

TÉMOIGNAGES DES PARTICIPANTS DU PROJET HÉRITAGE / LEGACY PROJECT
SUITES AUX ACTIVITÉS DU PROJET PILOTE, ÉTÉ 2015
LA FONDATION DE DANSE MARGIE GILLIS



> LINDSEY RENEE DERRY

" Joining The Legacy Project in its pilot season was a tremendous honor. Margie Gillis has been a longtime role-model, heroine, and inspiration to me, someone who I have revered deeply since first being introduced to her in 2005 at Springboard Danse Montréal. As an emerging solo artist, to be mentored by Margie Gillis who has had an extraordinary solo career that has spanned over forty years now, was a once in a lifetime opportunity. The two week experience was truly beautiful, with one of the weeks spent at Margie Gillis' family's property in Acton Vale, Québec. While dancing in the church that Margie Gillis' Great Grandfather built in the 1800's, I was constantly brought to tears by the beauty of Margie Gillis - her words and dancing - and by my inspirational colleagues, the ten other Legacy Project participants hailing from Montréal, Vancouver, Toronto, New York, Calgary, and Buenos Aires."

> DAPHNE FERNBERGER

" Working with Margie has been life changing and enriching. She invites you to connect with your truths, and the truths beyond just you - the essence of humanity and living. Through being both an example and teacher, Margie has shown me how and enabled me to approach dance, people and oneself with more generosity, compassion, vulnerability, and courage than I had previously known possible.

Margie's choreography is timeless. Through different periods, Margie's work has supported me in different ways, offering specific lessons and revealing truths depending on what I needed to connect with. Always coming from a place of health, I have found the various characters and concepts in her choreography to be healing, inspiring, stabilizing, freeing and deeply nourishing.

Through dancing with Margie I have learned more about transformation and how to approach various scenarios than from anywhere, or anyone, else. The information and lessons cultivated through this kind of work translate beyond the studio. Margie once said "we learn through experience". Dance is an enhanced form of experience, more malleable and experimental. This is also why her work is so useful in Conflict Transformation. In fact, it is crucial because it is "kindly honest and transparent".

Margie's work within the studio and on the stage is accessible to any individual, of any level of experience, age and even language. So is one of the gifts of dance, and Margie. "Life is which connects us and keeps us available to respond accurately and out of necessity to NOW."

> RUTH LEVIN

Reflections on an important Legacy

Dancers contribute so much to this world. The richness, pleasure and wonder that can be experienced through the body in motion; the vast, multi-dimensional wisdom it holds... These are invaluable to us as human beings.

Working with Margie has been a deep affirmation of these understandings and the value they hold, for myself and for others. It has helped me to hone and value more deeply the perspective and skills I bring to the world through my experience as a dancer and performer; to know these and bring these forth more

boldly; to understand their inter-connection with other disciplines; to understand that an embodied perspective is in fact a deeply important and radical one for our culture.

Working with Margie and the other dancers of the Legacy Project has been a hugely nurturing experience for me. To be with such high-level artists, passionate about their role in transforming the world through authenticity and movement, has been nothing short of inspiring.

Margie guided us into the work continuously from a basis of pleasure and curiosity. With this as the starting point I was able to steadily deepen my understanding of what we were doing and the dances we were learning; letting go of non-supportive patterns of thinking and moving as we progressed, finding more constructive places of movement and health.

Also, Margie's approach is one that holds possibility and potential in the room, allowing for the best to rise gently out of each person. There was a high level of support and appreciation present over the course of the Legacy Project summits, held by Margie and met by each of the participants. This made for fertile ground for me to meet deep challenges and grow fearlessly. It has also taught me that holding space and trust in each individual for their potential to emerge is perhaps the most important and powerful teaching tool there is.

Margie's work holds a depth of understanding of the human condition and showcases it with a vulnerability and transparency that is utterly uncommon. It is this special capacity through which Margie has opened the door for audiences and students worldwide to enter into that liminal space where hope, transformation and deep healing live.

Because of how I personally have experienced Margie and her work, I believe strongly that her wisdom and skill are invaluable to us as a species seeking health, collaboration and fulfillment. I believe that the perspectives and approaches that she offers have the power to contribute meaningfully to many other disciplines within our society and to touch lives in important and powerful ways.

It is a deep joy and tremendous honor to be a part of this project. I look forward to continued learning and contribution, however that may come.

> TERESA MARCAIDA

I will always be grateful for being part of the Margie Gillis Legacy Project. I believe that what we experienced as a group during the first session of the Legacy Project this past June is far beyond words. Personally, being close to Margie and feeding off her energy and generosity is inspiring and nurturing.

It is a journey of self-discovery in which being close to nature, it becomes easier to be true to oneself. One of the things I love about Margie's work and creative process is that it embraces one's imperfections and grows from the wisdom of the body, its emotions and immense range of possibilities, thus creating genuine expression. The truth of vulnerability and emotion are so vivid in her work that it makes it breathtaking and healing.

It was a powerful glimpse of getting in touch with the essence of life through becoming aware of possibilities, finding healthy solutions to problems, loving oneself, the others and the environment, letting our body tell us, letting our center move us, and letting it change, not knowing but discovering. As a consequence, the work becomes "transpersonal", as Margie would say, and able to appeal to and heal the souls of many.

I feel therefore honored for being part of the Legacy Project and I am grateful to Margie, The Margie Gillis Foundation and the government of Quebec for making this possible, urging them to continue with such important endeavor. In this way, Margie's Legacy can remain alive and reach many corners of the world.

