



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

# Honorees 2009

Gala 2009 was distinguished by some surprises and changes in the established order of things. First, the Gala was not held at a Chinese restaurant! Murmurs of surprise, delight and disappointment were reported but everyone agreed that the new venue, The Cathedral on West 41st. St., was an excellent choice. The warm, spacious interior was welcoming and celebratory, and its wooden floor inspired an impromptu dance to break out, a first in the history of the Galas.

In addition to the three annual awards, MHDF presented a Special Citation to Hortense L. Zera for her lifetime dedication to dance in education and her vision to honor Martha Hill's legacy. It was at her prompting that the MHDF was created in 2000 with the goal of making a documentary.

Beverly Blossom was this year's honoree for the Lifetime Achievement Award. Ms. Blossom is a founding member of the Alwin Nikolais Dance Company, director of her own company, and is considered the doyenne of the art of solo dance. She has had a long association, as professor, with University of Illinois. Her work is noted by her singular wit and an irreverent sense of theatricality.

Virginia Johnson was honored with the Mid-Career Award in recognition of her trailblazing career with Dance Theatre of Harlem and her contribution to dance journalism, as managing editor of Pointe Magazine. We applaud her recent appointment to direct Dance Theatre of Harlem and extend our best wishes for a successful partnership.

Jacqueline Green, of The Ailey School, was this year's recipient of the Young Professional Award for the power and beauty of her dancing and her commitment to the pursuit of excellence in the studio and in performance.

Many thanks to Murray Louis, our charming, eloquent and humorous Master of Ceremonies, and to the presenters Jennifer Dunning, Michelle Burkhart, Melanie Person and Vernon Scott. Our gratitude also goes to the "Welcoming Committee", Jeannette Stoner, Ruth E. Grauert and Virginia Dillon, who took care of all the details concerning Beverly Blossom's stay in NYC.

Most newsworthy was the screening of the trailer for the documentary on Martha Hill. After years of working to get the documentary started, it was with much excitement and pride that we shared the result of our first steps in this project. Greg Vander Veer was asked to make the trailer and has now been commissioned to direct the documentary.



Photo: Tony Powell

From left to right: Beverly Blossom, Hortense Zera, Jacqueline Green and Virginia Johnson.

Mr. Vander Veer's most recent directorial credits include Keep Dancing, the story of Marge Champion and Donald Saddler, produced by Douglas Turnbaugh, also the producer of Ballet Russe.

Mr. Vander Veer brings to our project a love of dance (he was a cameraman for Sally Gross - The Pleasure of Stillness), a fresh eye, and a genuine interest in the story of Martha Hill. We are looking forward to having, at long last, a documentary on Martha Hill's life and work.

We believe that such a documentary is necessary not only as a tribute to a beloved woman and visionary, but also as a testament and a resource trove for future dance makers, historians and educators.

The Board would like to thank all its friends and benefactors whose support throughout the years has made the commissioning of the Martha Hill documentary possible. We are now engaged in the beginning phase of producing the movie. We hope to have a third of the project accomplished before the end of the year. Hopefully we will be able to screen it and share it with you at Gala 2010.

We need your continuous and renewed help in order to keep to schedule and bring the whole project to fruition within two years. In other words, we need to keep fund raising and we hope you will come to our assistance.

We are also interested in archival material and personal recollections. To contribute and make donations to the Martha Hill documentary, please contact us at: info@marthahilldance.org.

THANK YOU, MHDF BOARD

Work has started on the documentary on Martha Hill! Greg Vander Veer is the director.

To view photos of Gala 2009 and for updates on Gala on 2010 please visit our web site at [www.marthahilldance.org](http://www.marthahilldance.org)

## Profile of MHDF Board Member David K. Manion

by Elizabeth McPherson



Photo: Mark6

Born in Michigan, David was an early dance and theatre lover, taking dance classes starting at age 7, and performing in musicals in high school. He attended the University of Detroit as a Physics major and later the Chrysler School of Engineering, all the while maintaining his interest in theatre. During his service in the army as a military policeman during the Viet Nam war, David formed a Military Police Choir in Ft. Gordon, Georgia, and started a theatre at the air force base in Niagara Falls.

