



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.

## Letter from our president

On December 1st, 2019 the embryo of an idea was born at the Centennial Celebration of the birth of Martha Hill. For the next nineteen years, on or about that date, the Martha Hill Dance Fund brought together the dance and dance educator community with events that both perpetuated Martha's legacy and celebrated the many noteworthy among us.

Since the 2019 Gala, the MHDF board members have set out on the annual journey towards planning a 2020 event. We, of course, have now watched in dismay as many of our beloved institutions have been forced to cancel performances, workshops, residencies and galas...many of which would have been significant anniversary landmarks – American Dance Festival and Jacobs Pillow to name just two of the many.

Beyond doubt, 2020 will be the year the world rises above the unthinkable; we will renew and rebuild. MHDF will take the year to reflect, and in some cases redirect our energies to become a resource to our community. With our focus shifted to a re-envisioned future, the decision has been made to cancel the MHDF 2020 gala.

We intend to remain in contact via newsletter and social media during this year, as we all pull together "virtually" and arrive to a time where we can laugh, share tears of joy and hug in person. We will certainly gather again and party at our Gala 2021!

I feel certain that there will be stunning, thoughtful and meaningful work created by dance artists post the current health crisis – art will help us heal.

Vernon Scott  
President MHDF  
April, 2020

## Gala 2019

On Monday November 25th, 2019, around 5 p.m. the room at the Manhattan penthouse was abuzz. Tables were being set with centerpieces designed by Board member Lance Westergard, assisted by Board member Yasi Tokunaga and guest Emi Tokunaga.

Final seating placement and ticket sales were being re-checked by Board members Ernesto and Andra Corvino. Lighting and lectern placement were being discussed by Board President Vernon Scott and Board member Allen Maniker and sight lines for the videos were being adjusted by our outstanding videographer Daniel Madoff. Moral support and last-minute details were being attended to by the rest of the Board members.

All the effort was well worth it as we later agreed that the 2019 Martha Hill Dance Fund Gala, a sold-out event, was a splendid evening (if we do say so ourselves).

As always, the clatch in attendance was delighted to see each other and catch up on personal and professional news. This could be gaged by the sheer volume of conversation at the cocktail hour. Some shrieks of delight at discovering a long unseen colleague in attendance were overheard.

Especially gratifying was seeing generations of dance lineage in one room together. Current Martha Graham Dance Company director Janet Eiber conversing with 2019 Lifetime Achievement honoree Stuart Hodes. Limón leader and 2011 MHDF Lifetime Achievement honoree Danny Lewis conversing with Juilliard students currently learning Limón technique. Paul Taylor veterans Ruth Adrien and 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award honoree Carolyn Adams in an especially warm embrace of greeting. It is our dance history on display in a very personal and human way.

The evening was orchestrated to perfection by master of ceremonies Madeleine Nichols who was curator of the Dance Collection at the New York Public Library from 1988-2005. First up gala co-chair Liz Radke offered welcoming remarks. Next were Mid-Career Awards presented to Chanel DaSilva and Nigel Campbell. After being introduced by Risa Steinberg, Nigel shared with us that he had purchased a new outfit for the evening, and he did look sharp indeed. Chanel, looking terrific in a beautiful gown glowed with appreciation as the two of them accepted the awards for their work as performers, choreographers and founders of MOVE (NYC).

Next at the podium, after an introduction by Lois Welk, was Mid-Career Award honoree, Seán Curran. Performer, choreographer, company director and administrator, he is a graduate and faculty member of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts where he now serves as Arts Professor and Chair of the Department of Dance. His was a lovely acceptance speech from a man with many, many accomplishments.

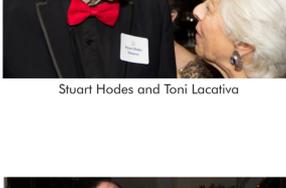
Onto the Lifetime Achievement Awards. First, introduced by Norton Owen (2017 MHDF Lifetime Achievement honoree), was Limón performer, choreographer and teacher Betty Jones. A founding member of the Limón company she was a legendary performer and a much beloved teacher of technique in her home state of Hawaii and around the world.

Unfortunately, unable to attend our gala ceremony, she was honored by the Board earlier in October when she and her husband Fritz were in town. At a festive dinner in her honor she was presented with her certificate of the award and our appreciation for all that she has contributed to the world of dance.

