



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 2016

When the Martha Hill Dance Fund family gathers, as it did last year for the gala held on November 21, it is a time to see friends, renew old friendships, make new friends and celebrate the awardees who are being honored. Held at the Manhattan Penthouse, the room sparkled above the skyline as we shared old memories, made new ones and honored the legacy that is Miss Hill. A festive meal was shared at tables decorated with centerpieces designed by Board member Lance Westergard and a good time was had by all as the awardees were announced and celebrated.

The evening began with a warm welcome by the Gala Co-Chairs Rebecca Stenn and Megan Williams and was then turned over to our wonderfully engaging Master of Ceremonies, Jacqueline Z. Davis. Ms. Davis is executive director of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, where she oversees a collection of more than 9 million items related to performance.

This year a **Special Citation Award** was given to the much beloved accompanist Reed Hansen for his over five decades working with dance. He was introduced by Terese Capucilli, a dance luminary now turned film maker, who is producing a new film, *Reed Hansen, the "Sacrosanct" Accompanist*. His reception was warm and most heartfelt.

Matthew Rushing presented the **Mid-Career Award** to Frederick Earl Mosley. An outstanding performer, choreographer and teacher, Mr. Mosley is well known for his passion of mentoring and encouraging young dancers to reach for their dreams. He is the Founder and Director of Diversity of Dance, a non-profit that is committed to appreciating the differences that truly make each artist unique.

In a lovely demonstration of how we are all so connected, Mr. Mosley then returned to the podium to present the **Young Professional Award** to Eric Parra. Mr. Parra began his dance training at Montclair State University where he is currently a senior. He works with Mr. Mosley in Diversity of Dance.

Tina Curran presented the **Martha Hill Lifetime Achievement Award** to Ann Hutchinson Guest. A founder of the Dance Notation Bureau in New York, Mrs. Guest is the author of the definitive textbooks on Labanotation. Realizing the importance of understanding movement, she established The Language of Dance Centre in London in 1967, the USA Language of Dance Center in 1997 and, more recently, centers have been established in Tokyo and Mexico City. At the conclusion of her acceptance remarks Ms. Guest regaled us with an impromptu jig across the floor. Given Mrs. Guest's 98 years, it was a performance that delighted and astonished.

Wendy Perron was up next presenting the **Martha Hill Lifetime Achievement Award** to Deborah Jowitt. Ms. Jowitt began writing a regular dance column for the *Village Voice* in 1967 and her articles have appeared in most major publications. Her book *Time and the Dancing Image* received the de la Torre Bueno Prize in 1988. She taught at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts from 1975 to 2016. She is a founding member of the Dance Critics Association, a member of the Dance Advisory Panel to the National Council on the Arts. She was granted a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2002, and was a Dance Magazine awardee in 2010. Ms. Jowitt currently posts her reviews at the website [www.artsjournal.com/dancebeat](http://www.artsjournal.com/dancebeat).



Ann Hutchinson Guest



Vernon Scott, Deborah Jowitt and Wendy Perron



Earl Mosley, Eric Parra and Elizabeth McPherson

Gala photos: Tony Powell

## Interview with Rebecca Stenn and Megan Williams by Allen Maniker



Megan Williams and Rebecca Stenn

photo: Allen Maniker

On a cold winter evening I had the opportunity to sit down and talk dance with two distinguished artists and members of the Martha Hill Dance Fund Board. They have worked as co-chairs for the last five years of the Martha Hill Dance Fund Galas.

**Rebecca Stenn**, dancer, choreographer, educator, writer, founded Rebecca Stenn Company in 1996. The company has since performed to critical acclaim in over 50 cities, nationally and internationally. As a principal dancer with Momix Dance Theater from 1989 to 1996, Stenn performed in over 30 countries and throughout the U.S. and appeared as a featured performer in films for Italian, Spanish and French television. Stenn is a founding member of Pilobolus Too and has been a contributing editor at Dance Magazine and The Dance Insider. Stenn is on faculty at The New School and Princeton University and is Choreographer-in-Residence at Dartmouth College. She holds a BFA from The Juilliard School and an MFA from The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. She has been a member of the Martha Hill Dance Fund Board since 2012.

**Megan Williams** is an independent dance artist, with a BFA from the Juilliard School, and an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College. Her choreography has been produced by 10 Hairy Legs, Dancenow NYC and many others.

In 1988, after dancing for Laura Glenn, Mark Haim and Ohad Naharin, she joined the Mark Morris Dance Group, with whom she danced for 10 years. She continues to stage Morris' work on ballet companies and student groups. From 2000-2013 she was on the modern dance faculty of the Conservatory of Dance at Purchase College, State University of New York, and is currently an adjunct professor at Connecticut College. She teaches in the Dance for Parkinsons Disease program and has served on the Martha Hill Dance Fund Board since 2011. She is currently collaborating with composer Eve Beglarian on a new dance, and has a commission for a full evening work at Joe's Pub, NYC in 2018.

### When did you start to dance?

**RS:** My mother brought me to ballet class at the age of 3, at the suggestion of our pediatrician – I was born with one inwardly turned foot and he thought ballet would help turn it out. But I immediately knew that this was what I would do for a career, even at that early age.

**MW:** I grew up in LA and was taken to a movement class at the age of 5 as a way to channel some excess physical energy, and because dance class was what little girls did!

### How did you get to Juilliard?

**RS:** Most of my training was in ballet when we moved to Ontario Canada. I then went to Interlochen Academy for high school and for my senior year I went to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and was very seriously in the ballet world. During a rehearsal for *Swan Lake* I had an epiphany where I realized that I could not do this type of work for the rest of my life. I had heard of Juilliard and modern dance and that is when I decided to go there. I started at Juilliard in 1986.

