



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 2017**

On November 20, 2017, the Martha Hill dance family once again gathered to celebrate her legacy at the annual Martha Hill Dance Fund Gala. Old friends met up, new ones were made and the awardees that were being honored were applauded. Held again at the Manhattan Penthouse, the venue has become a familiar gathering for our gala. A festive meal was shared at tables decorated with flowers designed by Board member Lance Westergard and a good time was had by all as the awardees were announced and celebrated and Miss Hill's memory was honored.

The evening began with a warm welcome by our Gala Chair and President, Vernon Scott, and was then turned over to our distinguished Master of Ceremonies, Martin Wechsler. Mr. Wechsler, a graduate of Oberlin College, has been the longtime Director of Programming at the Joyce Theater. He recently announced that he would be stepping down, after 22 years in the position, at the end of December. Beginning as an administrative assistant he has devoted 33 years to this important dance venue. He has helped shape the Joyce Theater into one of the world's leading presenters of dance. Each year he selected over 40 companies to present at the theater. Mr. Wechsler also oversaw The Joyce's Commissioning program, allocating approximately \$75,000 each year to choreographers and dance companies to help fund the creation of new dance works.

Our awards ceremony began with a presentation by Theresa Howard to our **Mid-Career awardee** Robert Garland.

Mr. Garland was a principal dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem. Arthur Mitchell invited him to choreograph a work for Dance Theatre of Harlem and upon his retirement from the stage, he was appointed the organization's first Resident Choreographer. He has created works for Dance Theatre of Harlem and their School Ensemble as well as for New York City Ballet, The Royal Ballet, and Oakland Ballet, among many others. His commercial work has included music videos, commercials and short films.

Next up was Jodi Melnick who presented our second **Mid-Career Award** to Denise Roberts Hurlin. Ms. Hurlin graduated from the Conservatory of Dance at Purchase College with a BFA in Dance. As a dancer, she was a founding member of Parsons Dance and performed for six years with the Paul Taylor Dance Company where she danced many lead roles. In 1991, she and Hernando Cortez co-founded Dancers Responding to AIDS. She continues to lead the program's efforts to provide a safety net for the dance community. She is also an inaugural member of the Advisory Council for The Dancers' Resource, a program of The Actors Fund founded by Bebe Neuwirth.

Finally, came our **Lifetime Achievement** awardees. We were treated to some relaxation exercises by Joan Finkelstein in her introduction of Alice Teirstein. Ms. Teirstein has been choreographing, performing, and teaching dance in New York since the early 1970's. She is Founding Director of Young Dancemakers Company, a tuition-free company of NYC teens, now entering its 23rd season, presenting free concerts of original student choreography throughout NYC. Ms. Teirstein designed and directed the dance curriculum for grades 7-12 at the Fieldston School, where she served on the faculty for over 30 years.

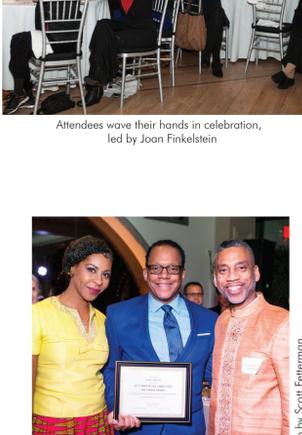
She initiated the dance program's Dance Out Project, bringing her students into the city's homeless shelters, leading dance workshops for which she received an award from the City of NY Human Resources Administration. She designed and led the decade-long Fieldston Summer Performing Arts Institute in the 1980's. Her awards include a 2012 "Bessie" and 2015 Lifetime Achievement Awards from the NY State Dance Education Association and from the American Dance Guild. Giving her acceptance speech Ms. Teirstein graciously called up and acknowledged two of her students as well as her family that had accompanied her to the gala.

Next, previous Lifetime Achievement awardee, Deborah Jowitz introduced our second **Lifetime Achievement** awardee, Norton Owen. Mr. Owen has been associated with Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival since 1976 and has been Director of Preservation since 1990. He is a key member of the team that produces Virtual Pillow, an online engagement effort that reaches audiences worldwide. Previous awards received are from Dance Films Association, Dance USA and the José Limón Dance Foundation. The modesty he touchingly expressed in his acceptance speech belied the enormous contribution he has made to the dance world.

It should be noted that this year the MHDF had the idea to forgo its young professional award and instead distribute the money so that 10 students from the area dance programs could attend our gala. They were able to enjoy the evening while meeting students from other programs, and to learn from the vast amount of talent and history present in the room. From the enthusiastic feedback received from the students, it was a most successful idea.

As our dear Chairman of the Board, David K. Manion, was indisposed it fell to Allen Maniker, Board member, to conclude the evening with a few summary remarks. It was a gala evening, indeed!

