

BARBARA MAHLER, formerly of the Klein/Mahler School of Dance and Movement Studies, is a widely respected dance innovator, very active in the development of post modern dance technique. A Master teacher in Klein Technique she has taught daily class for 27 plus years, educating an entire generation of performers and choreographers. She received her BA in dance from Hunter College, NYC, under the tutelage of Dorothy Vislocky., and her MFA from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Barbara, a noted teacher and choreographer of international reputation has had her work presented at many festivals and venues across the nation, as well as in Canada and Europe. She has danced with many renowned choreographers, but has primarily pursued her own choreographic vision and passion. She draws upon her life experiences and artistic exposures to create moving solo dances of clarity and design for herself and other artists. She has created work for UnderFoot Dance (NYC), for Janet Oxley (funded by the Council des Artes et des Lettres du Quebec, the School for Contemporary Dance in Copenhagen, Denmark, Hunter College, NYC, Ohio State among others. Barbara has been a recipient of the Sage Cowles Land Grant Guest Artist (University of Minnesota), and was an artist in residence with Movement Research for the 2001-02 and 2006-08 seasons. She is on the advisory board at the Brooklyn Arts Exchange. as well as maintaining a private practice in movement therapy and bodywork as a certified practitioner and senior teacher of Zero Balancing. www.barbaramahler.com

Klein Technique is a living and growing body of work developed initially by Susan Klein in 1972. Her mentors, and greatest influences were Steffi Nossen, Martha Graham, May O'Donnell, Gertrude Shure, Don Farnworth, Colette Barry, Barbara Mahler, Dr. Barbara Vedder, D.C., Irmgard Bartenieff, Dr. Fritz Smith, M.D., Dr. J. R. Worsley, D. Ac. and many others taught her invaluable lessons; something to push against to spark change.

Klein Technique was developed within the context of Susan's personal search to heal a serious and devastating injury, which occurred in 1971. She began dancing at the age of five. At the age of 19, about to join a major modern dance company she found herself to be considered useless, unimportant, and replaceable. The injury abruptly ended her professional career as a dancer. Her quest to recover expanded into a passion to develop a new dance technique and that in turn developed into wanting to change the TRAINING of dancers to way of TEACHING dance - for them to learn their own way, and respect themselves, and be respected by others.

Barbara Mahler began studying with Susan Klein and Colette Barry in 1977, and began teaching in 1979, when the school's name changed to the Susan Klein School of Dance. Beginning her dance career at the age of 20, she was initially inspired by the pioneer anatomist Dorothy Vislocky, Ph.D., to search for new ways of working to stave off the constant frustration, and injuries incurred by attempting (desperately) to achieve the "modern dance" status quo body. Looking to find, her own way of learning, and her own way into "body: led her to the Colette Barry and Susan Klein School of Dance, where she began studying passionately in 1977, and teaching in 1979. Using the principles of the technique, Barbara since has added exercises, expanding the work, and the methodology of teaching, delving into the depths in order to help others as she had helped herself learn to dance. She is responsible for the continuity of both the school and the technique, and teaching the majority of the classes, is the "motor" (Diane Madden, soloist for the Trisha Brown Dance Company) of the school. Barbara is a brilliant teacher, gifted in her ability to see, understand and create. She also aided the development of the teaching methodology: teaching to the individual, and aiding them in finding their own unique way of learning. She has helped Klein Technique live and grow with her tremendous contributions over the last 20 years. At 50 she is still dancing with passion, grace and the ease of a connected body expressing itself in movement and space. Barbara's dancing is both athletically challenging and poetic at the same time. In 2001, the school's name was changed to the Susan Klein and Barbara Mahler School of Dance and Movement Studies in acknowledgment of her contributions.

Klein Technique is a body of work; of knowledge, but it is also a way for dancers to be treated, respected and to be seen as individuals. The main thrust of the work is for dancers to find their own essence, their own identity and integrity and take that into movement. In order to do that we work at the level of the bone, not the traditional level of the muscles. Klein Technique is not a release technique in that our goal is not to release, but to move. In order to move most efficiently it is necessary to release or let go of the muscles that hold us back from moving and fix the body into a set and locked configuration. We aim at releasing the muscles so we can get down to the deepest tissue, the bone, where we can learn to move from the true essence of our individual nature. When the bones are aligned we become connected, we become powerful and strong. The body becomes efficient and alive, and injuries often heal. We align the bones by using the muscles most responsible for the transfer of forces through the body - the psoas, the hamstrings, the external rotators, and the pelvic floor. We do not work to "exercise" these muscle but rather to "wake them up"; to use them for support for and realignment of the bones. We work, and teach, for the body to be elastic, responsive, open to choices, and expressive. Movement, and the treatment of each individual student's body, mind and spirit with kindness, respect and generosity is our ultimate goal. And finally and most importantly, the body does not exist alone but in connection to the ground, the space, and to others.

All certified teachers need to have this deep understanding and embodiment of the principles and pedagogy so they too can add to the depth fo the work.

Susan Klein and Barbara Mahler 2001
Updated by Barbara Mahler 2008