

HEARD & SCENE

Festival Shines Spotlight on Sephardic Culture



The sixth annual Sephardic Music Festival, which opened Dec. 1 and runs until Wednesday, promotes Sephardic fashion, music and culture. Top, a woman modeling clothing from Baruch Chertok's label. Above, Y-Love, left, launches the beginning of a fashion show and Matan Havari draws on the graffiti wall.

DONOR OF THE DAY | By Shelly Banjo

Couple's Trust Provides Grants for Young Artists

During their lives, Edward and Sally Van Lier helped children and young adults enjoy New York City's cultural smorgasbord.

Now the charitable fund the couple set up at Sally's death in 1988 is granting \$700,000 to more than a dozen nonprofits around the city for pre-college and post-college scholarships and programs for young artists.

Born into a family of Hungarian immigrants at the turn of the century, Ms. Van Lier struggled to launch a career in show business. She got her break in 1923 when she won a local beauty contest and subsequently landed a role in the first production of Flo Ziegfeld's musical "Showboat."

In 1935, she married Edward, a real-estate investor. Although the couple didn't have children, they became involved with the local YWCA near Manhattan's Grand Central Station where they befriended a number of young women. Taking the women to concerts and museums, they encouraged them to pursue the arts.

At their death, the Van Liers set up a fund with the New York Community Trust, requiring the fund be disbursed to "provide education assistance

and training to gifted young persons who aspire to a career in the arts."

"Sally was no stranger to what it was like to be a struggling artist," says Kerry McCarthy, a program officer who oversees grants to arts and culture for the New York Community Trust, the largest private funder of the city's nonprofits. "The Van Liers' role of helping gifted and talented but underserved young people pursue the arts will continue for years to come."

In 1991, the trust began making grants to arts organizations to award Van Lier fellowships to low-income and minority artists at two critical points: pre-college, for training to help prepare for admission to a college or conservatory; and post-college, to develop a body of work and make the transition from student to professional artist.

"When students are in school, they are surrounded by an academic environment that can nurture them," Ms. McCarthy says.

"It's getting into these schools that are tough and then again, they struggle when they graduate and face the challenging world of finding space, resources and work."

For that reason, the fund has awarded more than \$11

million to more than 130 arts training groups including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, the Manhattan School of Music and Dancewave, a pre-professional performing arts training center in Brooklyn.

"The Van Lier Scholarship will give these kids, many of whom would never have the money to pay for dance lessons, an opportunity to perform on world-class stages and get into the best college programs," says Diane Jacobowitz, executive director at Dancewave, which this year will award five Van Lier scholarships to high school students.



Kerry McCarthy