



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 2011

Gala 2011 was a very elegant and festive affair. We had a wonderful time at the Manhattan Penthouse, high above Union Square, together again after a year of not having a Gala due to our Film Event in 2010. It was good to be with friends, old and new, celebrating Martha Hill and honoring Daniel Lewis. We had special reasons to be proud, the accomplishment of Phase Two of the Martha Hill documentary and standing at the threshold of post-production. Our spirits were high and so was our view, beautiful and striking, overlooking the city's night skyline. Thank you to all our friends who could join us and those who sent greetings from afar. Your support and your donations are invaluable.

We thank Mercedes Ellington, our Mistress of Ceremony, for her witty and charming presiding of the evening. And we are grateful to Carla Maxwell who presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Daniel Lewis. She spoke with warmth and humor about their dancing years in the Limón company and with admiration about his work as educator and visionary at Juilliard and The New World School of the Arts in Miami. He responded with a moving tribute to Martha Hill and accepted the award with filial joy and pride. The accompanying home-made movie collage about his life was a fun, surprising treat.

In a nod to the future, Patricia Carby, student at the New World School, received the 2011 Young Professional Award. She is graduating in April and plans to move to N.Y.C. to continue dancing. She is particularly interested in the work of Garth Fagan and Rennie Harris.

The highlight of the evening was the much anticipated screening of our work in progress, the Martha Hill documentary. We had a first look at an excerpt of the rough cut of the movie, which spans Hill's childhood, the Bennington years, Juilliard's move to Lincoln Center, and more. It includes numerous interviews and footage of dance, from archival material to current rehearsals and performances. The rhythm and underlying feeling of the documentary captures Martha Hill's spirit, her times and the context of her life's work.



Daniel Lewis with, clockwise, Mercedes Ellington, Ernesta Corvino, Roxane D' Orleans Juste, Carla Maxwell and wife Maureen O'Rourke

The reaction to the screening and the ensuing conversations were overwhelmingly positive and encouraging. It is every one's wish to see the documentary completed as soon as possible. Everything is ready for the third and last phase, post-production, except our budget. We are facing a major fundraising campaign and we must continue to count on your support and generosity. We appeal to all and everyone to help us. Please send us your contributions, ideas and suggestions for fundraising. We are almost there, so close to reaching our goal that if we come together for one final push, we believe we can make it!



Patricia Carby, right, with mother Joan Gray, and Benisa Forte

Photos: Kelsey Benedetto

To view the trailer and make a contribution, please visit our website at [www.marthahilldance.org](http://www.marthahilldance.org)

## Profile of Vernon Scott, Board President of the Martha Hill Dance Fund

Compiled and edited by Elizabeth McPherson



Photo: Tony Powell

Vernon Scott at Gala 2009

I was born on May 3, 1961 in Houston, Texas, the youngest of three boys. I took my first dance class at school in 8th grade and continued taking dance classes through high school along with many other interests including theatre, choir, track, and basketball. When I began to think about going to college, I decided I wanted to pursue architecture. I was accepted at the University of Virginia and enrolled in 1979 as an architecture major. My first year I was extremely excited about that choice, but I also discovered the theater and dance program, which dramatically hurt my architecture studies!

I secured a supporting lead right away: Grumio/the Jester in *The Taming of the Shrew/Kiss me Kate*. I was also taking dance classes (when I should have been at the drafting table) and slowly began admitting to myself my commitment more to theater and dance than architecture. During my second year at UVA, with the push of my dance teacher I snuck away to New York City (without parental permission) to audition for New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in dance and for Juilliard in theater. I was accepted at NYU, and transferred. While at NYU, I found that the program wasn't pushing me hard enough technically, so I auditioned for Juilliard in dance. I was accepted, and entered in 1982, graduating in 1985.