Stuart Hodes, our next Lifetime Achievement Award honoree, was in fine form. Presented by Naomi Goldberg Haas, his many accomplishments as a dancer with Martha Graham and on Broadway were outlined. His last public performances as a Broadway were with Alice Teirstein (Lifetime Achievement honoree 2017) at the age of 88. He is also well known as a choreographer, dance teacher, dance administrator and author. A WWII veteran, he served in the Army Air Corps. After he expressed deep appreciation for the award, he related that he was only sorry our ceremony could not have been held on November 27th as that was his 95th birthday!

Finally, introduced by Robert Battle, the Director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, was Carolyn Adams: dancer, teacher, administrator. We learned of the many accomplishments of this star performer of the Paul Taylor Dance Company as well as an apparently naughty sense of humor. She is the founder, along with her sister Julie Strandberg, of the American Dance Legacy Initiative (ADLI). She is the founding artistic director of the New York State Summer School of the Arts School of Dance, and of the Harlem Dance Foundation. This is to name just a few of her many accomplishments.

Additional remarks were made by Martha Hill Dance Fund President, Vernon Scott and concluding remarks were made by Board member Allen Maniker. Another year, another wonderful gala. Congratulations to all our honorees.



Chanel Da Silva, Carolyn Adams and Nigel Campbell



Stuart Hodes and Toni Lacatava



Seán Curran and Megan Williams

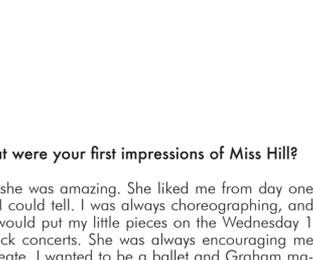


Robert Battle, Carolyn Adams and Allen Maniker

Photo's: Steven Spelliois/Rainco



Betty Jones early 60's



Centennial birthday 2000

## Interview with Yasuko Tokunaga by Allen Maniker January 2020

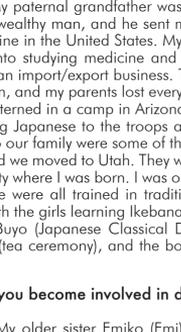


photo: Liz Linder

Yasuko Tokunaga affectionately known to all as "Yasi" is our featured Martha Hill Dance Fund Board member. She has been a member of this Board since 2012 and I had the opportunity to sit down and learn a little about her and her background and her many, many accomplishments.

**Yasi, let us begin at the beginning. Where were you born?**

I was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. My father was born and raised in Japan studying medicine, and my mother was born in the United States and raised in Japan. My paternal grandfather was a surgeon and a very wealthy man, and he sent my father to study medicine in the United States. My father was not much into studying medicine and he eventually started an import/export business. Then World War II began, and my parents lost everything when they were interned in a camp in Arizona. My uncle was teaching Japanese to the troops at a base in Utah and so our family were some of the first to be released and we moved to Utah. They wound up in Salt Lake City where I was born. I was one of seven children. We were all trained in traditional Japanese arts with the girls learning Keibana (flower arranging), Buyo (Japanese Classical Dance) and Cha-no-yu (tea ceremony), and the boys learning martial arts.

**When did you become involved in dance?**

Very early. My older sister Emiko (Emi) was interested in dance and she first choreographed for me when I was three. A dance called *Naughty Buttn!* I began formal training at 9 years old.

By that time Emi was a student at The University of Utah in Salt Lake and they had an extension division in dance, and I started there. The Head of the Dance Department at that time was William Christiansen and I grew up under his tutelage, he was my dancing dad. They pushed me very hard in ballet and I was on track to join the company. Around the age of 17 they asked if I wanted to join the company and this was the only time my mother ever said no. She said in this family we go to college. The University also had a very active contemporary dance program and by 16 I was taking the master classes of the visiting artists. One person that came was Anna Sokolow. After class she pointed at me and just said: you! I was nearly in tears as I thought she was going to tell me never to come back and I apologized to her saying I had never had modern dance before. Instead she said she wanted me to come to New York City and study at Juilliard where she was teaching. I really had no intention of leaving Utah and knew nothing of Juilliard and modern dance. But after my parents visited New York and Anna spoke to them they permitted me to audition. It helped that my sister Emi had already moved and was living in New York.

