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CONCERT SEASON

THE SPOTLIGHT



MARTHA GRAHAM

Martha Graham is a tenth-generation American. On her mother's side, she is a direct descendant of Miles Standish. She was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she lived until she was ten years old. At that time her father, a well-known nerve specialist, moved his family to Santa Barbara, California, where Martha Graham grew up and received her education.

She cannot remember a time when she did not long to dance, and at the age of two years, she horrified her mother by slipping out of the pew during a church service to which she had been taken, and dancing solemnly down the aisle to the offertory music. After that early debut she was forced by parental pressure to confine her performances to the family kitchen. There, with Lizzie, her nurse, for an audience, she danced.

Her father was definitely set against her taking dancing lessons and it was not until she was sixteen years old that Martha Graham had an opportunity to study. After seeing a dance recital in Santa Barbara by Ruth St. Denis, the first she had ever seen, she was so moved by the performance that she dared to defy her father. At last she obtained his permission to go to Los Angeles to study with Miss St. Denis. At the end of a six week period she returned to Santa Barbara to finish her schooling.

In 1919 Martha Graham returned to the Denishawn School in Los Angeles and became a member of their concert company. She remained with them until 1923, dancing

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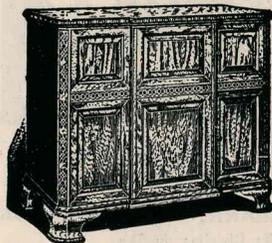
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THE SPOTLIGHT

MARTHA GRAHAM—(Continued)

in the company in the winter and teaching at school in the summer.

During the first two years after she left the Denishawn company, Martha Graham taught at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. At this time, breaking with the tradition of Oriental and musical interpretative dancing which she had been doing in the Denishawn company, she began to evolve her own technique; a technique which has revolutionized the part of the dance.

In 1926 Martha Graham came to New York and gave her first recital. It was greeted by a varied response by the press but by the unanimous prophecy that here was a dancer about whom much would be heard in the future. This prophecy has been fulfilled; for, in addition to her recitals in New York and her concert tours, her activities have included appearances with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Stokowski, when she danced the leading role in the League of Composers' production of the "Sacre du Printemps," and with the Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of Sokoloff, when she danced the leading role in Irene Lewisohn's production, "Heldenleben." In the theatre she has also been active. She directed the Stage Alliance's "Six Miracle Plays," assisted Guthrie McClintic in the staging of Katharine Cornell's "Lucrece," and staged the dancing in the ball room scene of Katharine Cornell's production of "Romeo and Juliet." She also directed the action in the Phoenix Theatre's "Panic," a play by Archibald MacLeish, and the dancing in the Theatre Guild's play "Valley Forge."

In recognition of the important cultural factor that her dance had become in American life, Martha Graham was awarded a fellowship by the Guggenheim Foundation. This was the first time such an award had ever been made to a dancer.

Last season Martha Graham completed a transcontinental tour, the first ever undertaken by a modern American dancer. Thirty thousand in audiences across the country were present at her recitals, and so great was

◆ CONCERT SEASON ◆

THE SPOTLIGHT

MARTHA GRAHAM—(Continued)

the success that she is making another nation wide tour—this time accompanied by her famous concert group.

Louis Horst, Miss Graham's musical director for the past ten years, has been her constant collaborator. In addition he is widely known as a critic and is a member of the faculties of the Neighborhood Playhouse Studio, Barnard College, Sarah Lawrence College and the Bennington College School of the Dance, at all of which he teaches Composition in Dance Form.

Mr. Horst, called "the perennial pianistic patron saint of the dance," is said to know more about dancing than do any of the dancers. The modern dance in America occupies the important place it does today largely because of his counsel and support.

In 1915 he was engaged by Ruth St. Denis as musical director for the Denishawn company, and for the next ten years he toured continuously in vaudeville and concert with them, giving performance in every state in the Union. He left the company in 1925 to study composition in Vienna.

Mr. Horst intended to stay two years; at the end of seven months he was on his way across the Atlantic eager to get back to work. He arrived in time to get into the young and new dance movement. In 1926 he played for Martha Graham in her first New York concert.

Since 1928 he has been composing, has been teaching dance composition, has lectured and has written music for theatrical productions. His work in dance composition is unique and he has given many lecture demonstrations on composition in dance form.

Of the dancers who comprise the group, all are Americans. Some have had classical ballet training and some have had their training in the modern technique exclusively. The extraordinary co-ordination of this group is the result of intensive training and rehearsal under the direction of Miss Graham and the technical proficiency is the result of hours of daily practice and rehearsal. The training for the modern dance is as definite and arduous as that required by the classical ballet.

