



## IN MEMORIAM

Marion Scott Rosalsky  
Professor Emeritus  
UC Los Angeles  
1922 - 2008

Marion Scott Rosalsky, known to both her colleagues and to the professional world of dance as Marion Scott, died in Los Angeles on October 5, 2008, at 86 years of age.

In 1969 she joined the UCLA Dance Department as associate professor and remained for two decades, teaching choreography at all levels and becoming resident choreographer of the UCLA Dance Company. After retiring from UCLA as professor emerita, she blossomed as a vital member of the Los Angeles dance community where she continued to produce, choreograph, and perform to high critical acclaim well into her 80's.

Born in Chicago on July 24, 1922, Prof. Scott began dancing at the age of 5. As soon as she finished high school, she left Chicago and moved to New York, at 18 years of age, to study with many of the pioneers in the world of modern dance, including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Helen Tamaris, Jose Limon, Hanya Holm and Anna Sokolow. While in New York City she danced in the companies of Martha Graham, Humphrey- Weidman and, as a lead dancer from 1959 to 1963, with Tamaris- Nagrin Dance Company. In 1963, she received the Doris Humphrey Fellowship at the American Dance Festival, which at the time was the only existing award in modern dance for choreography.

She also formed and performed with her own company, the Marion Scott Dance Company, for 20 years, as well as being one of the founders and directors of Contemporary Dance Inc. (an organization that presented new works by young choreographers). Her New York City performances centered at the 92nd Street YM/ YWHA; however, she also toured regularly – including performances at Jacob's Pillow.

In 1968, when she was 46, she stopped performing because of crippling arthritis. The next year, she began a bicoastal life, leaving her businessman- husband Ivan Rosalsky, and their two college age children on the East Coast to pursue her new career at UCLA.

In the years that followed she did such pieces as: Trans; Sevenfold (1973); Mysterium (1975); 1, 2, 3 (1977); Initiation (1978); Many Paths (1980); Underglow (1981); Fine Line (1981); Triune (1984); Legend (1985); Psalm 1984 (1985).

She also mounted Doris Humphrey's Partita for the UCLA Dance Company in 1974/75.

In 1973 Prof. Emerita Allegra Fuller Snyder made a documentary film on Marion Scott and her work called Reflections on Choreography. Shirley Clarke, an Academy Award- winning filmmaker who was professor of film at the Department of Theater, Film, and Television at UCLA from 1975 to 1983, made three short films of Marion Scott's works: Trans (1978); One Two Three (1978) and Mysterium (1975); Initiation (1978).

Gary Bates, who completed his BA and MA in dance at UCLA and then went to teach at Florida State University, UCLA, Scripps College and Loyola Marymount University, writes of working with Marion Scott.

“We began rehearsals on *Mysterium* in the fall of 1975, working several hours a day, 2 to 3 days a week. The piece progressed nicely over the next 5 to 6 weeks. She had created a fast moving choreography of about 6 minutes duration for Kathe Copperman and myself, utilizing our skills, and we were pleased with the results. In the coming rehearsals we were quite sure we would be developing and refining the material for the upcoming UCLA Dance Company concert. However, that was not to be. Marion had been contemplating the work and decided she wanted to bring out something different in the two of us. So we made a fresh start with a very small element, a tiny phrase of movement, she had chosen to explore. Another 5 to 6 weeks and we had developed another 6 minutes of choreography.”

“Once again Marion came into our next rehearsal, looked at us, and said she was not satisfied with the piece and would we mind starting again. With the concert date now just weeks away, we agreed to trust her intuition. We began again for the third time. In the process of developing material and discarding it to discover yet more movement ideas we had begun to merge as one voice. A trust had developed and an intuitive energy had engaged us. Each of us had surrendered to the work at hand. It took us very little time to finish the choreography after that. What emerged was a hauntingly beautiful piece – *Mysterium*.”

It was apparent she was reaching for a new way to work, relying more on an inner, intuitive source to express her ideas. It was also evident in several other pieces she choreographed for the UCLA Dance Company, most notably *Sevenfold* and *Legend*.