After Juilliard, I danced with many companies: Rush Dance, Elisa Monte, Pilobolus, Steven Petronio, Lar Lubovitch, Mark Morris, and Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project. I was with Elisa Monte for nearly five years, and it was truly a wonderful training ground for me as a young dancer. The work put to task everything I learned at Juilliard: ballet, Graham-based movement, partnering, and I was introduced to Pilates as a way of life. The work and Elisa hold a special place in my heart. During my time there, I auditioned for Pina Bausch and was asked to join her company. Although I found her work brilliant, I felt that I wanted to stay with Elisa and do more go-for-broke dancing! Ah youthful decisions.... After dancing with many companies, years later I landed at White Oak, which was definitely a highlight for me, not solely because of Misha's presence, but because I felt I had found another home there. Many of my contemporaries had discovered a choreographer/style that they loved, that fit their body type, their mind set, and towards which they devoted their entire careers. I discovered that I enjoyed the challenges of techniques new to my body on a continual basis. White Oak performances often presented several choreographer's works in an evening. We all worked hard to master the technique

as well as the "steps" in the dances, as much as we could in the time allotted. This was exciting and challenging.

In 1995, I met my partner Martin Lofnes while standing in line to see a performance at Dance Theatre Workshop. We've been together ever since. Martin and I began discussing adoption around 1999, and I figured it might be better if we were both not on the road all the time, so I stopped dancing as my main job. (I don't think of myself as a retired dancer, just currently "non-practicing.") Demian was born in 2001. Martin and I were in the hospital shortly after he arrived on the scene, and three days later we left the hospital with him. After a week's stay with my cousin in New Jersey (NJ adoption law), we were able to take him out of state and home to Brooklyn. Unbelievably, he is now applying to middle school.

After I stopped dancing full-time, I dabbled in catering, became a Manger of Special Events for Givenchy USA, then an executive assistant at Grange Furniture. The CEO at Grange changed my life, teaching me the business from bottom to top and eventually promoting me to National Director of Showrooms. When the company was purchased by Aga Ranges, I became Retail and Special Events Manager and then National Public Relations Manager, a position I held until 2008. Currently, I am serving as Director of Development for 360° Dance Company (Martin is the artistic director), and I am free-lancing in event planning and production with various catering and production companies. I am looking for more regular positions as well as growing 360° Dance Company to a formidable company in the dance scene.

Former Martha Hill Dance Fund board member Francie Huber tapped me to join this board in 2005. Francie and I were at Juilliard together. I had often thought that one day, after dancing, I wanted to "do good" in the dance community like I saw Martha Hill doing. Being a member of this board has allowed me to contribute in that way. As the President of the Martha Hill Dance Fund since 2009, I have become even more involved in pursuing the missions of the board, being particularly involved in the Martha Hill documentary project.

## Q & A with Martha Hill Documentary Director Greg Vander Veer Interview and editing by Elizabeth McPherson

**How did you become interested in making films?** When I was young, my friends and I would make ridiculous pretend movies and TV shows with my parents' video camera, and then my mother would become furious because I recorded over something important, like my sister's graduation, with footage of me dressed up as a cowboy crying about my fear of horses. But, perhaps more seriously, I was always interested in people's stories. My parents owned the only store in the town where I grew up in Northern Vermont. I spent my childhood listening to our customers chat about their lives. I attended Hendrix College in Arkansas. They did not have a film program, so I created an interdisciplinary major in Historical Film, taking history classes at Hendrix, then studying film at the University of Technology-Sydney in my junior year abroad.

**What are some of the film projects you have worked on?** For three years I worked with legendary documentary filmmaker Albert Maysles on different projects, and was a cameraman for his dance documentary: *Sally Gross: The Pleasure of Stillness*. After this, I made my first film *Keep Dancing* (about Marge Champion and Donald Sadler), in which I partnered with producer, Douglas Turnbaugh (*Ballets Russes*). Since then I have been working on the Martha Hill film as well as creating smaller films on various subjects.