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THE PHILADELPHIA FORUM

PRESENTS

MARTHA GRAHAM and COMPANY

LOUIS HORST, MUSICAL DIRECTOR

EL PENITENTE (THE PENITENT)

MUSIC BY LOUIS HORST COSTUMES BY EDYTHE GILFOND MASK BY ISAMU NOGUCHI

CHARACTERS:

PENITENT ERICK HAWKINS
CHRIST FIGURE MERCE CUNNINGHAM
MARY FIGURE MARTHA GRAHAM

VIRGIN MAGDALEN MOTHER

ACTION:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. ENTRANCE OF PERFORMERS | 6. THE FALL OF MAN |
| 2. FLAGELLATION OF PENITENT | 7. THE CHRIST CONDEMNS |
| 3. VISION OF PENITENT
THE VIRGIN PLEADS
THE CHRIST BLESSES | 8. THE PENITENT BEARS THE CROSS ON HIS
BACK |
| 4. DEATH CART
THE DEATH CART IS THE SYMBOL FOR SIN | 9. THE CRUCIFIXION — THE PENITENT
ATONES AND WINS SALVATION |
| 5. SEDUCTION
THE MAGDALEN SEDUCES THE PENITENT | 10. THE FESTIVAL DANCE |

PROGRAM CONTINUED ON PAGES 10, 11 AND 12

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Program Continued—EL PENITENTE

The Penitentes are a sect that believe in purification from sin through severe penance. Even today, in both Old and New Mexico, they practice their ancient rites, including the crucifixion. The dance bears no factual relationship to these practices, but is done rather as a story told after the manner of the old minstrels. The three figures enter, assume their characters, and perform as a group of players acting in a Mystery Play. The action is divided by a return to the entrance theme. The Festival at the end is a version of a popular dance of celebration without ritualistic content.

* * *

"LETTER TO THE WORLD"

MUSIC BY HUNTER JOHNSON
COSTUMES BY EDYTHE GILFOND
SET BY ARCH LAUTERER

CHARACTERS:

ONE WHO DANCES MARTHA GRAHAM
ONE WHO SPEAKS JEAN ERDMAN
LOVER ERICK HAWKINS
ANCESTRESS JANE DUDLEY
MARCH MERCE CUNNINGHAM
FAIRY QUEEN SOPHIE MASLOW
YOUNG GIRL ETHEL BUTLER
TWO CHILDREN {NINA FONAROFF
 {MARJORIE MAZIA

AND

ELIZABETH HALPERN, PEARL LACK, DAVID CAMPBELL, SASHA LIEBICH, DAVID ZELLMER

ACTION:

1. "BECAUSE I SEE NEW ENGLANDLY"
 - a. "Life is a Spell"
Martha Graham, Jean Erdman, Erick Hawkins
 - b. Party
Ethel Butler, Merce Cunningham and Company
2. "THE POSTPONELESS CREATURE"
 - a. Ancestress
 - b. "Gay Ghastly Holiday"
Martha Graham, Jean Erdman, Jane Dudley, Erick Hawkins and Company
3. "THE LITTLE TIPPLER"
 - a. The Little Tippler
Martha Graham
 - b. "Dear March, come in"
Merce Cunningham

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Program Continued—"LETTER TO THE WORLD"

- c. The Fairy Queen
Sophie Maslow, Nina Fonaroff, Marjorie Mazia, Jean Erdman
- d. Young Love
Ethel Butler, Merce Cunningham
- 4. "LEAF AT LOVE TURNED BACK"
Martha Graham, Erick Hawkins, Jean Erdman, Jane Dudley
- 5. LETTER
Martha Graham and Company

* * *

The title of "Letter to the World" is a line from a poem by Emily Dickinson, and all the spoken words of the piece are from her poems. The action is built on the legend rather than the facts of her life; and the scene is laid in the

shadow world of her imagination as set forth in her poems, rather than in the real world of Amherst where she lived. No one character in "Letter to the World" is meant to portray Emily Dickinson—each character is some one aspect of her. The Children, The Fairy Queen, and the Young Girl, as well as the One Who Dances and the One Who Speaks, are extensions of her own self in childhood, adolescence, and maturity. The Ancestress is the embodiment of her background, puritan, awesome, but beautiful, and is the symbol of the death-fear constantly in her mind. March and the other men are extensions of the Lover who, in turn, represents her gesture toward happiness. The loss of her lover forces her to face her destiny as a poet with the realization that her happiness must be found in the intensity of her work. That out of the tragedy of loss will be born the poet, is her "Letter to the World."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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