a <u>restraining order</u> against one of her fans, who she claims was so obsessed he changed his last name to hers as well as leaving gifts for her at her mother's apartment. [29]

Filmography

Film

Year	Title	Role	Notes	Ref.
1994	The Swan Princess	Pre-teen Odette	Voice role	[1]
1995	The Baby-Sitters Club	Dawn Schafer		[30]
1998	The Swan Princess: Sing Along	Pre-teen Odette	Voice role; short film	[31]
1999	10 Things I Hate About You	Bianca Stratford		[30]
2000	100 Girls	Wendy		[30]
2001	An American Rhapsody	Maria Sandor (age 18)		[30]
2002	A Time for Dancing	Jules Michaels		[32]
2002	Speciale Casting	Jules Michaels	Archived; uncredited	
2003	Bringing Rain	Ori Swords		[21]
2006	Pope Dreams	Maggie Venable		[32]
2007	Relative Obscurity	Claire		[33]
2008	Broken Windows	Sara		[32]
2009	Together Again for the First Time	Brenda	Direct-to-video	[32]
2009	I Have It	Emily	Short film	
2010	Winx Club 3D: Magical Adventure	Icy	Voice; English dub	
2012	Born Yesterday	Elyse	Short film	[34]
2012	Atlas Shrugged: Part II	Cherryl Brooks		[32]
2013	OJ: The Musical	Regina		[35]
2014	BFFs	Chloe		[36]
2013	The Mamet Women	Polly	Short film	[37]
2014	Jessabelle	Sam		[32]
2014	Horrible Parents	Jill	Short film	
2017	Wandering Off	Amanda		[32]
2018	Accommodations	Natalie		[38]
2019	Animal Among Us	Anita Bishop	Completed	[39]
2019	Auggie	Hillary		

Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes	
	Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman	Susie	Episode: "Heroes"	
1993	River of Rage: The Taking of Maggie Keene	Gail Keene	TV Movie	
1994– 1998	The Secret World of Alex Mack	Alex Mack / Barbara Mack	Lead role (78 episodes); played Barbara Mack in the episode "The Switch"	
1995	All That	Alex Sax	Episode: "Larisa Oleynik/Da Brat"; sketch: "The Secret World of Alex Sax"	
1996	The Adventures of Pete & Pete	Nurse	Episode: "Dance Fever"	
1996– 1998	Boy Meets World	Dana Pruitt	3 episodes	
1997	The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo	Gator World Employee	Episode: "The Alligator Mystery"; uncredited	
1998– 2000	3rd Rock from the Sun	Alissa Strudwick	Recurring role (21 episodes)	
2005	Malcolm in the Middle	Abby	Episode: "Army Buddy"	
2006	Katie Sullivan	Katie Sullivan	Lead Role; Pilot	
	Pepper Dennis	Brianna	2 episodes	
2008	Aliens in America	Zoe	Episode: "Community Theater"	
2009	Without a Trace	Liza Miller	Episode: "Voir Dire"	
	Psych	Willow Gimbley	Episode: "Let's Get Hairy"	
2009	Psych	Shawn Spencers Gal		
2010	Backyard Wedding	Renee	TV Movie	
2010– 2015	Mad Men	Cynthia Cosgrove	Recurring role (5 episodes)	
2011– 2012	Winx Club: Enchantix	Icy / Various	Voice role (28 episodes)	
2011– 2014	Hawaii Five-0	Jenna Kaye	Recurring role (7 episodes)	
2012	Mike & Molly	Allison	Episode: "The Dress"	
	Fairly Legal	Officer Glacki	Episode: "What They Seem"	
2012– 2013	Winx Club: Beyond Believix	Icy / Various	Voice role (24 episodes)	
2012–	Pretty Little Liars	Maggie Cutler	Recurring role (7 episodes)	
2014	Winx Club	Icy / Various	Voice role (52 episodes)	
	Remember Sunday	Lauren	TV Movie	
2013	Ghost Ghirls	Megan	Episode: "Will You Scary Me?"	
_010	American Dad!	Super hot girl	Voice role; episode: "Steve and Snot's Test- Tubular Adventure"	

Year	Title	Role	Notes	
2014	Robot Chicken	Alex Mack / Cheetara / Classmate	Voice role; episode: "Rebel Appliance"	
	Stolen from the Womb	Diane King	TV Movie	
	Extant	Phillips	Episode: "Ascension"	
	The Michaels	Katherine Bixby	TV Movie	
2015	Wish Upon a Christmas	Amelia	i v iviovie	
2016	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit	Lizzie Bauer	Episode: "Assaulting Reality"	
2018–	Half Life	Patty	Lead role (4 episodes)	
2019	Trinkets	Shawn	Recurring role (2 episodes)	

Stage credits

Year	Title	Role	Notes	Ref.
1989– 1991	Les Misérables	Young Cosette / Young Eponine	Second national touring production	[14]
2014	Be a Good Little Widow	Melody	NoHo Arts Center	
2016	I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti	Giulia	Hangar Theatre	[28]
2017– 2018	Baghdaddy	Berry	St. Luke's Theatre	[40]

Notes

a. Some sources erroneously state that Oleynik was born in <u>San Francisco</u>, including the <u>Biography Today 1996 Annual Cumulation</u>: <u>Profiles of People of Interest to Young Readers</u> (1996). However, this conflicts with the California Vital Statistics' <u>Birth Index</u>, which lists Larisa Romanovna Oleynik as having been born June 7, 1981 in <u>Santa Clara County</u>. <u>CBS</u> San Francisco confirms in a 2011 article that Oleynik was born in the city of Santa Clara. [5]

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External links

- Larisa Oleynik (https://x.com/loleynik) on Twitter
- Larisa Oleynik (https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0646351/) at IMDb
- Larisa Oleynik (https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/person/144487%7C*) at the TCM Movie Database