



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

Another gala evening at the Manhattan Penthouse to cap the year's work at the Martha Hill Dance Fund occurred on November 30th. Our attendees, both returning friends and new faces, enjoyed the warm ambience and atmosphere of celebration as they caught up with old friends, honored the honorees and partook of a festive meal. Just as Miss Hill would have wanted it. Each table in the dining room was adorned with a unique centerpiece designed by Board member Lance Westergard to celebrate each of the Lifetime Achievement honorees over this, the Fund's fifteenth year (!). Our attendance continues to grow each year.

The honorees for **The Martha Hill Lifetime Achievement Award** this year included **Murray Louis** and **Carla Maxwell**. Unfortunately, Murray was not able to attend but his spirit was present as Bebe Miller enumerated his many accomplishments and creative endeavors, first in association with the Alwin Nikolais Company and then his own, Murray Louis Dance Company. The award was graciously accepted on his behalf by Alberto Del Saz who offered a personal message from Louis with whom he had visited earlier in the day. Lest anyone forget Murray's amazing grace and fluidity and delightful style, a video was shown of him dancing excerpts from his own choreography. Carla Maxwell was also awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award. In a heartfelt and emotional introduction Roxane D'Orleans Juste outlined the many accomplishments of Maxwell as she assumed the leadership of the Limón Company and has guided it for the last 37 years. A brilliant dancer herself, Maxwell was noted to be a nurturing guide of talented dancers throughout the years. Both of these honorees embody the spirit and legacy of Miss Hill at her very best. Our congratulations go out to both of these outstanding individuals.

Mark DeGarmo was awarded the **Mid-Career Award** for his work in dance education in the public schools through his Mark DeGarmo Dance. Introduced eloquently by William Whitener, a superior dancer and educator in his own right, Mr. DeGarmo spoke fervently of the need to pass on the spirit of modern dance and its founding principles. His educational efforts speak to the next generation of dance professionals and educators. Again, the embodiment of the spirit of Miss Hill.

A **Special Citation** was given to the Dance Notation Bureau in honor of their 75th anniversary and in recognition of their dedicated service to the dance community. The award was accepted by Executive Director and Chair of the Board, Lynne Weber.

As is the way of the Fund, a **Young Professional Award** was also given. This year it went to Jacoby Pruitt after being introduced by Pamela Pietro. A 2015 graduate of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, we look forward to hearing more from this talented and gracious young dancer. Also present at the gala was a table of current New York University, Juilliard, and Hunter dance students, their attendance courtesy of various contributions. Indeed, it was gratifying to see the spirit of the next generation of dancers present to learn from the wealth of dance knowledge and history in the room.

All of this was seamlessly knitted together by our master of ceremonies Dennis Nahat. With additional remarks by the Fund's President, Vernon Scott, and Chairman David Manion, it was an evening to remember.

THANK YOU, MHDF BOARD



Bebe Miller and Alberto del Saz



Carla Maxwell, Vernon Scott and Roxane D'Orleans Juste



Mark DeGarmo



Rebecca Stenn and Jacoby Pruitt

Gala Photos: Steven Spinakis & Bebe Young

Henning RübSam - Interview by Allen Maniker



And There was Morning (2015) Maurice Dawkins, Kristen Stuart and John Raffles Durbin

Photo: Stephen Delas Heras

Henning RübSam has been a member of the Martha Hill Dance Fund Board since 2001. Scheduled to receive his M.A. in dance education from Hunter College in 2016, he earned his B.F.A. degree in dance from The Juilliard School in 1991. While at Juilliard, he worked extensively with Anna Sokolow, and toured with the Limón Dance Company. Upon graduation he founded his own ensemble SENSE-DANCE and continued to dance with other choreographers, namely Duncan Macfarland, Beverly Blossom, Murray Louis, and most importantly Alwin Nikolais.

Aside from choreographing for SENSE-DANCE, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary, he serves as a resident choreographer for Hartford City Ballet, is on the faculty at The Juilliard School, and a visiting guest artist at Texas Academy of Ballet. He is a faculty member for the Certificate Program at the Peridance Capezio Center in New York City.

His dance writing has appeared in Dance Magazine and its Stern's Performing Arts Directory, Pointe Magazine, Ballet Review, and The Juilliard Journal. Currently he is a senior editor and correspondent for Dance-Enthusiast.com.

