

April 16, 2008

Rena Shagan to Receive Dance/USA Trustees Award

Washington, DC, April 16, 2008 – At the culmination of its 25th Anniversary, Dance/USA announces the selection of **Rena Shagan** to receive the **Dance/USA Trustees Award**. The award will be presented at the Dance/USA Honors Celebration Dinner, held at the Sheraton Hotel, Wednesday, June 11, 2008 in Denver, Colorado. The Honors Celebration Dinner will be the kick off of the 2008 Dance/USA National Roundtable.

The Dance/USA Trustees Award is given at the discretion of the Board of Trustees to recognize an outstanding professional whose work has special significance to the field and, in this case, to Dance/USA. Rena Shagan will be recognized for her outstanding contribution to the creation and growth of Dance/USA. As chair of the committee and task force that created Dance/USA, Ms. Shagan led her colleagues in defining relevant goals, programs, services, and constituencies necessary to create a national service organization that would support the rise of the national dance community.

“The Board of Trustees thought that the culmination of Dance/USA’s 25th Anniversary year was the perfect opportunity to recognize and give credit to those who had the wisdom and forethought to create an organization that would galvanize the professional dance field and allow us to speak with one, united voice,” said Cookie Ruiz, chair of the Dance/USA Board of Trustees. “Rena Shagan’s leadership in establishing the organization that would become Dance/USA is a testament to how far we have come as an industry in support of the art form.”

History

Prior to Dance/USA, the Association of American Dance Companies (AADC) was created in 1966 as a dance service organization that fostered economic and institutional growth of the national dance community. AADC provided access to information and professional development geared toward organizational stability and access to higher standards of funding. AADC was in operation for 14 years until it folded in 1980 due to a mix of circumstances.

Following the closure, Rena Shagan was one of the many voices determined to find an organized way of supporting the growing dance community. In 1980, Ms. Shagan was tapped to serve as chair of the “Long Range Planning Committee” which was tasked with funding and administering a national study on the creation of a national dance service organization and taking action on the results of the study. Under Shagan’s leadership, the committee held several meetings in the following years and formed a strong task force whose work resulted in the creation of Dance/USA. Rena Shagan’s leadership on the Task Force for a National Dance Organization was essential to the establishment and continued success of Dance/USA.

Rena Shagan Biography

Rena Shagan has spent much of her life in dance. She was in the first class of children at the American Ballet Theatre school, was a student at the High School of Performing Arts, and a dancer in the company of legendary Graham dancer May O’Donnell.

After graduating from NYU, she worked for a brief time as the Legislative Assistant to a NY City Councilman and on the campaigns of Robert Kennedy and Howard Samuels. Shagan got back into dance as the manager of the 5 by 2 dance company, a modern dance repertory company, and then worked with several others.

Demonstrating a real strength in making relationships between presenters and artists, and recognizing a true need for that service in the field, she created Rena Shagan Associates, Inc., starting with three dance companies in 1982. Since that time, it has become a highly respected management organization that produces tours for international artists such as Pina Bausch, William Forsythe and Cloud Gate Dance Theatre; and represents U.S. companies including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Susan Marshall & Company, Meredith Monk, Lar Lubovitch Dance Company and the Houston Ballet. Shagan has written the definitive text on touring, that has come to be known as the “bible” in the field, “Booking and Tour Management for the Performing Arts,” along with numerous other articles and studies.

She was chosen by the board of the Association of American Dance Companies, the precursor organization to Dance/USA, to lead the effort to produce a new national service organization for dance in America. Over a two-year period, she led the Task Force for a National Dance Organization, raising the funds for a national study, lobbying for its existence, and administering its work.

Shagan has sat on numerous panels for the NEA, international and regional organizations and has been on the Board of Dance/USA, American Arts Alliance and the Western Arts Alliance.