



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.

MHDF Honorees 2008



Ethel Winter first from the right,
with Daniel Lewis and Marian Seldes

Lifetime Achievement Award

Ethel Winter was born in Wrentham, Massachusetts, and earned her BA and MA from Bennington College under the direction of Martha Hill. Acclaimed in her many principal roles, Winter performed with the Martha Graham Company for 25 years. She was a soloist with the Sophie Maslow Co., appeared in summer stock, TV, Broadway productions, and directed and choreographed for her own company.

Winter taught extensively nationally and internationally. She was a founder of the London School of Contemporary Dance in Britain and the Batsheva School in Israel. She has been on the faculty at The Martha Graham School (1946 - 2006) and The Juilliard School (1953 - 2003).



Janet Panetta

Mid-Career Award

Janet Panetta has operated her own dance studio in New York since 1973. A gifted teacher, she travels internationally to teach at PARTS studio in Brussels, CCN in Montpellier France, Impuls Tanz Festival in Vienna, and Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch in Germany. Her extensive performing career includes work with American Ballet Theatre and Paul Sanasardo Dance Company, as well as performing and choreographing for her own company for ten years.



Lilli-Anne Tai with William Henderson

Young Professional Award

Lilli-Anne Tai from Queens, NY, has trained at Studio E in Queens, New World School of the Arts in Miami, the Miami Conservatory of Ballet, and on scholarship at Dance Theatre of Harlem and The Ailey School. In 2005, she was an ARTS award recipient from the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts, and in 2008 she was awarded First Prize in Contemporary Dance at the Seoul Int'l Dance Competition. Lilli is currently a dancer with Evidence, (Ronald K. Brown, Artistic Director), and is finishing her senior year in the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program.

Photos Tony Powell

A NOTE FROM THE BOARD – THANK YOU

to all our friends who contributed by their presence and their support to make GALA 2008 a very special evening. It was one of the best-attended galas, with over one hundred thirty guests.

Our gratitude to Marian Seldes for being our gracious Master of Ceremonies, and to our presenters, Daniel Lewis, Nancy Alfaro and Sylvia Waters.

We acknowledge the generous permission of American Dance Festival to screen footage of Martha Hill from NYU and Bennington College. And, we thank Victoria Geduld for underwriting the projection equipment and operator for the evening.

Special Thanks to our Golden Benefactors and Benefactors.

To view photos of Gala 2008 and for updates on Gala 2009 please visit our website
www.marthahilldance.org



Photo Eduardo Patino

Sylvia Waters

Congratulations to Board member Sylvia Waters on her Dance Magazine Award 2008!

Sylvia Waters has been closely associated with the work of Alvin Ailey, first as company member and principal dancer and, since 1975, as the director of Ailey II. In a recent conversation she spoke with wonderment and still palpable excitement about NYC in the late 50's and 60's, the amount of talent among dancers and choreographers, the performances at the 92nd St. Y and Hunter College, and the anticipation they generated. She remembers Juilliard as "quite a magical place," and living and working in Paris, upon graduation, as "a really wonderful experience for me as a dancer and as a young woman." Then, in 1968, came Alvin Ailey.

Legend has it that it was Martha Hill who suggested you go to Alvin Ailey. What exactly happened?

Well, Miss Hill gave me some pretty sound advice and later I capitalized on that advice. Of course I knew Ailey, she didn't send me to him but she did tell me that she believed he was going to be the next big thing in American dance. We met on the subway, shortly after I graduated, and I was thinking of moving to Paris. Miss Hill advised me to take classes with Ailey and to keep working on my ballet. Then the train stopped, the doors opened and she was gone! Four years later, in 1968, I joined Alvin's company. I was back from Paris on a break when he asked me if I was available to work with him. It meant leaving Paris, not going back to Béjart and committing myself, long term, to Alvin's work. It was an important decision but not a difficult one. I loved Ailey's work, I thought he was wonderful, as a person and as a dancer. I had seen his first performance at the 92nd St. Y, and before that, I had taken classes with him at the New Dance Group. Over the years, we kept running into each other at concerts and in studios but the timing was never right for us to work together. When he asked me that time, in '68, I knew I had to act fast and I felt I was ready. I believe certain things happen at the right time.

What was it like working with him in the studio, as a dancer?

He was very generous with himself and his choreography. He was very interested in the individual, in what you, as a person, would bring to the steps. He gave one a certain amount of latitude in how to approach a role.

Is there a dance that you remember with special affection?

Working on the creation of "Masekela Language" in '69 was very special. Everyone in the piece was a character and it was during the height of the civil rights movement. It was a very personal, moving process for all of us. Alvin was outraged at a particular incident, which he never explicitly discussed with us, but we could tell by the movement that the choreography came from a deep, private place. As he worked on it, and through it, he called upon each of us to bring ourselves into the process and put ourselves into the characters.

From performer to company director, was it an easy, natural transition?