**What interests you about dance?** Before *Sally Gross* and *Keep Dancing*, I had no particular interest or knowledge of dance. But the whole reason I love

documentary film is because every project opens up a whole new world to me, in this case – dance. In many ways, there is nothing better to film as it combines movement, emotion, music, and storytelling, all of which are crucial elements of any movie. I really enjoy filming dance and look forward to continuing to find new and beautiful ways to capture it. I am also particularly fascinated with archival footage of dance and how we can present history through these images. The possibilities with the Martha Hill film are quite exciting as the archival footage spans almost a century.

**How did you become involved in the Martha Hill documentary?** One evening at a party, I met Henning Rübsam, of the Martha Hill Dance Fund board. He was interested in my film *Keep Dancing*, and introduced me to the board as a potential director for the Martha Hill film.

**What are your plans for the future?** My first plan is to finish the Martha Hill film! I am so excited to see it on the big screen and can't wait to share it with the wonderful community that Miss Hill built and who have been helping make this film from the beginning. I am also making a new film *Church Forest* with Peter Buntaine (cinematographer for the Martha Hill film). We were filming in Ethiopia in January and are now in post-production. Hopefully both films will be released at the same time, and I will be catapulted to a life of fame and fortune, at which point I will buy a really nice RV, build a mobile film studio, and travel around the country capturing amazing stories that show the beauty, absurdity, and wonder of life.

PLEASE NOTE THAT NO GALA WAS HELD AND NO AWARDS WERE GIVEN IN 2010 DUE TO FUND-RAISING EFFORTS FOR THE DOCUMENTARY  
**Lifetime Achievement Award** 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** 2009 Virginia Johnson, 2008 Janet Panetta, 2007 David Dorfman, 2006 Doug Elkins **Young Professional Award** 2011 Patricia Carby, 2009 Jacqueline Green, 2008 Lilli-Anne Tai, 2007 Levi Marsman, 2006 Katie Dorn, 2005 Christopher Vo, 2004 Mollie Mae McGregor  
**Carl Wolz Award** 2003 Mira Kim **Special Citation** 2009 Hortense Zera.

## FLASH NEWS

**Pauline Koner Centennial Committee** is planning a year long celebration of Pauline Koner's life and works beginning in June. The committee consists of Evelyn Shepard, C.C. Conner, David K. Manion and advisor Sylvia Koner.

**360° Dance Company** is reconstructing Koner's *The Shining Dark* and will perform it at their third annual New York Season, October 18-20, at the Ailey Citicorp Theater.

*Pina* by Wim Wenders is a powerful, strangely beautiful, documentary about the work of Pina Bausch and the dancers in her company. **Ernesta Corvino** (board member) is listed in the credits.

**Katie Dorn** (Young Professional Award 2006) has been in Michigan, Ann Arbor, working with Lucinda Childs and Bob Wilson on Philip Glass' opera *Einstein on the Beach*, which premieres in Montpelier, France, in March and will come to BAM's Next Wave Festival, NYC, in the fall. She is also performing in Child's DANCE and helps in rehearsals with the students of the University of Michigan who participate in this piece. She feels lucky to be dancing and teaching and performing all over the world.

**Jacqueline Green** (Young Professional Award 2009) is one of the most recent members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. New York audiences had the opportunity to see her with the company during their December season at City Center. She is currently on her very first North American tour.

MHDF Chairman, **David K. Manion**, is back on the boards - He will be choreographing the musical *Annie* in June at the Grand Opera House in Dubuque, Iowa.

**Elizabeth McPherson** (board member) is curating a celebration of the Bennington School of the Dance at the 92nd Street Y on April 20, 2012. She will read from her book-in-progress *Voices from the Bennington School of the Dance*; there will be performances of works by choreographers associated with Bennington (including Limón, Sokolow, and Weidman); and there will be a Q & A session with Joseph Gifford, alumnus of the Bennington School of the Dance.