**MW:** In LA, I went to a junior high that had an arts program where I was first exposed to modern dance and to a lot of musical theater. I did not have strict ballet training at all. My mother and I moved to Toronto when I started high school and I became a jazz dancer. At 16, I was performing with a teen jazz company when I met Gregory Mitchell, a Juilliard Alum who taught us a master class. He told me that Juilliard would be a good fit. I started there in 1980.

### The two of you did not overlap at Juilliard?

**RS:** No, we met at the Martha Hill Dance Fund Board. I had heard of Megan, and had long admired her dancing, but we had not met previously.

**MW:** Rebecca and I did not know each other personally, we were aware and admiring of each other professionally prior to working together on the board. It is because of the board and co-chairing that our ever growing friendship and artistic work together began. Rebecca asked me to dance in her work last year and we will dance again later this year.

### What was your relationship with Miss Hill?

**RS:** My first year, was Miss Hill's first Emeritus year but she was very much a presence. Miss Hill liked me and was very supportive. She liked me not only as a dancer but as a thinker. I very much appreciated that.

**MW:** She initially scared the lights out of me, her opinions were strong. It was right at the end of her time as Head of the Division and there was a real spirit of rebellion and change amongst the students. She and I had our moments of conflict, but I was generally a very obedient student and she was encouraging and supportive of me. She taught me some hard lessons and helped me with many professional connections.

### Who were your major influences at Juilliard?

**RS:** Jill Beck, a Labanotation and Dance History teacher. Richard Feldman, a theater teacher who taught the Drama for Dancers class. Pia Gilbert and Ed Bilous were also important influences. I met Moses Pendleton, orchestrated through Jill Beck, and that started my career with him and Momix. The people I met and worked with at Juilliard really helped me launch my career.

**MW:** I was deemed in the "Limon" camp and got to work closely with Danny Lewis. Ethel Winter and Alfredo Corvino were also beloved teachers. Ruby Shang taught the "newer" modern and set Paul Taylor repertoire which was very important to me. I was in three original Anna Sokolow works. Mari Kajiwara, Ohad Naharin's wife, set an Ailey work my senior year and introduced me to Ohad, with whom I later worked. All were influential, and so were my peers.

### What do you see as the mission of the Martha Hill Dance Fund Board?

**RS:** The field is being. Miss Hill was devoted to furthering the idea by being totally dedicated to the nurturing of dancers, choreographers and thinkers. Now, as an educator and choreographer I feel it is our duty to continue this legacy of furthering the field by supporting the young and the up and coming.

**MW:** Yes, legacy, and I think about education more than ever. Through the years, MHDF has tried to balance our awards between performers, choreographers, educators, scholars and writers. I think we could fine tune that to have an award or research grant earmarked for an educator in the field, to not only honor life-time achievement, but someone who is active and making visionary contributions to dance education.

### What do you see as the future of the Board?

**RS:** Miss Hill was a builder and a starter and I would like to see the Board get behind new ideas to further move her legacy forward.

**MW:** The Fund is known for its annual Gala event. How can we be more visible throughout the year? We are ready and excited to seek out some fresh shifts in our focus that will keep MHDF current and relevant and will connect the work we do to what is happening now.



Megan Williams and Rebecca Stenn in Ms Stenn's *Bridgemaker*

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

**Lifetime Achievement Award** 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** 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

## FLASH NEWS FROM OUR HONOREES

**Daniel Lewis** (Lifetime Achievement Honoree 2011) has been very busy since his retirement from The New World School of the Arts. In addition to staging works by Limon and Humphrey, teaching master classes all around the world, he has been organizing his archives and collaborating on his biography with author Donna Krasnow. His archive, documenting 67 years as a dancer, choreographer, teacher, photographer and company director, will be housed at the University of Florida Library in Gainesville and called the Daniel Lewis Dance Research Library.

**Dian Dong and H.T. Chen** (Mid-Career Honorees 2012) This year their company reached audiences of all ages through touring of *South of Gold Mountain* to TX, MA, VT, upstate NY, as well as through educational performances for young audience in NYC. In addition, over 400 children per week attended on-going classes at Chen Dance Center and at PS 42M. Chen Dance Center also supported emerging choreographers through its Newsteps Series, CO-Production series and residency programs. The highlight of the season was visiting Bennington College and the Martha Hill Dance Theater!

**Janet Panetta** (Mid-Career Honoree 2008) was featured in *Dance Teacher Magazine*, January 2017. The article, *How I Teach Ballet to Contemporary Dancers*, by Rachel Caldwell, stresses Panetta's calm, holistic, and sometimes humorous approach to ballet training. "Often dancers don't know how easy ballet is."

One of the things I like to say in class is, "Ballet has been around forever. No one would have done it if it was that hard." To access the full article, please visit <http://www.dance-teacher.com/2017/01/janet-panetta-teach-ballet-contemporary-dancers/>

Congratulations to **Molly Mae MacGregor** (Young Professional Honoree 2004) as her recent wedding! In the past year she joined the teaching faculties at Kinected Pilates Center and at Alexandra Beller + Dance's Summer Intensive. She has joined FAMI (Functional Anatomy for Movement and Injuries) as Team Coordinator. FAMI's immersive anatomy workshops for movement professionals are held at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai. She will also be working with Westside Dance Physical Therapy and Hatch NYC as a Pilates/Movement Education specialist.

**Eric Parra** (Young Professional Honoree 2016) will be graduating this May from Montclair State University. He is thankful to his parents, friends and mentors who supported him in every step of the journey so far. Looking ahead, he will enter the professional world of dance with an open heart and mind.

**Danielle Reinstein** (Young Professional Honoree 2014) is currently freelancing in New York with a few different projects and companies, including Mook Dance Company and Bianca Johnson + Dancers.

## MHDF BOARD

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