

Lissa Tyler Renaud

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Hello,

I wrote about André Bernard's work, ideokinesis, for a recent VASTA newsletter and now he has passed away in NY. A great man and a kind one. An incalculable influence on people across the disciplines of acting, voice, broadcasting, music, dance and especially the alternative movement practices related to kinesiology. I was so looking forward to the next ten--or twenty--years of his work. The NY memorial for André is apparently planned for Thursday afternoon, June 26th, from 3 to 5 PM at, St - Mark's Church:

André Bernard, the host of "Around New York" on WNYC-FM throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s, died last Wednesday night in Manhattan of a heart attack. He was 78 and had lived on the Upper East Side since 1950. André had the perfect radio voice a big, booming, toffee-smooth tone that sounded both supremely authoritative and downright homey. He held court on WNYC from 1965 through 1990, greeting his hundreds of guests some of the leading writers/actors, dancers and musicians of the time ---as if they were old and valued friends. Indeed, many of André 's guests later became his friends: I remember especially his close ties to the composer Lucia Dlugoszewski, the soprano Eleanor Steber and the actress Irene Worth, all of whom would call him in the studio.

Because his radio manner was so eloquent and formal, visitors were often surprised to find out that André was given to the most casual dress, often wearing a sand dollar medallion around his neck. He followed a strict macrobiotic diet for much of his life, and brought his own pungent-smelling casseroles of unusual greens to the studio each day. He was an accomplished poet, a legendary (the word is not too strong) kinesiologist, and something of a mystic. Above all, he was a kind and thoughtful man and these qualities pervaded his work.

I was lucky enough to work with André for six years, after my own program -- "New, Old and Unexpected" was started as a sort of annex to "Around New York." The initial response to my show was not all favorable (an airing of Steve Reich's "Six Pianos" in 1981 inspired more than 40 listeners to call the station and complain that the record was stuck!) but André was delighted with the change from a conservative format. "'Around New York' should represent the music being made in this city," he told me.

The composer David Garland, who is the present host of Evening Music on WNYC, paid tribute to André yesterday: "He set a wonderful example by embracing the new while being an exemplar of the grand old radio announcer tradition."

André was born Bernard Moses on June 10, 1924 and grew up in Columbia, S.C. He moved to New York in 1950 and worked as an actor/ appearing in roles on the Kraft Television Theater and the Hallmark Hall of Fame. It was at about this time that he changed his name to André Bernard.

In 1952, André started dancing with the Erick Hawkins Company and it was Hawkins who suggested he become a teacher. He studied kinesiology – a method of body alignment that helps reduce stress and coordinate ease of motion -- with Barbara Clark, who was herself a student of Mabel Elsworth Todd, the founder of the technique. A small book about André 's work, entitled "Ideokinesis & Creative Body Alignment" was published by **Contact Quarterly**. Many dancers and choreographers in New York swore by André's teaching. "If you were to ask me what it is I do, I'd say that I communicate," André said in 1989. "The thing I like about teaching is basically the same thing I like about radio announcing, and that I liked about acting - they're all forms of communication."

Through it all, André was modest and self-deprecating. "Sometimes I sign off my show saying, 'I'll be back tomorrow and I'm going to keep on coming back until I get it right.'"

He is survived by three sisters, Gloria Moses, Dolores de Maria and Marguerite Ojalva and a brother, Stephen Moses, all of Columbia. His family may be reached through Gloria Moses, 5008 Clemson Avenue, Columbia, South Carolina, 29206.

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