**How did your audition at Juilliard go?**

I remember Miss Hill at the center of the table. There was Mr. Corvino and Mr. Tudor but I was petrified. I had choreographed a piece for myself called "Theorems" based on geometry to Debussy. I had no idea Mr. Tudor was so interested in geometry and he called me out onto the stage to ask me where I had gotten such an idea for a piece. I told him I had a very funny math teacher and he inspired me to create it. "Well", Mr. Tudor said, "you will have many more funny teachers to create for when you come to Juilliard." In that way he let me know I was accepted before I got the actual acceptance letter. I entered Juilliard in 1966 and graduated in 1970, the first class from Juilliard's move to Lincoln Center.

**What were your first impressions of Miss Hill?**

Oh, she was amazing. She liked me from day one and I could tell. I was always choreographing, and she would put my little pieces on the Wednesday 1 o'clock concerts. She was always encouraging me to create. I wanted to be a ballet and Graham major and Miss Hill was very encouraging. Mr. Tudor accepted me as a ballet major which was a real accomplishment as he accepted very few dancers. She would always look out for me for auditions, jobs and employment.

**What did you do when you first graduated from Juilliard?**

I got my degree and quit dancing cold turkey. Everyone was pushing me too hard. I needed to stop and do my own thing. But then about 6 months later I got this fateful call from June Dunbar. June told me they were forming a Juilliard alumni dance company to be called The Juilliard Alumni Dance Ensemble (JADE) and Anna Sokolow wanted me to be a member of the company. I walked into the studio for the audition cold, not having danced in 6 months but I got in the company. I then started back into dance class fast and hard as I had to get myself back into shape so as not to embarrass myself. Limón was the hardest technique for me as I had concentrated on ballet and Graham technique and after all that we did not do Anna's work but Limón's *There is a Time*. We also performed Paul Taylor's *Three Epitaphs* and an excerpt from *Don Quixote*. We toured up and down the east coast and I was the ballet and modern swing. JADE lasted 2 years but I was also teaching and had my own company, Tokunaga Dance Co., with my sister Emi. Ko means "children of" and also "institution" in Japanese.

**After the alumni company ended what came next?**

Emi was planning to go to medical school, and I thought it was not really for her. I saw an ad for a faculty position in dance at The Boston Conservatory (TBC) and so I completed an application for her, without her knowing, and then gave her a bus ticket to Boston telling her she was going to the interview. She got the job, joining the faculty, and the following summer she brought me up to teach in the summer session. That was my first real teaching job. We would go back and forth between Boston and New York but then in 1975 we got very serious about our company and opened a studio here in New York City. We developed what we called a "coordinated concept" of learning ballet and modern techniques simultaneously. It got some attention and an article was written about it in *Dance Magazine*. The studio went from 1975 until 1985. In 1985 we lost our space and I was invited to go up to the TBC to teach full time.

**How was your time in Boston?**

I was a full-time faculty member at the BC from 1985 until 1989 when I was asked to become the director of the dance program. I served as director of that program from 1989 until 2011 when I retired. I had 26 dance faculty members and 19 musicians, and we had about 60-80 students. I felt so at home at TBC as it was a program similar to Juilliard's. When I asked her why, she chose to highlight the three techniques of ballet, Graham and Limón and she said that if you can master those techniques, you can do anything. She was right. I firmly believed, as did Miss Hill, that the classes should be taught by specialists who were experts in that particular technique. I did not want crossover with one person teaching many different techniques. I also made it a performance-based program. Miss Hill was so helpful to me in setting up the program. I also instituted a wellness week where there were lectures by an orthopedic surgeon and physical therapists to help prevent injury.

**How have you been occupied after Boston?**

After I retired from the BC, I took 6 months off. I then taught Graham technique at the Hartt School at the University of Hartford for a year and a half. Then I became the director of licensing for the Limón company for 5 years. After leaving Limón, it was perfect timing as I was asked to teach ballet for the summer intensives at the Graham school. I continue to do freelance work and keep busy. I have been really blessed.



Suite for Five by Tokunaga

Photo: Otto Beak

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. IN 2017 AND 2018 NO YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD WAS GIVEN. INSTEAD TEN STUDENTS WERE INVITED TO ATTEND THE GALA.