**Janet Panetta** (Mid-Career Award 2009) has closed her NYC studio but is not taking a break. She is busy teaching nationally and internationally; when in NYC she is at the Gibney Center for Dance. Next fall she will be a guest artist in residence at the Dance Department of the University of Illinois. She continues her association with Tanztheater Wuppertal, Pina Bausch, and with P.A.R.T.S, the contemporary dance school under the direction of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker in Brussels. This summer she will be at Impulstanz, Vienna, where in addition to teaching master classes she will once again take part in the Teachers Teaching Teachers program, a week long workshop where invited artists of the dance world come together to discuss and invent new practices. You can read more about it at [www.impulstanz.com/gallery/videos/en/](http://www.impulstanz.com/gallery/videos/en/)

Panetta was recently asked to do an interview for the Dance Oral History Project at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. She is honored to have a record of her work alongside with the greats of the dance world.

**Henning RübSam** (board member) is celebrating this season the 20th Anniversary of SENSEDANCE.

**Ani Udovicki** (board member) is excited that her seniors at Frank Sinatra School of the Arts will perform an excerpt from Robbins' *N.Y. Export: Opus Jazz* at their Spring Dance Concert, May 3 & 4. She is thankful to the Jerome Robbins Foundation and Tony Bennett's *Exploring the Arts* foundation for making this project possible.

**Sylvia Waters** (former board member) expects to continue doing residencies based on the course *The Ailey Legacy* she created as visiting professor at Harvard in the spring of 2010. The course includes classes in Horton technique, Ailey repertory and lectures, enhanced with DVD footage of dances, interviews with Ailey as well as photos and written material. Although she will be stepping down from the helm of Ailey II she will stay connected to the organization and she looks forward to a productive, post Ailey II, life.

**MHDF BOARD** We welcome new board member Owen Taylor!

Vernon Scott - President, David K. Manion - Chairman, Hudas Liff - Vice President, Hortense Zera - Vice President, Andra Corvino - Correspondence Secretary, Elizabeth McPherson - Secretary, Ernesta Corvino - Treasurer, Henning RübSam, Ani Udovicki, Lance Westergard, Megan Williams.

We at MHDF mourn the loss of Ethel Winter, one of our beloved founding members and treasure of the dance community



Photo: Arnold Eagle

Ethel Winter 1924 - 2012

### ***Ethel Winter to Receive Dance Award***

By Elizabeth McPherson

First published in *The Juilliard Journal*, November 2008.

Ethel Winter was my teacher at Juilliard, and I have strong memories of her positive energy, openness, and concern for students. She taught many other students during her tenure at the School from 1953-2003, and I recently asked several of them what they remember about her as a teacher. Each one emphasized the joy and enthusiasm that she brought to her teaching, her dancing, and her life. Winter radiates passion. So it's only natural that, on December 1, that passion will be celebrated as Ethel Winter receives the Martha Hill Dance Fund Lifetime Achievement Award for her multifaceted dedication to the dance field.

Born June 18, 1924, in Wrentham, Mass., Winter loved dance from an early age, taking classes at a local studio as a child and moving on as a teen to classes in ballet, tap, Spanish dance, classical Indian dance, and acrobatics in Boston. She knew that she wanted to pursue dance as a career,

but opportunities were limited in the United States in the 1940s, and her parents insisted that she go to college. She chose Bennington College in Vermont, an innovative, progressive school where the arts were considered equal among other academic subjects. Martha Hill (director of the Juilliard Dance Division from 1951 to 1985) was the director of dance at Bennington College at that time, and she and Winter developed a lifelong close friendship. William "Bill" Bales was Winter's primary modern dance teacher.

In the summer of 1943, Martha Graham was in residency at Bennington College and premiered her work *Deaths and Entrances*, which impressed Winter deeply. Graham technique was difficult for her at first, but she quickly grew to love the expressive and deep physical nature of it. She joined Graham's company in 1944 and continued until 1969, originating such roles as Helen of Troy in *Clytemnestra* and Aphrodite in *Phaedre*. Her lyrical quality, intensity, and diverse range defined her dancing, and those who saw her perform remember her as unforgettable. Of special distinction is the fact that Winter was the first dancer Graham chose to take over her roles.

