

DANCE/NYC JOINS NEW YORK BEYOND SIGHT

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NYC Dance Community
Helps Make NYC Accessible for People Who Are Blind
www.nybeyondsight.org

What do Ellen Bar, Jonah Bokaer, Lane Harwell, Mark Morris, Linda Shelton, and Sylvia Waters have in common with Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, sports broadcaster Michael Kay, Trinity Church's Reverend Dr. James Cooper, author Linda Fairstein, and WNYC commentator Brian Lehrer? All can be heard describing their favorite NYC landmark online at www.nybeyondsight.org.

New York Beyond Sight is an online project of Art Beyond Sight/Art Education for the Blind (ABS)-- a project designed to make NYC's cultural treasures accessible for people with vision loss, but that is enjoyed by all. It features the voices of prominent New Yorkers providing "visual descriptions" of NYC landmark buildings, historic sites, and public artworks. Visual descriptions (also called "verbal descriptions") use words to represent the visual world in a way that helps people who are blind to form mental images of what they cannot see.

The recorded visual descriptions provide some historical background about the sites, landmark buildings, and outdoor art featured. Online links are provided for people who are interested in knowing more about the significance of the site and/or information on visiting it. The website also contains tactile diagrams of some of the buildings featured; the diagrams can be downloaded and printed on swell paper as raised-line drawings.

In addition to being published online, New York Beyond Sight recordings are featured in free public programs cosponsored by ABS and the New York Public Library; the majority of these programs are held at the Andrew Heiskell Library in Manhattan.

New York Beyond Sight received an international Jodi Award Commendation for Compelling Content in 2010. The award was presented at the European Union's Congress on E-Inclusion, at which the www.nybeyondsight.org website was featured.

Art Beyond Sight/Art Education for the Blind is a 25-year-old NYC-based nonprofit dedicated to making art and culture accessible to all people. Its New York Beyond Sight program is supported, in part, by funds from American Express, The McGraw-Hill Companies, NYC's Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

If other dancers or choreographers would like to donate their time and voices to this project, contact Joan Pursley by phone (212-334-8720) or by email: coordinator@artbeyondsight.org.

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