Thank you, the MHDF Board



Attendees wave their hands in celebration, led by Joan Finkelstein



Theresa Howard, Robert Garland and Vernon Scott



Denise Roberts Hurlin, Jodi Melnick and Megan Williams

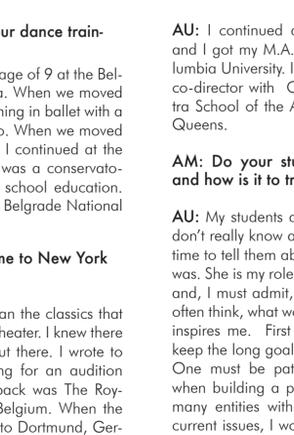


Elizabeth McPherson, Alice Teirstein and Joan Finkelstein



Norton Owen, Deborah Jowitz and Yasuko Tokunaga

**Interview with Ani Udovicki  
by Allen Mankier**



Ani Udovicki, welcome address Gala 2017

Today I had the great pleasure of spending time and getting to know Martha Hill Dance Fund (MHDF) Board member and Editor of the MHDF newsletter Ani Udovicki. Here is some of our conversation:

**Allen Mankier:**  
**How long have you been on the Board Ani?**

**Ani Udovicki:** Well for as long as I have been editor of the newsletter so that makes it 10 years. Vernon Scott (MHDF Board President) and I were at Juilliard together and at one of the MHDF galas I approached him and told him I would do anything for Miss Hill and to let me know if I could volunteer and help in any way. As I was accepted onto the Board they also asked me to put together the annual newsletter. I thought it was funny that they would ask someone with my English accent to put the newsletter together.

**AM: I do hear an accent but I cannot place it.**

**AU:** Well, it's complicated. I was born in the United States, learning Spanish and English but at the age of 5 our family moved to Belgrade in what was then Yugoslavia and I learned to speak Serbo-Croatian. At 10 years of age we moved to Uruguay so I began speaking Spanish again. We then moved back to Belgrade when I was 14, going back to Serbo-Croatian.

**AM: When did you begin your dance training?**

**AU:** I began my training at the age of 9 at the Belgrade Ballet School, Yugoslavia. When we moved to Uruguay, I continued my training in ballet with a local person, Susanna Mondino. When we moved back to Belgrade 4 years later I continued at the Belgrade Ballet School, which was a conservatory that also gave me my high school education. When I graduated, I joined the Belgrade National Theater, Ballet.

**AM: How did you finally come to New York City and Juilliard?**

**AU:** I wanted to learn more than the classics that we performed at the National Theater. I knew there was a wider world of dance out there. I wrote to many theaters in Europe asking for an audition and the only one that wrote back was The Royal Flemish Ballet in Antwerp, Belgium. When the National Theater went on tour to Dortmund, Germany, with *Swan Lake*, I snuck away on my day off and took the train to Antwerp and auditioned. It was a secret expedition! I was accepted into the company. While they were a ballet company they did not do the classics. I was not really happy with the repertoire, but I was able to see a lot more dance and was able to widen my horizons. One summer I went to visit my brother in Boston and started taking classes with the Boston Ballet. I became an apprentice with the Boston Ballet but did not make it into the company after a year. By then I was married and my husband, Nenad, who is an artist, wanted to move to New York City. So we did. A friend suggested I audition for Ballet Hispanico. I was accepted into the company but they changed my name to my mother's maiden name, Lozada, and told me I had to take more modern dance classes so I could perform the company's repertoire. I began to take modern classes but finally a friend said if you really want to learn modern why don't you go to Juilliard? I started at Juilliard in 1982 and graduated in 1985.

**AM: What was your relationship with Miss Hill?**

**AU:** It was always close. I think it helped that I was a little older and had already been a professional dancer. Miss Hill was actually the first person I met when I went to find out how to apply and audition. She invited me into her office and even had me take off my coat so she could have a closer look at me! She knew my South American and Yugoslav background, she knew that I was married and knew my husband. She often asked after him. She usually cared for everyone, and it really helped and felt good to know that she was interested in me and my family, and my future after school. She said to me once: "I don't worry about you, you love dance more than dancing, this will carry you through". It didn't make sense then, now it does.

**AM: What did you do once you graduated from Juilliard?**

**AU:** I was lucky, I did not have to audition once out of Juilliard as I had many classmates with performing groups. I performed with Neta Pulvermacher, Errol Grimes, and Ohad Naharin.

**AM: When did you start teaching?**

**AU:** I started teaching when I was dancing with Neta and Ohad. This was at an after school program for teenagers at St. Hildas and St. Hughs School on the Upper West Side. It worked very well because I could take a morning class and rehearse and then teach and then do evening rehearsals. In 1990, Ohad left for Israel and I auditioned for the Grand Theatre in Geneva. Even though accepted, I decided not to take the job. I wanted to live and dance in New York. In 1991, I auditioned for and started dancing with The New York Baroque Dance Company, Catherine Turcoy Artistic Director. Then I got pregnant. Lazar was born in October of 1991, and I did not perform for 3 years. Invited by my friend Torbjörn Stenberg, I taught in Sweden for a semester, but I was very eager to return to the U.S. By then, New York was home.