She greatly valued being a teacher and helping others find and explore their own creative process. Her colleague Irma Dosamantes- Beaudry, Professor in Arts Therapy, Culture and Performance in the Department of World Arts and Cultures, who, from 1977 through 1990 served as the Director of the Graduate Dance/ Movement Therapy Program within the Department of Dance at UCLA, writes- “Marion and I agreed that self- transformation occurred though a kind of movement that begins with the mover attending inwardly to their own internal experience and then allowing a spontaneous impulse to move outwardly without censoring where it might take the mover and arriving at its own conclusion. This is a way of moving that Mary Whitehouse (noted dance therapist and former visiting faculty at UCLA) referred to as “authentic movement” and Marion later came to refer to as “spirit dancing.” Marion and I agreed that the major difference between the creative process that was involved in “spirit dancing” when performed before an audience and “authentic movement” which takes place within a Dance Movement Therapy context, was that “spirit dancing” culminated with the performance of the spontaneous dance created, while in Dance Movement Therapy, which used authentic movement, aimed to process the personal meaning contained in the dance created by the mover for themselves and not for others.”

Dosamantes- Beaudry continues, “After each of her Spirit Dance concerts Marion and I would get together. She used me as a kind of sounding- board for what she was aiming to accomplish aesthetically and emotionally. I loved talking to her about the value of what she was passing on to other dancers.”

Roberta Wolin- Manker, Santa Monica College dance faculty, who studied at UCLA under Scott in the 1980s, said her former teacher had the ability “to nurture and bring forth the uniqueness of each of her students.”

Marion Scott became a significant force in greater Los Angeles modern dance community, mentoring prominent choreographers such as Hae Kyung Lee (Cal State University Los Angeles) and dedicated educators such as Linda Gold (Santa Monica City College). In 2001 she was awarded the Lester Horton Lifetime Achievement Award by the prestigious Dance Resource Center of Greater Los Angeles.

“Marion showed the world that your creativity never stops, that what you have to offer and share is only richer as time goes by,” continues Roberta Wolin- Manker. “You can dance as long as you can move,” Scott once said, explaining the credo that shaped her last years.

Marion Scott’s worsening arthritis led to two hip replacement surgeries in the early 1970s. She also tried Rolwing, a rigorous form of massage therapy that slowly improved her suppleness. She continued to create new pieces. By 1985, then 62, she returned to performing with *Visions*, an all- women collective she founded whose members included performance artist Rachel Rosenthal and Hae Kyung Lee, another former student who became an internationally known choreographer.

In a 1985 review, Los Angeles Times critic Lewis Segal called Scott's solo in a *Visions* program “. . . a statement of one woman's connection to something beyond the personal.”

In 1999, when she was 77, Scott embarked on a series of programs that she called “Spirit Dances”. It was a collaborative dance group whose members ranged in age from their 40s to their 80s. The concerts’ themes ranged from a tribute to Isadora Duncan to an exploration of masks and movement. Professor Dosamantes-

Beaudry comments: "I was particularly moved by her Spirit Dance entitled "Crones" since I felt that in this concert she addressed a critical question that all western dancers must contend with- whether they can continue to perform after they reach a certain age? That concert made perfectly clear that one must never cease dancing since spontaneous dancing is the very expression of "being alive." She inspired a number of retired dancers to perform again, including Prof. Emerita Allegra Fuller Snyder, former head of the Dance Department at UCLA who appeared in Spirit Dance performances for seven years.

Scott's last performance was in April 2007 at Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica. Despite a number of health setbacks, including congestive heart failure and strokes, she performed a piece she called "Prayer." It began with Scott pushing her walker across the stage to a chair. Accompanied by the third of composer Richard Strauss's "Four Last Songs" about death, which speak of the spirit flying "freely into night's magic sphere," she sat down in the chair, then stretched her arms toward a light. "It just took everyone's breath away," recalled Jamie Nichols, who produced the show.

She is survived by her husband Ivan Rosalsky, of Montclair, N.J.; daughter Lynn of Clifton Park, N.Y.; son Peter of Swarthmore, Pa.; twin sister, Anita Chadwick of New York; and three grandchildren. She will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by her family, friends, and many students, fellow dancers and colleagues whose lives she so enriched.

Professor Emeriti Allegra Fuller Snyder  
Professor Emma Lewis Thomas