



Martha Hill (1900-1995)
Educator, administrator, artistic director,
and visionary for dance as a performing art.

MARTHA HILL DANCE FUND LIMITED
WAS ESTABLISHED TO HONOR,
PERPETUATE, AND REWARD MARTHA HILL'S
COMMITMENT TO DANCE EDUCATION
AND PERFORMANCE INTERNATIONALLY

Gala 2018

Interesting! We knew it was going to be an interesting evening when our Master of Ceremonies for the evening, the Brooklyn-based choreographer and performer, John Heginbotham chose to begin the evening serenaded by the musician and singer Damon Daunno. The two began artfully weaving their way through the tables greeting guests and singing a song of welcome. They even paused for a moment to literally bow down at the feet of dance legend Judith Jamison who was in attendance. It began the evening on a light and joyous note. Again held at the Manhattan Penthouse, the décor was expertly designed by Board member Lance Westergard, and a festive meal, which would have been as per Miss Hill's wishes, was shared by all.

After opening remarks by our Vice President Ani Udovicki, our first **Mid-Career Award** went to Jessica Lang. She was introduced via a video presentation by American Ballet Theatre Artistic Director Kevin McKenzie that was expertly produced by Daniel Madoff and featured clips of Jessica's work. Ms. Lang was Artistic Director of Jessica Lang Dance. Under her artistic leadership, the company would present more than 50 performances annually at some of the world's most prestigious performing arts centers. Noted for her dedication to educational activities, Ms. Lang developed a unique curriculum for JLD called LANGuage, which was offered as part of the company's programming on tour and locally in New York City.

Continued on Page 5



Sylvia Waters, Jessica Lang and David Leventhal

Photo: Steven Speliotis/Reiko Yanagi



Vernon Scott, Sylvia Waters and Robert Battle

Photo: Steven Speliotis/Reiko Yanagi

Interview with Lance Westergard by Allen Maniker

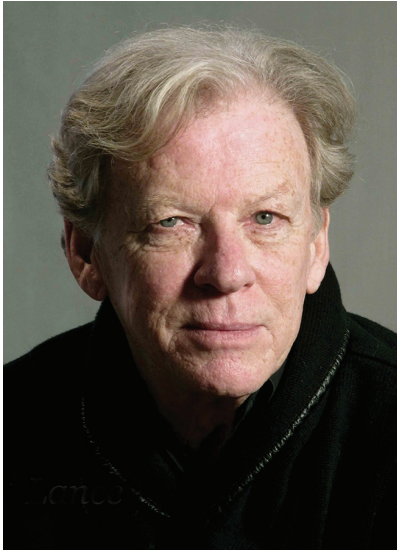


photo by Peter DeNicola

Today I had the opportunity to speak with Martha Hill Dance Fund Board member Lance Westergard. It was an afternoon filled with wonder and awe as this accomplished dancer, teacher, choreographer and administrator led me through his career. Here is some of what we spoke about.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Poughkeepsie. My parents brought me in to the city to see performances but I would get so excited I would make myself sick so they would not tell me when we were going.

Do you remember the first thing you ever saw?

Yes, it was *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* at Radio City Music Hall. And as we left the theater I said to my mother, "This is what I want to do and this is where I want to live." I started dance lessons at the age of five at the Rutherford School of Dance in Poughkeepsie. My sister was enrolled and as I sat watching her, my mother asked if I wanted to take class too. So, I was enrolled. Mrs. Rutherford had been a student with the Royal Ballet and she had been in Ziegfeld follies. Mr. Rutherford would play piano as the accompanist and he taught tap. He would teach in a suit jacket and tie. He also mowed the lawn that way. They had a large mansion on Hamilton Street with gold mirrors and gold flocked wall paper and you would go into the large studio with the grand piano. I studied tap, jazz and acrobatics at first and then around 13 switched to ballet. Both my parents were very supportive.

How did you find out about Juilliard?