**AM: What did you do after your return to the United States?**

**AU:** I continued dancing with Catherine Turcoy and I got my M.A. from Teachers College at Columbia University. In 2001, I became the founding co-director with Olivier Heuts of the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts Dance program in Astoria, Queens.

**AM: Do your students know of Martha Hill and how is it to train students today?**

**AU:** My students are high school students. They don't really know about Martha Hill, but I take the time to tell them about her and how important she was. She is my role model, in shaping the program and, I must admit, when dealing with adversity. I often think, what would Miss Hill do? Her example inspires me. First of all, perseverance! And, to keep the long goal in mind.

One must be patient and able to compromise when building a program and collaborating with many entities within a school. Then, there are current issues, I wonder, for example, what would Miss Hill think of the competition scene in dance? What would she think of the new terms, Traditional Modern Dance and Contemporary Dance? I try to stay open. That's another lesson from Miss Hill. She attended her students' performances as long as she could travel the NY subway system, well into her late 80's.

After 17 years of teaching at Sinatra there are several students that have become professional dancers and teachers. I am very proud of them. I am also proud that this year we are doing Limón's *Choreographic Offering*. Carla Maxwell is setting it. Miss Hill would approve, I like to think. And, I am grateful to Danny Lewis for opening the world of Limón to me when I was a student. Really, all my teachers at Juilliard influenced me tremendously. And, collaborating with my classmates was life changing. I wouldn't have been the dancer I was nor the teacher I am today without the experience of Juilliard under Miss Hill.

**AM: What do you think is the future of the Martha Hill Dance Fund?**

**AU:** That is a very interesting question. When I first came on the Board we were making the movie (*Miss Hill: Making Dance Matter*, 2014). This was the Board's big dream and it took 10 years to accomplish. We, on the Board are all in agreement that nurturing the legacy of Miss Hill is our mission but other than our annual Gala, and the Newsletter, how are we going to do it? We really have to come up with some meaningful ideas for the community. I would love to see something with an international reach as I realized from being on the Board that we have a wide network and that we should stay connected. We would like to create something that is enduring, something that is creative, at the same time educational, and that would honor her legacy. We are still searching for that perfect idea, or ideas, but I believe something is bound to take shape in the future.

**FLASH NEWS**

**Alfredo Corvino** (Lifetime Achievement Honoree 2001) has been inducted into the **Dance Hall of Fame** in Saratoga, NY, with a ceremony to take place this August 11th.

**Beverly Blossom** (Lifetime Achievement Honoree 2009) *Beverly Blossom Festival* June 1-3 at the 92nd St Y, NYC.

**Deborah Jowitz** (Lifetime Achievement Honoree 2016) continues to contribute dance reviews to *Arts Journal* (<http://www.artsjournal.com/dancebeat/>) and hopes to finish her critical biography of Martha Graham by June.

**Mark DeGarmo** (Mid-Career Honoree 2015) co-choreographed a duet, *Entanglements of the Shadow*, with Isabel Beteta for a performance in March at Beteta's Centro Cultural Festaleres, *Danced Soliloquies and Dialogues Festival*, in Coyocacan, Mexico City.

Mark DeGarmo Dance's Partnerships in Literacy through Dance & Creativity, an independent evaluation from Johns Hopkins University is available online. Dr. Rosin Concoran's *An embodied cognition approach to enhancing reading achievement in New York City public schools: Promising evidence is in Teaching and Teacher Education*, Volume 71, April 2018.

Mark's contribution to the textbook *Teaching Choreographic Composition from a Transdisciplinary Focus*, entitled *Transdisciplinary Performative Implication*, is in its final review phase for 2018 publication by the University of Colima, Mexico. This article builds on his dissertation examining the relationship between movement improvisation and embodied learning.

**Dian Dong & H.T. Chen** (Mid-Career Honorees 2012) H.T. Chen & Dancers are working on a new 2019 piece and a retrospective program of repertory works. In 2018, every Chen Dance Center instructor and company member will be participating in the Dance Education Lab at the 92nd St Y sessions to work towards their K-12 dance certification. They also have the opportunity to take Professional Development classes with Andra and Ernesta Corvino.

**Earl Mosley** (Mid-Career Honoree 2016) Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts is celebrating its 13th

summer by collaborating in their inaugural summer with Hofstra University. Mosley just received the first **Life Time Dance Contribution Award** for 2018. The Hearts of Men Summer Intensive will be held at the Ailey School, August 19 to September 2.