Winter's career led her to Broadway, television, summer stock, dancing with Sophie Maslow's company, and directing and choreographing for her own company. In addition, she taught both nationally and internationally at numerous locations, including Juilliard and the Martha Graham School, for 50 years. She was one of the founders of the London School of Contemporary Dance in Britain and the Batsheva School in Israel.

Winter is that rare kind of gifted teacher that students remember years later for having led them to essential knowledge about themselves, dance, and life too. Perhaps it is the influence of her progressive education at Bennington College (from which she holds both bachelor's and master's degrees) that leads her to respect her students as people above all. Some dance teachers teach with the result being their primary objective; with Winter, process is equally, if not more, important. In this way, the road to becoming a dancer is filled with discovery and inner growth, as well as the more easily quantifiable outer growth.



*Night Forest, 1962*

Winter described her own teaching to me: "I like to use positive encouragement instead of negative criticism. A teacher can be firm without killing the spirit, an essential ingredient for the performer." She continued by describing how, as she grew more experienced as a teacher, she learned to value each student for whom they were without trying to mold everyone into one image.

Her students absorbed and valued this in her. Tony Powell (B.F.A. '95) remembers, "There was something very magical about Ethel's classes. She cared about each of us and knew our strengths and weaknesses firsthand. If you were struggling with something, she would put you in the front row, so you couldn't fade away into the background." Ani Udovicki (B.F.A. '85) remembers, "One felt that she saw you on your own terms and not against some ideal abstraction. Indeed, she could see even the tiniest attempt at moving in the right direction, and she celebrated it as if it were some great achievement. She would get closer, her voice and hands full of excitement, to congratulate one's efforts."

Newsletter designed and edited by Ani Udovicki

Dance is embedded in the very fabric of her life, yet Winter never loses sight of what it is to be human and to value that in herself and others. Tina Curran (B.F.A. '90) summarized the feelings of many of Winter's students: "I gained in Ethel's classes an understanding that dance comes from life, and that technique is a means to focus and heighten the ability of the body to be expressive, to share life. I will never forget Ethel's demonstration of a Graham contraction as an expression of joy. This image still resonates in my memory and in my body. The experience was an epiphany to recognize that dance is not only doing, but also an expression of being." Winter is an inspiration for the inner light and dignity she embodies and shares.

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Photos from the Ethel Winter personal archives with no credits available. If you have credit information, please contact [info@marthahilldance.com](mailto:info@marthahilldance.com)



*Teaching in Bern, Switzerland, 2004*

# THE MARTHA HILL DANCE FUND, LIMITED

April 1, 2012

Dear Friends:

The Martha Hill Documentary Project is very pleased to announce that we have 60 minutes of edited footage completed on the documentary film about Martha Hill, a film which will be instrumental in preserving her important legacy as a major figure in 20<sup>th</sup> century dance. The Martha Hill Dance Fund would like to thank you for your support over the years, which has allowed us to reach this exciting stage.

The Fund has raised and spent \$130,000 on production costs and we are now seeking funds for our post-production budget of \$75,000. This post-production stage includes securing rights for archival footage, final editing, color correcting and the composition of a music score. If we reach our fundraising goals in the next 6 months, it is very likely that we could have the film completed by year end. Therefore, we are asking everyone with interest in seeing this project completed to help us in any way possible. For all who were touched by Martha Hill, this is an excellent opportunity to make sure that her vision and work is solidified as a crucial element of dance history. In the future, we will have special screenings for donors to show the latest cut of the film.

The newly revamped Martha Hill Dance Fund website ([www.marthahilldance.org](http://www.marthahilldance.org).) has several pages dedicated to the Martha Hill Documentary Project, containing a preview of the documentary, news about upcoming screenings and events, and facility to accept online donations. The Martha Hill Dance Fund is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization which allows the project to receive tax-deductible grants and donations.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or suggestions for sources of support: [documentary@marthahilldance.org](mailto:documentary@marthahilldance.org) or (973)981-0579.

Martha Hill Dance Fund Board

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