Henning, when did you become involved in dance?

I was 5 years old when my mother took me to a local ballet school in my home town of Marburg, Germany. I am told that I said after watching the class "that is what I want to do" and I never left it. Marburg is a university town, a very academic, ivory tower town, about an hour north of Frankfurt where everybody is a student or teacher or professor with an occasional butcher or baker. Both of my parents were academics and, absolutely, it was a cultured household.

Your early dance training was in ballet?

Yes, and then at 12, I first encountered modern dance with an American dancer employed by the local ballet school to teach modern dance. She also brought in other artists for workshops including Jenny Coogan, a Juilliard graduate. And my world changed. This wonderful energetic person who worked on the floor and jumped and there was no pretense; it was all physicality and joy and I then knew why I had been training all that time.

What finally brought you to the United States?

I continued training in ballet in my home town with Carolyn Bogner and at 15 started to take classes in Kassel, with a male teacher. I then moved on to the Hamburg Opera Ballet School but I kept in touch with Jenny and continued to take modern dance classes. Then the Limón Company came to Hamburg and I thought "this is the company I want to dance with", and, "I want to go to Juilliard". I went to Juilliard to audition, I had a big suitcase with me, and I stayed.

Once at Juilliard do you remember your first meeting with Miss Hill?

I walked into Juilliard a few days before my audition in August and turned the corner from the elevator on the fourth floor and there at the other end of the hall was this tall lady with a bun on her head next to another shorter lady who I later found out was Doris Rudko. The lady with the bun said in an unmistakable voice: "Young man you look lost". And in my broken English I said I was and that I was looking for the dance office. "Well, I am Martha Hill." I said hello from Jenny Coogan and within 5 minutes she had gotten all of my information and made me feel

comfortable. She then shook my hand and said "we look forward to having you" and that was our first meeting. Although Miss Hill was by then Director Emerita she took me under her wing from that very moment on.

How was your time at Juilliard?

Martha Hill was my godmother. Miss Hill was there for me, we talked a lot, and she gave me a good deal of dance history information. She was very encouraging to me as a choreographer. I had Elizabeth Keen and Doris Rudko as composition teachers. Miss Hill would come to every workshop and showing and when I did a piece to Schubert that she loved, she invited Robert Lindgren who was then head of the School of American Ballet to see my work as she thought it would be of interest to a ballet company. For Miss Hill, after all the history with SAB, to walk into the school and talk to the director; she was just fearless. Miss Hill looked out for the student and made connections.

One experience in particular stands out with Miss Hill. I was selected to be the Faun in Nijinsky's *Afternoon of a Faun* and Miss Hill said to me: "Henning, I don't think you are right for it". And I was terribly hurt. Well, I went ahead and rehearsed and performed it and afterwards she was the first one to reach me back stage. She took my hands and did a deep curtsy and said "I owe you an apology, you did it!" At my end of the year conference, she turned to the faculty and said: "I want to say I was wrong. I did not think Henning could do the Faun, but he did." I thought that was truly a grand gesture. A grand lady with a grand gesture.

How do you think you carry on her legacy?

Tenacity. To stick around. I don't think I have found my position to give back and I am looking for that. I am finishing up my Masters' degree at the moment. I aim to be the artistic director of a company where the structure and development and finances are in place that allows me to be creative. If that does not happen then I also have a clear vision of how a dance department and dance education should look and where I can still be creative. Either way, as an artistic director of a company or a faculty member of a department, I hope to be a catalyst for creative minds that matter. My company SENSE-DANCE has been a wonderful laboratory for me where I have been able to experiment and hone my creative voice. I also write about dance and have immersed myself in the dance world. I have followed Miss Hill's advice to not be insular and to work with passion. Passion is something that Miss Hill kept throughout her whole life.

What do you see is the future of the MHDF?

Further distribution of the film, *Miss Hill: Making Dance Matter* is the immediate future. To see that it is distributed and is seen on television and put in University libraries. We were so "whole souled" about getting the movie made, a favorite word of Miss Hill's. This resonates with me as there is something in the dance world currently that makes the idea of being "whole souled" and committed to modern dance somewhat old fashioned. But I think that a total commitment to the art form as something greater than the individual is a concept that will always belong and is Martha's greatest legacy.