**Jannet Panetta** (Mid-Career Honoree 2008) will be participating in the New York version of the international event of Deufert & Pischke, *Just in Time*. This is a free, community oriented event in which participants write a personal letter to dance that describes their favorite movement. The favorite moves of each city eventually become the score for a communal choreography. The NYC performance took place in on February 24 at Seyer Hall, Eldridge Street.

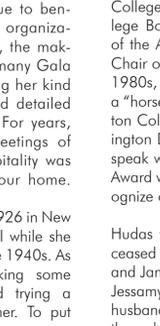
In addition to her annual teaching at the P.A.R.T.S. school in Brussels, she also held workshops at the University of the Arts, and Tanzfabrik, Berlin. She will be in Paris at Camping this summer, along with Impulzantz in Vienna. On this side of the Atlantic besides her ongoing classes at The New School and Gibney, she had the opportunity to give master classes to the Limón Company and AIM, Kyle Abraham.

**Molly Mae MacGregor** (Young Professional Honoree 2004) In July 2017, Molly and her husband moved across the country to Reno, NV. After nearly 15 years in the city, she is enjoying the vastness of the mountains. She continues with her Pilates + Movement (Re-)Education work there, teaching for a lovely, education-focused studio in South Reno. There is a burgeoning modern dance plus contact improv community there too, and the local university recently added its first Dance major. Reno is in a boom phase and growing in some culturally exciting ways. She is looking forward to a visit back to NYC in March, and to seeing what the next year brings.

**Jacoby Pruitt** (Young Professional Honoree 2015) is currently performing with Austin McCormick's Company XIV in Brooklyn and with Sean Curran Company, as well as doing some freelance work.

**Danielle Reinstein** (Young Professional Honoree 2014) is currently on tour with *The Phantom of the Opera* North American Tour. She is playing one of the Corps de Ballet jobs in the ensemble and feels it is truly a dream job! She joined the company in November and this is her National tour debut. She hopes to make it to the MHDF Gala next year.

**IN MEMORIAM Hudas Liff**



1926 - 1918

Our much beloved and respected board member Hudas Liff passed away on February 20, 2018. Hudas was one of the founding members of the Martha Hill Dance Fund, serving as Treasurer from 2000-2003, President from 2004-2008, Vice President from 2009-2014, and then Vice President Emeritus. Hudas described the beginnings of the MHDF: "It was like a mom and pop organization.... We all worked very hard, particularly in the first few years." The Martha Hill Dance Fund greatly benefited and will continue to benefit from her careful shepherding of the organization through economic ups and downs, the making of the Miss Hill documentary, and many Gala events. She was a guiding force, offering her kind and giving spirit, financial support, and detailed planning skills to our every endeavor. For years, Hudas hosted the executive board meetings of the MHDF at her apartment. Her hospitality was so generous, and her home became our home.

Hudas Schwartz Liff was born on April 7, 1926 in New Haven, Connecticut. She met Martha Hill while she was a student at Bennington College in the 1940s. As Hudas remembered, "I had been taking some art classes, but my advisor suggested trying a dance class. Martha Hill was my teacher. To put it bluntly, I was klutzy. I found moving across the floor difficult. It was clumsy, and I learned to move a little bit, but I was clearly not a dancer."

Hudas earned a Master's Degree in Library Science from Connecticut State College, and in the 1970s, was the President of the Suffolk County Planned Parenthood. She once explained that she learned a great deal about non-profits at Planned Parenthood, which contributed to her work with the MHDF. Planned Parenthood awarded Hudas the prestigious Margaret Sanger Award in honor of her commitment to their organization.

Hudas maintained her connections to Bennington College, serving as a member of the Bennington College Board of Trustees from 1980 to 1996, Chair of the Alumni Association from 1984 to 1988, and Chair of the Annual Fund from 1989 to 1998. In the 1980s, Hudas and Martha Hill did what Hudas called a "horse and pony show" to raise money for Bennington College. They went to events in Chicago, Washington D.C., New York, and other east coast cities to speak with alumni. In 1985, the Hudas Schwartz Liff Award was established by Bennington College to recognize outstanding volunteer service by an alumna.

Hudas was married to Julius Schwartz, who predeceased her, and had 3 children: Bradford, Wendy, and Janet. Bradford and his wife have two daughters, Jessamyn and Emma. Her daughter Wendy and her husband have one daughter, Julia, who studied dance through her youth. Hudas was very proud of each of them and often spoke of them at our board gatherings. As we mourn Hudas' passing, we celebrate a life lived with passion, grace, and kindness.

The Liff family requested in lieu of flowers donations to Bennington and the MHDF. We thank them for their kindness.

Elizabeth McPherson

**MHDF BOARD**

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Newsletter designed and Co-edited by Ani Udovicki and Allen Maniker. Technical support NeBo Studio.