

# thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



## Cereal Box Trivia: The Yard

by Lisa Bardarson

Welcome to thINKingDANCE'S first pop-quiz, inspired by my love of cereal box trivia. Here is your chance to test your knowledge on Philadelphia's connection to The Yard; a unique dance residency program located in the town of Chilmark, Massachusetts on the island of Martha's Vineyard. Over the years I have enjoyed many wonderful classes and performances while vacationing there with my family. Although you won't win any decoder rings for playing TD cereal box trivia, the prize is, as always, what's inside.

### Questions

1. The Yard was established in:
2. Name the Philadelphia choreographer who participated as a mentor in the Bessie Schonberg Choreographic Mentorship program at The Yard this summer.
3. Which Philadelphian has held the post of Executive and Artistic Director of The Yard?
  1. Carmen Febo-San Miguel, Executive Director at Taller Puertorriqueno
  2. Lois Welk, Director of Dance/USA PHL
  3. Gerry Givnish, Founder and former Director of The Painted Bride
  4. Lily Yeh, Founder of the Village of Arts and Humanities

4. Who might one see in the audience The Yard?

1. Michele Obama, First Lady of the United States
2. Virginia Johnson, Artistic Director and former Prima Ballerina of Dance Theater of Harlem
3. Lucinda Childs, American postmodern dancer/choreographer
4. Doug Elkins, American choreographer and B-Boy dancer

5. Name two additional Philadelphia choreographers who have participated at The Yard.

6. Where can choreographers and dancers go to learn more about participating in The Yard and other dance-based residencies?

## Answers

1. The Yard was founded in 1973 by Patricia Nanon who described her brainchild as “a playground without walls, a place to explore, to experiment, construct, a place of possibility, joy, love, anger, frustration, a place of mutual stimulation, sharing, testing, a space in which to come together and to be alone” (from the book *Sand, Sea and Stars: Twenty Years Dancing at The Yard*). Before her death in 2008, Nanon transferred ownership from her private estate to the The Yard, ensuring that her legacy would continue in its mission to support dance on the island of Martha's Vineyard.

2. David Brick, Co-Artistic Director of Philadelphia's HEADLONG Dance Theater mentored South Asian choreographer Hari Krishnan and New York choreographers Deborah Lohse and Donnell Oakley as part of the 2013 Bessie Schonberg Mentorship program at The Yard.

3. While Carmen Febo-San Miguel, Gerry Givnish and Lily Yeh have all made significant contributions to the Philadelphia arts community, only Lois Welk has held the position of Executive and Artistic Director at The Yard (2003- 2006). In addition to her current role as Director of Dance/USA PHL, Welk also serves the Philadelphia dance community as a board member of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, the Mayor's Cultural Advisory Committee and as one of Philadelphia's Creative Connectors.

David White is the current Artistic and Executive Director of The Yard. From 1975-2003, he was Executive Director and Producer of Dance Theater Workshop in New York City and joined The Yard in 2011. Along with his staff, White has played a significant part in bringing The Yard back to fiscal health. In a one-on-one conversation over lunch he talked about his hopes for connecting with the Island's school population during the school year, a new move for The Yard which has historically been active solely during the summer season.

4. Although it's possible that First Lady Michele Obama attended other performances at The Yard she wasn't there the night I went to see Doug Elkins' works, “Hapless Bizarre” and “Mo(or)Town/Redux.”. I did happen to see DTH Director, Virginia

Johnson, choreographer/dancer Lucinda Childs as well as Elkins. Fun!

5. Choreographers Jumatatu Poe and Kate Watson-Wallace have each had residencies at The Yard.

6. To learn more about The Yard go to <http://dancetheyard.org>. To learn about additional residencies available to dance makers please visit [The Alliance of Artists Communities](#) which lists over 160 programs in the United States and Canada as well as abroad.

I look forward to returning to The Yard next year where exceptional dance is the norm and meeting the President of the United States while waiting in line to use the restroom is a possibility (true or false?).

9.13\*\*\*Editors Note: Correction: Jumatatu Poe has not had a residency at The Yard.

By Lisa Bardarson

August 30, 2013