He continued following his interest in theatre after his service, performing at Wayne State's Hilberry Classic Stage. He turned his focus to dancing again as well as choreographing and was "discovered" by a producer of a West Side Story tour, quickly joining the company. West Side Story is his favorite of all the shows in which he performed, and there were many. After moving to New York City, David was hired by the Performing Arts Repertory Theater and soon became a sought after musical theatre choreographer nationally, including long-term stints at Viterbo College in Wisconsin and Clarke College in Iowa.

In 1976, he was hired to choreograph at the Theatre of the Riverside Church, which led to his positions as Executive Director and Artistic Director of the Theatre. In this dual position, he established the Riverside Dance Festival that ran for ten years from September to June, presenting sixty dance companies - choreographers each year.

Called a "dance explosion" by Clive Barnes, the festival had a significant impact on the course of modern dance through providing opportunities for emerging choreographers, exposure for established choreographers, and bringing the two groups together, sharing performances, and learning from each other.

Riverside Dance Festival brought David into contact with great numbers of dancers and choreographers such as Ohad Naharin, Mark Morris, Anna Sokolow, May O'Donnell, Ernesta Corvino, Pearl Primus, Phyllis Lamhut, Susan Jaffe, and Saeko Ichinohe. One RDF association he values particularly is the friendship he developed with Robert Joffrey who often attended the festival.

David K. Manion's original role with the Martha Hill Dance Fund was helping form the not-for-profit organization at the request of our first president Irwin Denis. In his current role as Chairman of the Martha Hill Dance Fund Board, David runs our meetings, and in general moderates between us and advises us. He has patiently, and with humor, guided those of us from the younger generation as we joined the board and developed our own roles and took on specific responsibilities. He is a person of wide-flung experience in dance and theatre that he draws upon and shares with those who work with him.

David fondly tells the story of driving back on a Sunday evening from a performance on Martha's Vineyard accompanied by Joffrey, Estelle Sommers, and Richard Englund. The traffic was so horrific, that they stopped and had a late dinner which lasted until midnight as the four friends were caught up in singing obscure Broadway musical songs and playing "Name that Musical!" Wouldn't it have been fun to be a fly on the wall?

It was also at the festival that he met Martha Hill who then approached him to work with her to produce a centenary tribute to Louis Horst. They met regularly in the Juilliard cafeteria for four months leading up to the event. While working with Martha, he developed a deep and lasting respect for her as a person and as an arts administrator.

David spent three years as the Administrative Director of the Yard and has been the Executive Director of The International Committee for the Dance Library of Israel since 1992. The Dance Library of Israel's immense collection (second only to the Dance Collection of the NYPL) covers diverse aspects of dance internationally through books, magazines, photographs, videos, and other archival materials. David has the opportunity to act as the go-between for donors and the library, picking up items, cataloguing them, and shipping them to Israel. In this role, he sees many wonderful and unique documents of dance history, such as materials from the Riverside Dance Festival, the Ballet Russe, and the estates of Anna Sokolow, Pauline Koner, and Sophie Maslow.

After a long career dedicated to dance and theatre performance, in his current positions as Executive Director of The Dance Library of Israel, Chairman of the Martha Hill Dance Fund Board, and as a board member of the Louis Falco Dance Project, David now acts as a custodian for the future of dance, celebrating and documenting the past to firm up a scaffold for what is to come.

Lifetime Achievement Award 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 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

THOMAS BAIRD, Board Member, is collaborating with the Historical Dance Theatre and the NY Historical Society on a lecture demonstration on the dances performed at Abraham Lincoln's Inaugural Ball in 1861. This project is in conjunction with the exhibit on Lincoln at the NY Historical Society; the dates for the lecture demos are February 20th and March 13th at 1pm.

