



# The Hummingbirds Institute

DANCE YOGA MUSIC

Mahe Benham  
Founder and President  
Tel: 212.505.2525  
www.hummingbirdsinsitute.org

Inside the heart of every human being there is a hummingbird.  
Its fluttering wings are the spiritual life force within us,  
inspiring and empowering us to create.

Founder and President  
Mahe Benham

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## Biography

### Mahe Benham, Founder and President The Hummingbirds Institute

Mahe Benham is the Founder and Artistic Director of Coyote Dancers, a modern dance troupe recognized for its highly theatrical and deeply spiritual dances. The Company gave its debut performance at the Festival de Musique on St. Barthelemy's Island in 1993. Coyote Dancers has since presented its New York City seasons at the Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College.

Ms. Benham is widely known for her acclaimed epic, "Sipapu", a dance for men of all generations, which has been hailed as "a masterwork which vividly renders a process of transcendence and spiritual renewal" (John Koroly, WRSU-FM). Her signature solo, "Mahe, It's Donald", was noted by Jennie Schulman of "Backstage" as "one of the most profoundly moving solos seen in many a day." Distinguished guest artists who have performed with Coyote Dancers include Stuart Hodes, partner to Martha Graham for 20 years, Dudley Williams, principal with Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham, Gus Solomon, Jr., dancer with Merce Cunningham and Martha Graham, Daniel Maloney, David Chase, Steve Rooks, and Maxine Sherman, principals with Martha Graham, Rael Lamb, soloist with Maurice Bejart, and Ted Dalbotten, music and dance educator.

Ms. Benham has danced with the Martha Graham Dance Company, Pearl Lang, Daniel Maloney, Kenneth King, Cornfield Dance and the Balinese American Fusion Dance Company.

She has been a member of the faculty of the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance since 1987, where he taught not only the company and adult professionals, but the children as well. Her unique and creative teaching brought great joy to Ms. Graham, who personally authorized her to teach the Martha Graham Technique anywhere in the world in her name. Ms. Graham was particularly touched by Mahe's ability to inspire and build confidence in her young dancers, ages 7 to 18. Some of them are now members of Coyote Dancers.



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Ms. Benham is also a member of the faculty of the Alvin Ailey School of Dance, and she has taught at Marymount Manhattan College, Ballet Hispanico, and Pratt Institute. At the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre, she taught the Movement for Actors course which Martha Graham instituted in 1928 and taught until 1968. She has a large following of enthusiastic and devoted students.

Ms. Benham is a certified Jivamukti Yoga teacher. She has taught both Yoga and Asanadance at the Jivamukti Yoga Center in New York City. She has choreographed several dances for Jivamukti's founders, Sharon Gannon and David Life, which they have performed both internationally and on stage with Coyote Dancers. She has studied Ashtanga Yoga both with David Life and with Sri K. Patabhi Jois. Her open yoga and meditation classes held at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre were highly popular and consistently packed. She teaches yoga and meditation both privately and to groups.

Ms. Benham graduated from Reed College with a B.A in Cultural Anthropology. She has her M. Phil and Masters Degree, and ABD for the PhD, in Cultural Anthropology from Columbia University.

In 1992, Ms. Benham was initiated into Kriya Yoga by Paramahansa (Supreme Swan) Hariharananda Giri, God-realized Master and living saint.

In 2003, she established The Hummingbirds School, the first studio of dance, yoga, and music for people with special needs. The School received a citation from United Cerebral Palsy of New York for excellence in dance classes for those in wheelchairs. Currently she continues as the President of The Hummingbirds Institute.