Well, I really didn't know anything about it. I first applied and was accepted at Butler as well as The Boston Conservatory. Then I just heard about Juilliard and figured it was more convenient being in New York. I had to have an audition to get in, and it consisted of a ballet class, some modern dance and a solo.

It all took place on the stage of the theater in the old school on Claremont Avenue. My mother had come with me and I learned later that she was out in the lobby as they would not let parents into the theater to watch. Martha Hill happened by and said to my mother "if you look through the crack in the door just this way, you can see the stage." In the theater, all the faculty were at a long table, and I just remember Miss Hill booming out "My, that boy can really turn." Miss Hill actually sent me a letter informing me of my scholarship that arrived before my acceptance letter arrived. She had her own way of doing things.

When did you first meet Antony Tudor?

Mr. Tudor was not at my audition, he was working on a ballet in Sweden. I first saw him in the cafeteria at the school, and then when I went upstairs to the ballet studio he was the teacher. Much like my first teacher Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Tudor would teach in a suit and tie. He first said to me "Martha Hill says you can turn," and I just nodded. He then based the whole class on turns. He believed that if you could turn you had a real center and could find all movement from that center. He had a wonderful sense of humor that was mostly based on double entendre and was quite devilish. His left eyebrow would go up when he was being wicked.

In January of 1966, my third year, he asked me "If I do a ballet at the (old) Met would you be in it?" I said yes and was told I would have to audition by taking the Met Ballet Company class. Well, I did take class and was given the part in the work that was called *Concerning Oracles*. At my debut I was given the dressing room right off the stage, the one that had been used by Caruso, Judy Garland, and Franco Corelli among others. The night of my debut it was filled with telegrams and flowers, like out of a Hollywood movie. I still have the telegram wishing me success from Dame Alicia Markova. It was a humorous ballet, and it actually stopped the Met orchestra, something that is never done, as the audience was laughing and hooting so loudly.

What happened after your Met debut?

Dame Markova offered me a job in the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. So my last year at Juilliard, I finished up my academics, took mostly Limón class, and performed with the Met. I had beautiful work to dance there, for instance a duet in Zeffirelli's direction of Barber's *Anthony and Cleopatra* choreographed by Alvin Ailey. But, dance was never the focus at the Met Opera. Opera includes all the art forms, and so many people would be milling around on the stage while you danced. I wanted to be in a place where the dance was central. I stayed with them for 2 ½ years. It was Miss Hill that suggested I audition for Lotte Goslar which I did not do immediately as I was still with the Met. Later, however when I was doing more freelance work with people like Lar Lubovitch, Eliot Feld, Kathryn Posin, Manuel Alum and Kazuko Hirabayashi, I did join her company and worked on and off with her for the rest of her life. I also performed with Les Grand Ballets Canadiens de Montreal for a time.

Continued from Page 2

When, if ever, did you end your performing career?

I didn't really ever stop performing. I last did a performance at the age of 69. I did a piece of Remy Charlip's. But I am probably going to do something again soon, this time with Kathy Posin. We already have a piece of beautiful music.

You were director of Dance at Hofstra University. When did you start there?

I was performing with Lotte Goslar at the Joyce in 1984 and I was approached by Harriet Peters of Hofstra who told me they needed a ballet teacher. I wasn't ready yet and so I turned it down. A few years later the ballet teacher they had left, and they asked me again. By that time in 1988, I was ready and I said yes. I also taught at Sarah Lawrence, but by 1990, I was a full tenured professor at Hofstra and concentrated my efforts there. In 2000, I took over as the director and stayed in that position until 2009 when I retired.



photo: Elisabeth Sawyer

Little Improvisations, Tudor, first year at Juilliard, 1964.



photo: Julie Lemberger

Forget The Past, Remy Charlip, 2015.

Who were your biggest influences as a teacher?