**Lifetime Achievement Award** 2019 Carolyn Adams, Stuart Hodes, Betty Jones, 2018 Silvia Waters, 2017 Norton Owen and Alice Teirstein, 2016 Ann Hutchinson Guest and Deborah Jowitz, 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

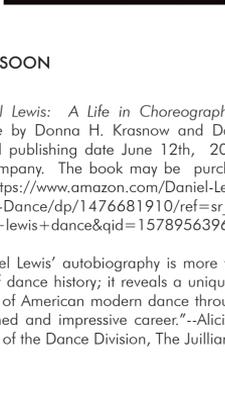
**Mid-Career Award** 2019 Seán Curran, Nigel Campbell and Chanel DaSilva, 2018 Jessica Lang and David Leventhal, 2017 Robert Garland and Denise Roberts Hurlin, 2016 Fredrick Earl Mosley, 2015 Mark DeGarmo, 2014 John-Mario Sevilla, 2012 Dian Dong & H.T. Chen, 2009 Virginia Johnston, 2008 Janet Panetta, 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 Dorr, 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

## OUT NOW

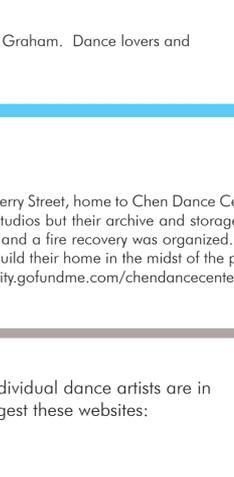


*Ethical Dilemmas of Dance Education, Case Studies on Humanizing Dance Pedagogy* (January 2020). Doug Risner and Karen Schupp, editors. Elizabeth McPherson is contributor and section editor. The book may be purchased online through the publisher McFarland & Company and Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/Ethical-Dilemmas-Dance-Education-Humanizing/dp/1476667179>.

The first of its kind, this volume presents research-based fictionalized case studies from experts in the field of dance education, examining theory and practice developed from real-world scenarios that call for ethical decision-making. Dilemmas faced by dance educators in the studio, on stage, in recreation centers and correctional facilities, and on social media are explored, accompanied by activities for humanizing dance pedagogy.

## OUT SOON

*Daniel Lewis: A Life in Choreography and the Art of Dance* by Donna H. Krasnow and Daniel Lewis. Estimated publishing date June 12th, 2020 by McFarland & Company. The book may be purchased on Amazon at [https://www.amazon.com/Daniel-Lewis-Life-Choreography-Dance/dp/1476681910/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?keywords=daniel+lewis+dance&qid=1578956396&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Daniel-Lewis-Life-Choreography-Dance/dp/1476681910/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=daniel+lewis+dance&qid=1578956396&sr=8-1).



by Donna H. Krasnow and Daniel E. Lewis

## LOOKING FORWARD

Deborah Jowitz is finishing writing her critical biography of Martha Graham. Dance lovers and bibliophiles are awaiting the publishing date to be announced.

## Chen Dance Center - Fire Recovery

On the eve of January 23, 2020, a 5 - alarm fire tore through 70 Mulberry Street, home to Chen Dance Center. The damage was incalculable. Not only did they suffer damage to their studios but their archive and storage incurred devastating losses as well. All classes and events had to be cancelled and a fire recovery was organized. The next month, Coronavirus hit NYC. Chen Dance Center is now trying to rebuild their home in the midst of the pandemic. To make a donation to their fire recovery fundraiser, please go to [charity.gofundme.com/chendancecenter](http://charity.gofundme.com/chendancecenter).

In these difficult times all arts organizations and individual dance artists are in need. If you wish to offer your support we can suggest these websites:

- **For organizations:**
  - COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund <https://www.nycommunitytrust.org/covid19/>
- **For individual artists:**
  - Foundation for Contemporary Arts COVID-19 Relief Fund <https://www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org/grants/emergency-grants>
- **NYC Low-Income Artist/Freelancer Relief Fund**
  - The Dance Union NYC Dancers Relief Fund (COVID-19) <https://www.gofundme.com/nyc-lowincome-artistfreelancer-relief-fund>
- **For both (organizations and artists):**
  - Dance/NYC Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund <https://www.dance.nyc.org/programs/CoronavirusDanceReliefFund>
  - Indie Theater Fund Rapid Relief Grants <https://www.indietheaterfund.org/>

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Newsletter designed and Co-edited by Ani Udovicki and Allen Maniker