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# The Bessies

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La Guardia Concert Hall at the  
Fiorello H. La Guardia High School of  
Music and Art and Performing Arts

## DANCE THEATER WORKSHOP AND DANSPACE PROJECT ANNOUNCE THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 1996-97 NEW YORK DANCE AND PERFORMANCE AWARDS (A.K.A. THE BESSIES).

On Wednesday evening, September 17, 1997, Dance Theater Workshop presented the Thirteenth Annual New York Dance and Performance Awards (a/k/a the BESSIES) for exceptional achievements of the 1996-97 season in an evening of performance and celebration at The La Guardia Concert Hall at the Fiorello H. La Guardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts. Originally established in 1980, the BESSIES acknowledge outstanding creative work by independent artists in the fields of dance and related performance in New York City. Over 1,000 artists, producers and press joined in the activities to honor the diversity of ideas that makes New York's contemporary performing arts community thrive.

The Masters of Ceremony for this event were performing artists Dan Froot, 1991 Bessie Recipient, and Lisa Kron, 1993 Bessie Recipient. The event included performances by musical guests Ancient Vibrations, the Doug Elkins Dance Company with an excerpt from *Center My Heart*, and choreographer/dancer Deborah Jowitz in her solo *Body (In) Print*.

This year's awards presentation included 23 citations honoring a total of 37 individuals for achievements during the 1996-97 season in the following categories: **Choreographer/Creator, Performer, Visual Designer, Composer and Special Citations**. As a whole, the award recipients represent a diverse cross-section of work created by independent artists in the performing arts community, including a wide range of works seen in smaller, alternative spaces to works produced by major venues. These artists represent works that influence and develops the future of our cultural history. This year, *The Village Voice* underwrote cash awards for both creators (\$1,000/each) and performers (\$500/each).

The 1997 BESSIE Awards were presented by (in order of appearance):

- Roma Flowers, Lighting Designer and 1990 Bessie Recipient, (Visual Design Awards)
- Jaeger Wedderburn, Composer/Musician and 1996 Bessie Recipient, (Composer Awards)
- Dan Froot, Composer/Performer and 1991 Bessie Recipient, (Special Citation)
- Merce Cunningham, Choreographer and 1986 & 1993 Bessie Recipient, (Special Citation)
- Jimie Bishton, Dancer and 1995 Bessie Recipient, (Performer Awards)
- Sandra Loring, Performer and 1996 Bessie Recipient, (Performer Awards)
- David Dorfman, Choreographer and 1996 Bessie Recipient, (Choreographer/Creator Awards)
- Jennifer Miller, Founder of Circus Amok and 1995 Bessie Recipient, (Choreographer/Creator Awards)

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 DTW and Danspace present The 1996-97 Bessies

The **Choreographer/Creator Awards** were awarded to **Mark Dendy** for Sustained Achievement; **Doug Edna** for *The Stuff of Recalling* and *Center of My Heart* at DTW; **Susan Marshall** and **Phillip Glass** for *Les Enfants Terribles* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; **Angelin Preljocaj** for *Annunciation* at The Joyce Theater; **Dianne McIntyre** and **Olú Dara** for *A Brand New People on the Planet* at Aaron Davis Hall; **Jennifer Monson** for Sustained Achievement and *Sender* at The Kitchen; **Bash Twist** for *The Arandae Show* at the Jim Henson International Festival of Puppet Theater at the Public Theater; **Lucy Guerin** for *Two Lies* at The Kitchen; and **Sham Mosher**, **Ronald K. Gray** and **David Pleasant** for *Hybridium* presented by Dancing in the Streets.

This year's **Performers Awards** were given to **Gerald Casel** for Sustained Achievement with Stephen Perone, Zvi Goitbner and Stanley Love; **Tom Thayer** for Sustained Achievement with David Dorfman; **Claudia De Smet** and **Julie Bour** for their performances in Angelin Preljocaj's *Annunciation*; **Kimberly Bartok** for Sustained Achievement with Merce Cunningham; **Sheri Williams** for Sustained Achievement with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company; and **Meredith Monk's Vocal Ensemble** including **Carlos Arevalo**, **Theo Bleckmann**, **Thomas Bogdan**, **Janis Brenner**, **Allison Easter**, **Dina Emerson**, **Katie Geissinger**, **Ching Gonzalez**, **Stephen Kalm** and **Randall Wong**, for their performances in *Politics of Quiet*.

**Composer Awards** went to **Zeena Parkins** for Jennifer Monson's *Sender*, and to **David Tudor** for Sustained Achievement with Merce Cunningham and *Ocean*; and to **Amy Denio** for David Dorfman's *Skydown*.

This year's **Visual Design Awards** were given to lighting designer **Margie Medlin** for Lucy Guerin's *Two Lies*; visual designer **Kasia Walleka-Malmone** for Susan Marshall and Phillip Glass's *Les Enfants Terribles*; and lighting designer **Philip Sandström** for David Dorfman's *Skydown*.

This year, **Special Citations** were given to **Leo Jankx** for downtown technical and production support and to **Mikhail Baryshnikov** for the artistic direction of *The White Oak Project*.

Recipient bios are attached.

David R. White is The BESSIES founder and DTW's Executive Director and Producer.

Dance Theater Workshop wishes to thank J.P. Morgan & Co. for providing enormous support for The BESSIES from the awards' inception. DTW would also like to thank the Harkness Foundation for Dance, Joyce Mertz Gilmore Foundation, The Village Voice, Patsy Tarr and the JCT Foundation, Philip Morris Companies Inc., New York Foundation for the Arts, The Candy Jernigan Memorial Fund and numerous individuals and organizations, all who have generously contributed to these awards over the past twelve years.