Of course Tudor. I'm not a disciplinarian in class, I talk more and try to have conversations with the students. The students liked me, and they listened. I could talk and joke and get my point across. I would say "Work properly, and if your leg doesn't go up, I don't give a hoot, just make it mean something."

Has there ever been a push/pull between contemporary dance and ballet for you?

People said, oh you should be a ballet dancer, others said oh you should be a modern dancer and at summer stock that I should be a theater dancer. I just wanted to be a dancer.

PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO FUND-RAISING EFFORTS FOR THE DOCUMENTARY NO AWARDS WERE GIVEN IN 2010 AND IN 2013 ONLY THE YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD WAS GIVEN. IN 2017 and 2018 NO YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD WAS GIVEN, INSTEAD TEN STUDENTS WERE INVITED TO ATTEND THE GALA.

Lifetime Achievement Award 2018 Silvia Waters, 2017 Norton Owen and Alice Teirstein, 2016 Ann Hutchinson Guest and Deborah Jowitt, 2015 Murray Louis and Carla Maxwell, 2014 Mary Hinkson and Martha Myers, 2012 Gemze De Lappe and Yuriko Kikuchi, 2011 Daniel Lewis, 2009 Beverly Blossom, 2008 Ethel Winter, 2007 Pearl Lang, 2006 Mary Anthony, 2005 Ruth Grauert, 2004 Donald McKayle and Doris Rudko, 2003 Francis Mason, 2002 Doris Hering and May O'Donnell, 2001 Alfredo Corvino **Mid-Career Award** 2018 Jessica Lang and David Leventhal, 2017 Robert Garland and Denise Roberts Hurlin, 2016 Fredrick Earl Mosley, 2015 Mark DeGarmo, 2014 John-Mario Sevilla, 2012 Dian Dong & H.T. Chen, 2009 Virginia Johnson, 2008 Janet Panetta, 2007 David Dorfman, 2006 Doug Elkins **Young professional Award** 2016 Eric Parra, 2015 Jacoby Pruitt, 2014 Danielle Robin Reinstein, 2013 Christian Griggs-Drane, 2012 Lissa Nicole Smith, 2011 Patricia Carby, 2009 Jacqueline Green, 2008 Lilli-Anne Tai, 2007 Levi Marsman, 2006 Katie Dorn, 2005 Christopher Vo, 2004 Molly Mae MacGregor

Special Citation 2016 Reed Hansen **Special Citation** 2015 Dance Notation Bureau **Special Citation** 2009 Hortense Zera

Student Choice Award 2012 Kazuko Hirabayashi **Carl Wolz Award** 2003 Mira Kim

Ann Hutchinson Guest's 100th Birthday Celebration

by Elizabeth McPherson



photo: Liz Schneider Cohen

Tina Curran, Ann Hutchinson Guest and Jody Arnhold

The Martha Hill Dance Fund 2016 Lifetime Achievement Awardee, Ann Hutchinson Guest celebrated her 100th birthday in a celebration at the 92nd Street Y on November 2, 2018. Those who were at MHDF Gala 2016, will never forget Ann dancing to the podium to receive her award! Her 100th birthday party was equally a memorable event. Tina Curran (faculty at University of Texas at Austin and Executive Director of the Language of Dance Center USA) was the master of ceremonies as well as coordinator of the entire event, and she led the attendees through the various films and performances that each represented an aspect of Ann's remarkable contributions to the dance community.

The first presentation was a showing of a film of *The Charleston Ballet* from *Million Dollar Baby* (1945). Jerome Robbins was the choreographer and Ann was a featured performer. This represented Ann's work as a professional dancer. Ann also notated the choreography of *The Charleston Ballet*, and this takes us to a next stage of her career. In 1940, Ann was one of

the founders of the Dance Notation Bureau in New York City. She has notated and staged many dances, written books on notation, and she taught Labanotation at a variety of institutions including Juilliard and the High School of Performing Arts in NYC. This part of her career was represented by stagings of two dances from the Labanotation scores.