I never anticipated being a director. I thought I would be an actress. Having the responsibility of helping younger dancers was a very interesting challenge for me. It took me a long time before I realized that I wished to create the very thing I had needed, but never had, as a young dancer. There were no second companies when I was coming along and I had no one to help and tell me – How do you get in, join a company? How do you know when it is your turn? When all you want is to dance, to reinvent yourself, to learn those roles, be that character, how do you learn patience? I decided I would try to provide that guidance, as a director. I hoped to be able to enrich the young dancers' transition from the classroom to the stage.

What are some of the challenges of teaching and coaching the Ailey repertory?

When you are transferring material you feel very responsible to transfer the integrity of the work as well as the steps. You feel like the gatekeeper of intention and integrity. It is very important for the dancers to understand what the work is about, and what their responsibilities are as artists. They need to absorb the information, retain it and give it back, and they need to do it with honesty. They must understand that artistry and honesty are almost one and the same.

You spend a lot of time touring with the company even though the idea was at first for you to stay at home with your family. How do you feel about it now that your son is grown up?

I like to travel and see new places, meet new people. I enjoy touring, the process of arriving and adapting the show to a new space, a different audience. When I was five or six years old I had a puzzle map of the United States. I was fascinated with that map and I would take it apart and put it together constantly. It hit me one day that, maybe, from early on travel has been part of what I love to do.

Interview by Ani Udovicki, February '09.



Photos by NeBo

The Story Behind the Statue

by Ani Udovicki

The story behind the statue is really the story of a friendship, the friendship of Hortense Zera and Martha Hill. The two young women met at NYU, in the early 30's, at the School of Education. Martha Hill was Instructor in Dance and Horthy, as everyone calls her, was a girl from Brooklyn, just sixteen, enrolled in the Physical Education Department. Over the course of her studies, Hortense discovered modern dance, fell in love with it, and developed a great admiration for her teacher. Much to Horthy's surprise, upon graduation, Martha Hill invited her to become her assistant at the Bennington School of the Dance summer program. "Imagine my happiness when Miss Hill asked me to be her assistant in dance classes. I was amazed. I couldn't believe she was asking me, what did I know, just out of school? But I loved Martha, I would do anything for her," she says, "So I accepted." For the next six years Horthy spent the summers working with Martha Hill. In the summer of 1938, photographer Thomas Bouchard took a series of pictures of Hill dancing on the Bennington College tennis court. She is barefoot with her hair down, in a long skirt, torso in full swing, arms reaching strongly into space.

Half a decade later, one of those pictures inspired Horthy to make a clay figure of Martha dancing. Still later, in 1993, she cast the sculpture in bronze. Between the time the picture was taken to the birth of the statue, a life-long friendship evolved. The two friends shared not only their passion for dance and education, but also their personal lives, growing very fond of each other's families and spending a lot of time together. "It was easy," Horthy says with a smile, "we both lived in New York." Although they never worked together again after the Bennington years, they remained keenly involved in and supportive of each other's professional activities. Martha started the dance division at Juilliard and Horthy taught dance as physical education in the city's schools for thirty years. When she retired she began to paint and sculpt. "I am not an artist," she says. With a wave of her hand, she points to the walls of her apartment covered with paintings and adds, "This is just something I can do." Her favorite subjects are monkeys but she occasionally draws inspiration from people.

Martha Hill passed away in 1995. Determined to "keep Martha's name alive in the dance world" Horthy approached their mutual friend Irwin Denis and suggested they create a Dance Fund. "What I really wanted to do, and we are still trying to do, is to make a movie, a documentary about Martha." In 2000, the Martha Hill Dance Fund was established, with Irwin Denis as President of the Board, Horthy as Vice-President. They were joined by Carolyn Adams, Hudas Liff, David K. Manion, Janet Mansfield Soares, Doris Rudko, Ethel Winter and Carl Wolz. The first Gala, conceived as a celebration of Martha Hill's life and work was held in December 2000 at a restaurant in Chinatown "because, as everyone knows, Martha loved Chinese food." The evening was a big success, a festive event attended by legions of Martha Hill's friends, colleagues and students. It showed that the dance community was eager to embrace and contribute to the preservation of her legacy. Horthy was delighted and reassured in her plans to pursue a lasting tribute to her friend and dance visionary. The following year the board created the Martha Hill Lifetime Achievement Award, to be presented annually for demonstrated leadership in dance.

The award would be accompanied with Horthy's bronze statue of Martha Hill. Each honoree would keep the statue for a year, and pass it on to the next recipient of the award.

Today, no one remembers whose idea it was to give the statue, but the spirit of the award and the statue speak in the name of the entire Board. Each year, as the statue passes from one person to another, from one home to another, new and old friendships develop and the dialogue with Martha Hill continues. This is what Horthy wanted, and what makes her happy. Forever busy with plans for the future, she would like "to get started on the documentary and to have a dance studio at Juilliard named after Martha Hill. She was a very special person, she started it all, she deserves it."



