

I REMEMBER: MARY.

I never saw you dance. I never saw your dances. No, I came at the end of your long career - at the end of a long, loving line of students. There wasn't really much time anymore - and yet there was just enough time---

West Berlin. On a sun-filled morning in October, 1965, Mary opened her Dance Studio door. Slowly, the handle turned, and an inquisitive, lively face peeped in at her Dance Students, practising in class. This was the first time I saw Mary Wigman. At first sight, I was shocked in feeling that I knew her face - as from some distant, undisclosed, taunting memory. A Lion. A mountain. A turquoise-blue lake. A red flower. All were part of her mystery.

The students squealed in delight to see their Mary again - and I was formally introduced to her by young Maria, our Argentine dancer; "This is Judy. She is from Canada." I shrunk in shyness from this powerful woman, but felt at the same time, as we all did, that I "belonged".

In November, 1965, the students celebrated Mary's 79th Birthday with a Concert in her Studio. There, Dore Hoyer, once the dancer's idol in solo dance, appeared, sinuous and striking, sitting at Mary's side. On Mary's other side was tiny, black-haired Til Thiele, our teacher in Technique. We danced our dances and afterwards everyone shared in the champagne, served in the

main hall of the big gracious old School on Rheinbabenallee.

Mary glowed, speaking with everyone, her deep deep blue eyes seeing, expressing the joys known to her. As always for celebrations, Mary wore a black suit, with a tiny diamond pin on her lapel, white silk blouse and fine black shoes. Ever stylish - and the very best! She loved Life. She loved Art. She spoke to us; encouraged us, taught us. She was there!

The first year passed, for me, in great struggle - it was not easy to be a beginner and a stranger. I spoke no German, did not speak much at all. But I worked hard - and was able to create and perform that year a young "Ophelia" and a harsh "Prophet".

October, 1966. Second year. Mary watched me as I descended the long staircase to the Studio (I always ran, slid, and leaped down), landing at her feet. She replaced her heavy gong on its iron place, and warmly smiled; "It's good to see you again, Judy." Patiently, she worked with me that year, as with the other students, correcting, guiding technique, compositions and improvisations. Developing as a dancer was painful, slow - but Mary made it an adventure.

One evening, early in the Spring of 1967, I found a baby squirrel clinging to a wire fence close to the School. The squirrel and I soon became good friends - and I named him "Danny". Mary allowed Danny to live in the School, and even let him sleep on her desk in her large room on the second floor. This room was majestic - with tapestries of black and gold, a soft black couch, deep red floor, grand piano, and a wonderful stone-carved bust

of Mary. But, there lived Danny too, perched on the enormous black desk - a small, pert reminder of the Nature that Mary loved.

Christmas-time with Mary, was, for me, best of all. The foreign students were invited to Mary's on Taubertstrasse 4 on Christmas Eve. That evening the windows of her apartment were ablaze with white candles. "The candles are burning for those who can't be with us," she once explained to me - referring to the East Berliners who live on the other side of the Berlin Wall. We assembled in her living room, sipping cognac from tiny silver cups, and at the signal of a small bell, Hesschen (Mary's companion) motioned to us to enter through the doorway to Mary's own room. We entered, and blinked in happiness at the warm light of many candles - everywhere aflame. Mary's face radiated - and she led us quietly to her Christmas Landscape - an exquisite little city of minute carved figures given to her over the years by her friends and students. Each little piece had a story behind it which she related when we asked. The little figures of animals and angels walking along the shiny red highway up the steps to the Christ-Child came alive and even seemed to dance! The orchestra of angels, the dancing angels, the silver peacock, the little black sheep, the dark paper angel, the carved lion, the little white birds - all lived in our imaginations. Mary had food served to us on white plates decorated with red dragons, and when we had finished the last of the champagne, and when the candles had burned down, we went on our way into the snowy Berlin night, carrying a precious little Christmas gift she had given each of us.

July, 1967. I graduated from the School, taking my Examination as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer. The same month, I gave my first solo concert in the School, and on that evening Mary closed her School forever. It was a time of sadness and of parting for us all.

Six years passed. I lived in Canada, but journeyed to Germany each Christmas to celebrate this time with Mary. As the seasons aged her, the lines in her face grew deeper, her eyes grew dimmer, until almost blind, her bones grew softer, susceptible to many breaks. But she remained alive in spirit.

June - July, 1973. I had danced at Berlin's Academy of the Arts in May, and chose to spend some days with my dear friend and teacher. We had many wonderful talks together - and I even read "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" to her. She called it "a lovely story." I bought a bicycle and spent hours riding in the Grünewald - and afterwards would relate my adventures to Mary. We talked of Nature, of Theatre, of the Opera, of people, of Dance, of books, of Religion, of little things, of big things, of past, present, future - of all that Life might offer.

Before I left Berlin for Canada, she asked me not to grieve for her in Death. She said she felt ready to go as she had lived her Life, and now was falling with the sicknesses of old age.

----- In Death, dear Mary, I miss you. I miss you. You have helped give us a vision of Beauty, of Joy, of the fulfillment of Life, of the greatness of Art. You lived, you suffered, but you endured, and loved!

From this World I thank you.

From my heart I thank you.

Judy Jarvis, Toronto Canada

October, 1973