> LUCY M.MAY

A Circulating Richness, August 28, 2015

" We strangers band together fast at Margie's home in Acton Vale. The warmth of being harboured among the peculiar treasures and family relics is disarming. And so, unshelled, we do what needs doing—washing dishes—laying the table—imagining the future—embodying all that Ms. Gillis has breath to share...

I was all but a stranger to Margie when she called me to the Legacy Project 'Think Tank' in the summer of 2014. I felt surprised and humbled. I had forgotten the letter I'd sent to the Foundation months prior, hoping to connect. She and I are beginning to know each other now during these vivid morsels. When I can and when I'm called, I lend myself to summer days at the country house and winter crossings in the city. I feel excited to be a part of this, but also apprehensive. *What do I have to offer?*

...and later, *what do I want?* Margie asked that we write wish lists. Everything was on the table—dances—lessons—time—space—mind—body—eye—heart . . . Stunned by this principle of goodwill and gift exchange, it took me months to compose a reply. I struggled to imagine what I could contribute in equal value to Margie's offerings. She laid before us repertory, syllabus, mentorship for performance or creation, methods of conflict transformation through movement...

The first summer, I slept in her childhood bed. Crocheted pink throws and giant paper flowers, photos of her brother, Olympic paraphernalia and Chinese figurines cluttered the room. To think that my own room growing up—also cluttered—kept an image of Margie in the black dress of *Torn Roots, Broken Branches* pinned to the wall near the light switch. I felt her room and her home embrace me; I felt at ease and accepted...

Margie is not just a fount of wisdom. She is a torrent—a rushing, gushing spring river bursting its banks. I leave her aura sopping with insight, freshness, feelings; not wishing to dry out but wanting to squelch around my work with that lushness soaking through me. I moisten my training with the wash of her words...my performance with the sensation of tumbling through her classes free-form. Her teaching balances between specificity and openness and we learn effortlessly.

The Legacy Project has so far been managed as a gift exchange. We've discussed funding and there has been a successful crowd-sourcing campaign to pay for the cost of meat and potatoes, but at the root of the project is Margie's untethered giving, her trust in our ability to receive. The project works insofar that what she gives, we will carry.

This trust in me and entrusting to me still seems dreamlike. But I've been given a charge and I must learn to care for it. In my body now are gifts transmitted from her to me, real things and responsibilities. In the quieting days and weeks that follow our working periods together, a bond strengthens. More and more, I feel compelled to enact Margie's movement of transformation with excellence, discernment, compassion, joy and health. As best I can, forward this on to others and into the world, making sure the gift is always in movement."

— Lucy M. May, with deference to Lewis Hyde

> TROY OGILVIE

"Participating in The Margie Gillis Dance Foundation's "Legacy Project" this summer inspired and charged me. Margie has been dancing, performing, and teaching for forty years and yet her relentless curiosity always leaves room for the new. It's a relief to witness a living legend continue to proceed with intuition,

confidence, and a radical openness to being wrong. It excites me to think about where the "Legacy Project" will go and I'm honored to be a part of it."

> MAKAILA WALLACE

"Margie Gillis has been a great inspiration to me since the first time I met her about 6 years ago. In that first interaction, something struck me very deeply and I knew was important. Yes, the things she was offering in the studio were helping me to improve my creative techniques and encouraging my development as a dancer, but ultimately she was helping me grow as a human being. Over time, my experiences with Margie have shown me that she helps people to problem solve, communicate, learn from one another, and understand how to watch and observe others with discernment and compassion, skills that I believe are incredibly important, not only as artists but as people.

Margie's work speaks to and reaches such a wide range of individuals. She helps people (and groups) find ways to deal with perceived problems and search for their own creative solutions in a supportive environment where one can feel safe to explore these "problems" in a productive, positive and compassionate way. I have seen her beautiful influence and teachings help people open up and speak to parts of themselves that might otherwise remain hidden or forgotten, and gives those **feelings a supportive space** to find a creative voice.

Dance/art is an incredible way to use our emotions (and feelings), that might otherwise be destructive, and gives them a voice (or an outlet) to be released in a way that can be insightful, inspiring and ultimately help to change our society! Margie and her work does this!

The way she communicates and teaches (not to mention her awe inspiring performances!) are a worldly contribution. She deeply inspires and touches those around her. This work is so important and needs to continue to expand and evolve into the future! The Legacy Project can help ensure this happens.

In the summer of 2015, I was very honoured to be asked to join the Margie Gillis Legacy Project~ a wonderful opportunity to observe Margie teach (at SpringBoard in Montreal), take part in daily discussions and then join Margie in Acton Vale with other Legacy collaborators. There we had the opportunity to join Margie in daily classes, be mentored by her in our own creative projects and learn and develop repertoire. This was an opportunity of a lifetime! I can not say all the ways in which this experience affected me and will continue to feed and inspire me into the future. It is my intention to take these experiences and use them as artistic fuel as a dancer, teacher and coach.

The information and experience Margie holds and has to offer is absolutely priceless and incredibly important. Her work, I believe, can assist and support any dancer, artist, teacher or person interested in personal growth and development. As I move forward into the next chapters of my life, I would love to be able to support others in finding and developing their own passions and creative expression in some of the ways I feel Margie has helped me. I would take any and all opportunities to work with her~ in any capacity! Being a part of the Legacy Project has and will continue to help me to be able to access this work to direct and use it in a variety of ways, not only as a dance artist but ultimately as a human being. I deeply believe in her and this work, and am incredibly grateful for all the ways she has contributed to my growth. I would like to do all that I can to ensure her Legacy continues."