Hortense Zera

PLEASE SEND YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS TO info@marthahilldance.org
OR WRITE TO US AT **MARTHA HILL DANCE FUND**
C/O ERNESTA CORVINO, 451 WEST 50TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10019

Lifetime Achievement Award (\$3,000) 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
Carl Wolz Award 2003 Mira Kim
Mid-Career Award (\$2,000) 2008 Janet Panetta, 2007 David Dorfman, 2006 Doug Elkins
Young Professional Award (\$1,000) 2008 Lilli-Anne Tai, 2007 Levi Marsman, 2006 Katie Dorn, 2005 Christopher Vo, 2004 Mollie Mae McGregor

FLASH NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS to Board member HENNING RÜBSAM, recipient of Bergen Community College's *Distinguished Artist Award 2009*. Previous recipients include Olympia Dukakis and composer Philip Glass. Rüksam is the first dance artist to be so honored.

360° Dance Company will present the reconstruction of Mary Anthony's 1952 *The Devil in Massachusetts* at the Ailey Studios on May 9th. For details visit www.360fullcircle.net

DOUG ELKINS (Mid-Career Award '06) hosted as well as performed an excerpt from his *Fräulein Maria*, in *Modern [Dance] Musicals* presented at Joe's Pub at the Public Theater, NYC, in March '09.

CHRISTOPHER VO (Young Professional Award '05) graduated from The Juilliard School in May '08 and has joined the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company. He is the recipient of the *2007 Princess Grace Dance Scholarship* and is featured in Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch in 2009."

KATIE DORN (Young Professional Award, '06) performed in Mary Seidman's *MAMA a Modern Folktale* at La Mama Theater in December '08. She will be performing with Lucinda Childs at Bard College's SummerScapes in July. Katie has recently presented her own work at Studio AIR in Brooklyn as well as at the Flickinger Performing Arts Center in Buffalo, NY.

LEVI MARSMAN (Young Professional Award '07) is in his second season performing with Ailey II.

FOR THE PURPOSE OF A DOCUMENTARY ON MARTHA HILL WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTRIBUTION OF ANY FOOTAGE

SOON OUT

Fall 2009

Equipoise: The Life and Work of Alfredo Corvino,

by Dawn Lille, Rosen Publishing.

For details go to www.corvinoballet.org and click on item:

A.A. Corvino Book.

June 2009

Martha Hill and the Making of American Dance by Janet Mansfield Soares, Wesleyan University Press.

May be purchased at www.amazon.com

OUT NOW

The Contributions of Martha Hill to American Dance and Dance Education, 1990-1995 by Elizabeth McPherson, the Edwin Mellen Press, ('08).

May be purchased at www.mellenpress.com or contact Elizabeth McPherson at emm2072000@yahoo.com

Ethel Winter and Her Choreography En Dolor by Karin Hermes, ('07).

May be purchased at www.amazon.com

REMEMBERING

Doris Rudko 1919 - 2008



Doris Rudko passed away on October 29, 2008. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison's dance program under Margaret H'Doubler, Doris Rudko was a longtime faculty member of New York City's High School of Performing Arts (1949-1963) and Juilliard (1969-1992). A much-beloved dance composition teacher, Rudko employed a method she had developed from her own studies including working as an assistant to Louis Horst. She influenced generations of choreographers such as H.T. Chen, Robert Battle, Rebecca Stenn, Neta Pulvermacher, Henning Rüksam, Stanley Love, and Tony Powell.

Rudko was a founding board member of the Martha Hill Dance Fund, and received its Lifetime Achievement Award along with Donald McKayle in 2004.

Chen Dance Center dedicated a studio to Rudko during the Memorial Service held on February 21, 2009.

Contributions may be made to The Juilliard School for the Doris Rudko Scholarship Fund.

Pearl Lang 1921-2009



Pearl Lang passed away on February 24, 2009. Born in Chicago in 1921, Lang moved to New York in 1941 to study with Martha Graham. She soon joined the Martha Graham Dance Company, and would remain a member on and off until 1978. In 1953, Lang formed her own company for whom she would choreograph numerous works. She has choreographed and staged works for various other dance companies including Boston Ballet and Batsheva Dance Company of Israel and taught at The Juilliard School and the Yale School

of Drama. Lang has received awards and honors from the American Dance Festival, the Guggenheim Foundation, and Artists and Writers for Peace in the Middle East, to name a few. She was honored with the Martha Hill Dance Fund Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007.

Newsletter designed and written by Ani Udovicki with contributions by Elizabeth McPherson.

MHDF BOARD We welcome new board member Ani Udovicki.

Hudas Liff - President, David K. Manion - Chairman, Vernon Scott - Vice-President, Hortense Zera - Vice-President, Elizabeth McPherson - Secretary, Ernesta Corvino - Treasurer, Andra Corvino, Henning Rüksam, Ani Udovicki, Sylvia Waters, Ethel Winter.