The first was *La Cachucha* (1836), choreographed by Jaen Coralli and which Fanny Elssler made famous. Ann notated the dance in 1981. On this occasion, it was danced beautifully and with much style by Elena Zahlmann of New York Theatre Ballet. This was followed by a staging, by MHDF board member Elizabeth McPherson, of Doris Humphrey's *Partita V, Op. 1 in G Major* (1942). Elizabeth's students from Montclair State University performed the work with energy and joy.

In addition to and related to Labanotation, Ann developed the Language of Dance® Approach. As the Language of Dance website explains, "the Language of Dance® Approach links movement exploration with Motif symbols to build an explicit foundation of movement knowledge." In the next part of the celebration, Rachel Anne Wurman's students from PS 11 and Barry Blumenfeld's students from Friends Seminary, NYC, performed well-structured and engaging works the elementary school students had choreographed themselves using the Language of Dance® Approach. All in attendance were then invited to dance the folk dance Farandole which led us to the reception where many people spoke about Ann and what she has meant to them personally and to the dance field. Ann seemed overjoyed and had much to say throughout the whole event. It was wonderfully successful in celebrating her 100th birthday.



photo: Liz Schneider Cohen

Montclair State University students performing Doris Humphrey's *Partita V*, staged by Elizabeth McPherson



photo: Steven Speliotis/Reiko Yanagi

Vernon Scott and Laura Glenn with Juilliard students

She has created original works for companies including American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the National Ballet of Japan, and Joffrey, among many others.

She has also worked in opera on a production of *Aida*, for the San Francisco Opera and Washington National Opera. She is the recipient of a 2014 **Bessie** Award and the 2017 Arison Award. Ms. Lang grew up in Bucks County, PA and has a diverse dance training background. She is a graduate of the Juilliard School under the direction of Benjamin Harkavy and a former member of Twyla Tharp's company THARP!

After accepting her award Ms. Lang poignantly announced that in 2019 she would be closing down her Jessica Lang Dance to focus on her choreographic obligations. On a fashion note, Ms. Lang sported a stunning necklace that had once belong to Martha Graham. Another example of how so much dance history converges in these gala events.

Next up was a **Mid-Career Award** given to David Leventhal presented via video by David Iverson and again beautifully produced by Mr. Madoff. Mr. Leventhal is a founding teacher and Program Director for *Dance for PD®* (Parkinson's disease), a program of the Mark Morris Dance Group that has now been used as a model for classes in more than 250 communities in 25 countries. He has co-produced three volumes of a successful *At Home* DVD series for the program and has been instrumental in initiating and designing innovative projects involving live streaming and *Moving Through Glass*, a dance-based Google Glass App for people with Parkinson's. He received the 2016 *World Parkinson Congress Award* for Distinguished Contribution to the Parkinson's Community and was a

co-recipient of the 2013 *Alan Bonander Humanitarian Award* from the Parkinson's Unity Walk.

Leventhal has written about dance and Parkinson's for such publications as *Dance Gazette* and *Room 217*, and has chapters in *Moving Ideas: Multimodal Learning in Communities and Schools*, and *Creating Dance: A Traveler's Guide* (Hampton Press). He has been a speaker at many international conferences and medical centers. He serves on the boards of the Davis Phinney Foundation and the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center's Arts and Humanities Program. He is featured in the 2014 documentary *Capturing Grace* directed by Dave Iverson. As a dancer, he performed with the Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG) from 1997-2011. Leventhal received a 2010 **Bessie** for sustained achievement. Prior to joining MMDG, he worked with Zvi Gotheiner, Ben Munisteri, Neta Pulvermacher, Seán Curran, Marcus Schulkind, Richard Colton and Amy Spencer, and José Mateo's Ballet Theatre of Boston. He graduated from Brown University magna cum laude with honors in English Literature.