(January 2016)

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 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** 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** 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** 2015 Dance Notation Bureau **Student Choice Award** 2012 Kazuko Hirabayashi **Special Citation** 2009 Hortense Zera **Carl Walz Award** 2003 Mira Kim

FLASH NEWS

Patricia Carby (Young Professional Honoree, 2011) is in the process of scheduling performances for her one-woman show *Money Talks* which premiered in February '15. Stay tuned for dates and further details.

Andra and Ernesta Corvino (Board Members) Andra will be accompanying Ernesta on a Pina Bausch tour to Australia and New Zealand at the end of February. Both have work in Melbourne at Victoria College of the Arts.

After more than half a century the Corvinos have move from their house on West 50th. Fortunately, their new home in Norwalk, Connecticut, is only 40 minutes away from the city. And, it has a large studio!

H.T. Chen and Dian Dong (Mid-Career Honoree, 2012) The highlight of the year for H.T. Chen & Dancers was the premiere of *South of Gold Mountain* based on oral histories of Chinese who settled in the American South before WWII. The work was presented in MS, AZ, AL, NY and will soon travel to TX, MA, KY. The company also presented educational performances to approximately 5,000 students in NY, and another 3,500 on tour.

Christian Griggs-Drane (Young Professional Honoree, 2013) graduated from Butler University in 2014 with a BFA in Dance Performance, cum laude. He is currently in his second season with Grand Rapids Ballet, under the direction of Patricia Barker. He appreciates the opportunities he has with the company, including touring, collaborating on new creations with choreographers Val Caniparoli, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Gina Patterson, Andrew Bartee, Andrea Schermoly, and Penny Saunders, and being cast in principal roles in Val Caniparoli's *The Nutcracker*, David Parson's *The Envelope*, George Balanchine's *Who Care's*, and Kent Stowell's *Carmina Burana*. He has also joined the faculty at The Grand Rapids Ballet School.

Molly Mae MacGregor (Young Professional Honoree, 2013) received her full Pilates certification through the Kane School. Currently, she is transitioning from their training program into teaching at Kinected and she is honored to be a part of their brand new Residency Program.

Elizabeth McPherson (Board Member) collaborated on an event with Janet Eilber of the Graham Company about the creation of *Panorama* at The Bennington

School of the Dance. The presentation took place at the Graham studios on February 10, 2016. Montclair State University students performed *Panorama*.

Danielle Reinstein (Young Professional Honoree, 2014) graduated from the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program in May 2015 and joined STEPS Repertory Ensemble, under the direction of Bradley Shelver. She loves being in a repertory company and working in a wide range of choreographic voices, including dances by Lar Lubovitch and Sidra Bell.

John-Mario Sevilla (Mid-Career Honoree, 2014) collaborated as choreographer with the Brentano String Quartet and artist Gabriel Calatrava on "Bach's Fugue, Spinning Across the Stage" presented at 92Y's *Seeing Music Festival*, January 2016.

Ani Udovicki (Board Member) is proud to be one of the featured teachers in the NY Emmy nominated documentary *PS. DANCE!*, directed by Nel Shelby in association with Joan Finkelstein, Dance Education Consultant for the NYC Department of Education; Executive Producer Jody Arnhold. (The film is available for streaming at <http://www.thirteen.org/programs/thirteen-specials/ps-dance/>)

Megan Williams and Rebecca Stenn (Board Members) will be performing a new duet choreographed by Stenn at BAM Fisher in March as part of the Brooklyn Dance Festival. Williams' new work for 10 Hairy Legs will be "previewing" in the same program.

IN MEMORIAM On February 1, 2016, Murray Louis, age 89, passed away. Borna in Brooklyn, he studied with Anna Halprin and Hanya Holm. In a summer program in Colorado studying with Holm he met Alwin Nikolais who would become his artistic collaborator and companion for more than 40 years. Through his own company and further when it merged in 1989 with Nikolais' company, he presented choreography around the world that made a lasting impression. As a performer he was captivating and riveting with an acute sense of comic timing. As well as his Dance Magazine award, two Guggenheim fellowships and grants from the Rockefeller foundation he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Martha Hill Dance Fund in 2015.



November 4, 1926 - February 1, 2016

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