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Dance Professor Keeps Famed Choreographer's Work Alive

Winthrop University

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01/10/2013

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Dance Professor Keeps Famed Choreographer's Work Alive

Quick Facts

- The Merce Cunningham Trust provides funds for the preservation and restaging of the famed choreographer's work.
- Neels restaged Cunningham's work "Place" in New York City recently.



Sandra Neels

ROCK HILL, S.C. — Winthrop University's **Sandra Neels** is "on pointe" as the first recipient of the **Merce Cunningham Trust** fellowship.

Named after avant-garde choreographer **Merce Cunningham**, the trust provides funds for the restaging and preservation of Cunningham's work. **Neels**, an associate professor of dance, used the fellowship money to restage Cunningham's piece "Place" last summer at the City Center in New York City. An article about the restaging, written by Neels, appears in this month's issue of Dance Magazine.

Neels is planning a new reconstruction of Cunningham's "**Variations V**," which she hopes to stage this year, as she receives another fellowship.

Neels was a member of Cunningham's company for 10 years, learning and performing nearly 30 dances, some of which she has been reconstructing and restaging in New York and across the nation.

Cunningham earned some of the arts profession's highest honors, including the National Medal of the Arts and the MacArthur Fellowship, throughout his 70-year career. With the Cunningham Trust, only former members of his company are permitted to teach and restage his work. Films of interviews and Neels dancing with Cunningham are currently on display at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Neels had a 10-year performance career with the **Merce Cunningham Dance Company** until 1974. Since then, she has choreographed more than 200 works in a variety of settings, including fashion shows in Los Angeles and Toronto and for the Utah Repertory Dance Theatre, and maintained her own studio and company in New York City. While in Canada she choreographed for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the Manitoba Opera Association, among others.

For more information contact Neels at 803/323-4855 or neelss@winthrop.edu.

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