The Martha Hill Dance Fund **Lifetime Achievement Award** was then presented to Sylvia Waters by Robert Battle, artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Since Ailey II's inception over 40 years ago, Artistic Director Emerita Sylvia Waters has been responsible for the growth and expansion of one of the country's most vibrant young dance companies.



photo: Steven Speliotis/Reiko Yanagi

Allen Maniker and Daniel Lewis

She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Dance at The Juilliard School. While at Juilliard, she danced with the companies of Hava Kohav and Donald McKayle. With McKayle, she appeared in the CBS television production of *They Called Her Moses*.

Gala 2018, Continued from Page 5

Ms. Waters toured with the European company of *Black Nativity* and, while living in Paris, she worked with Michel Descombey, then director of the Paris Opera Ballet, as well as Milko Sparembleck. She worked with Maurice Béjart's company performing in Brussels and at the Summer Olympics in Mexico City. Ms. Waters joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1968. In 1975, Mr. Ailey personally chose her to become Artistic Director of Ailey II, which she directed until stepping down in 2012. Ms. Waters is the recipient of many awards and honors including honorary doctorates from the State University of New York at Oswego and The Juilliard School. She is the recipient of a Bessie Award, the Legacy Award as part of the 20th Annual IABD Festival, Syracuse University's Women of Distinction Award, and the Dance Magazine Award. Ms. Waters has served on a number of panels including the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Princess Grace Awards. Currently, she leads The Ailey Legacy Residency; a lecture,

technique, and repertory program for college-level students that looks definitively into the history and creative heritage of Alvin Ailey.

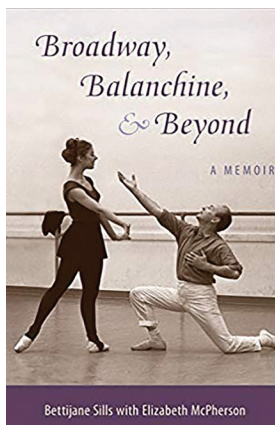
Our President, Vernon Scott offered remarks and noted the important presence of so many students at our gathering. Miss Hill appreciated the need for students to be knowledgeable about the history of the art form that they were studying, and she would have approved that they were there to interact and learn from so many important artists and innovators in dance.

The evenings final remarks were made by Board member Allen Maniker recalling Miss Hill relating in her words her "surprisingly soon" retirement at the age of 86.

As a finale we were serenaded again; this time with a rendition of *Goodnight Irene* by Mr. Heginbotham and Mr. Daunno leaving all with a smile on their face as the evening concluded.

OUT NOW

Broadway, Balanchine, and Beyond: A Memoir by Bettijane Sills with Elizabeth McPherson



Available at the University Press of Florida website, discount code: AU219 <http://upf.com/book.asp?id=9780813056258>

"A lively and valuable read for dance fans, particularly Balanchine enthusiasts. It provides not only a trajectory of Bettijane Sills's career—from child actor to hardworking ballerina to dedicated teacher—but also a candid view of the talented, complicated Mr. B."—Yaël Tamar Lewin, author of *Night's Dancer: The Life of Janet Collins*

CONGRATULATIONS

Vernon Scott will be honored at Elisa Monte Dance's 38th Annual Gala on April 9th, 2019. Vernon was a member of the company from 1989 to 1998. He came back twice as guest artist, in 1997, and in 2005 for the 25th Anniversary season with duet with Elisabeth Roxas. He created roles in *Audentity*, *Dextra Dei* and *Turtles Eat Bones*. The Gala will be held at the Alhambra Ballroom, NYC.

Tickets are available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/elisa-monte-dance-38th-annual-gala-tickets-57799895042>

Lance Westergard will be honored by Chen Dance Center on their 40th Anniversary celebration on May 16th, 2019. Lance has been a guest with H.T. Chen & Dancers, and toured Asia with the company in the early '80. He has reconstructed Remy Charlip's repertory and taught master classes for the company and the school. He continues to serve as a panelist for the Center's artist selection.

Tickets are available at www.chendancecentergala.eventbrite.com

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