CHRISTOPHER VO (Young Professional Award '05) continues dancing for Lar Lubovitch and is just back from his first tour to China. The company is performing at The Joyce early in March and later in the summer at The Spoleto Festival, Italy. He is staging Lar's Concerto Six Twenty-Two on the students at Marymount for their Spring Season. And, he teaches fitness classes at Equinox Fitness Clubs. It keeps him in shape during his rare time off!

ELIZABETH MCPHERSON, Board Member, is newly appointed Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the BA in Dance Education at Montclair State University. She is staging Donald McKayle's Games and Helen Tamiris' Negro Spirituals for MSU's Repertory Dance Company's upcoming performances April 7-11.

ANI UDOVICKI, Board Member, organized a benefit for Haiti at the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, where she teaches, on February 4th. Participants included students and young professionals from Graham, Cunningham, ABT, Ballet Hispanico, Ailey/Fordham, Hofstra University, The Fieldston School and several NYC High Schools. Proceeds were donated to Doctors Without Borders.

LEVI MARSMAN (Young Professional Award '07) is completing his second year with Ailey II. He is going on an extended national tour in February and March. New York audiences can see the company in April at The Joyce's 1...2...3...festival.

MARY ANTHONY (Lifetime Achievement Award '06) will have her work The Devil in Massachusetts performed for the first time in 50 years. The dance was reconstructed by 360° Dance Company and it will be presented at Dance Theater Workshop in June 2010.

## BOOKS OUT NOW

Equipoise: The Life and Work of Alfredo Corvino by Dawn Lille, Rosen Publishing, ('09). May be purchased at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Martha Hill and the Making of American Dance by Janet Mansfield Soares, Wesleyan University Press, ('09). May be purchased at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

The Contributions of Martha Hill to American Dance and Dance Education, 1900 - 1995 by Elisabeth McPherson, The Edwin Mellen Press, ('08). May be purchased at [www.mellenpress.com](http://www.mellenpress.com) or contact Elisabeth McPherson at [emm2072000@yahoo.com](mailto:emm2072000@yahoo.com)

Ethel Winter and Her Choreography En Dolor by Karin Hermes, ('07). May be purchased at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

PLEASE SEND YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS TO [info@marthahilldance.org](mailto:info@marthahilldance.org)  
OR WRITE TO US AT MARTHA HILL DANCE FUND  
C/O ERNESTA CORVINO, 451 WEST 50TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10019

## REMEMBERING

### Francis Mason 1921-2009



Francis Mason passed away on September 24th, 2009, at his home in Rye, NY. Born in Jacksonville, FL, in 1921, he graduated from St. John's College in Annapolis and joined the Navy during

World War II, participating in D-Day. His interest in dance began in the late 40's and throughout his long career as editor, writer, diplomat, radio and dance critic, his contributions to the field were both erudite and passionate, with a high degree of personal commitment to each endeavor he pursued. As cultural attaché in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, (1956-60), and especially in London (1960-65), he was instrumental in the early success abroad of Balanchine, Graham, Cunningham and Ailey which in turn helped further their careers at home. He developed a lifelong association with Balanchine and Graham.

In 1954 he was principal editor of Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets, and in 1991

he published I Remember Balanchine, an anthology of interviews with people who had worked with the choreographer from the 20's through the 80's. He served on the Graham company board twice as chairman, from 1974 to 1976 and from 2000 to 2007.

As a critic he was a beloved presence on WQXR-FM radio station for many years, and he was editor of Ballet Review since 1980. He received the Martha Hill Dance Fund Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003. A memorial was held at The Joyce Theater on October 30th.

The MHDF Board joins the dance community in mourning the loss of Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) and Pina Bausch (1940-2009) whose work shaped the course of dance in the second half of the 20th century. They will be missed and their legacy honored.

Newsletter designed and edited by Ani Udovicki

MHDF BOARD We welcome new board member Thomas Baird.  
Vernon Scott - President, David K. Manion - Chairman, Hudas Liff - Vice President, Hortense Zera - Vice President, Andra Corvino - Vice President, Elizabeth McPherson - Secretary, Ernesta Corvino - Treasurer, Thomas Baird, Henning Rübsam, Ani Udovicki