

Dance Magazine.

July 1929.

Martha Graham, assisted by her Dance Group. Louis Horst, pianist. Booth Theatre.

PROGRAM

Dance (Martha Graham)..... Honegger

- Spires (Chorale) (Betty, Evelyn, Rosina)*
Bach
- Four Insincerities*..... Prokofieff
- a. *Petulance* c. *Politeness*
b. *Remorse* d. *Vivacity*
(Martha Graham)
- Vision of the Apocalypse—(Theme and Variations)*..... Herman Reutter
- Vision* *Pestilence*
Toil *Mourning*
Famine *Prayer*
Blasphemy *Death*
Ruthlessness
(Kitty Reese and Group)
- Fragments*..... Louis Horst, pianist
Hugo Bergamasco, flutist,
- a. *Tragedy* b. *Comedy*
(Martha Graham)
- Adolescence (Martha Graham)*.. Hindemith
- Moment Rustica (group) assisting Pianist-Dini de Remer, Louis Horst*.. Poulenc
- Dance Piece (Betty, Evelyn, Rosina)*
Hindemith
- Sketches from the People*... Julien Krein
- a. *Monotony*—b. *Supplication*—c. *Requiem*
(Group)
- Danse Languide (Betty, Evelyn, Rosina)*
Scriabin
- Resurrection (Martha Graham)*.. Harsanyi
- Ronde (Betty, Evelyn, Rosina)*. Rhene-Baton
- Heretic (Old Breton Song) Martha Graham and Group*..... de Sivry

ALTHOUGH this was the third appearance this season of Martha Graham, it was also announced as her last and had the additional attraction of marking the début of her pupil group.

The enthusiasm which prevailed was no exaggerated tribute to a popular favorite, but discriminating and understanding endorsement of one of the finest efforts which has been disclosed in the dance theatre this year. Miss Graham has long stood well in the front in the ranks of the gifted and progressive artists of this country, and her personal talents have tended to increase in subtlety and point during the last twelve-month, but no one was quite prepared for the spectacular success of her accomplishment along a somewhat different line of march.

The group consists of fifteen girls, among whom are those three exhibition pupils who have taken part in previous recitals, known as Betty, Evelyn and Rosina.

The first of the major group numbers was in many ways the most striking, perhaps because it introduced and established the style of the new disclosures. The title itself was suggestive and stimulating, *Vision of the Apocalypse, (Theme and Variations)*. This was divided into nine episodes, each purporting to project the emotional experience of a young monk contemplating the sorrows of the world. The monk, portrayed by Kitty Reese, stood elevated above the stage level and by means of plastic miming revealed his reactions to the significant design of the "chorus" below. The ensemble was costumed in gray and black in this and in other numbers, and the wooden impersonality and drive of their action was well underscored by the sinister shadows their garments created. Many of the variations

contained feats of technique, but all were accomplished with an amazing ease and an actual élan.

She was able, by a tour de force of imagination, to contrive another group number following swiftly on the heels of this, which, although in the contrasted vein of grotesquerie and humor, was equally arresting.

This was *Moment Rustica* and was remarkable more for what it implied than for what it actually represented. The costumes were, as always in the Graham scheme of things, the reproduction in stuffs and color of the mood of a dance. In this case a peasant scene was indicated, and the choreography was notable for an economy of movement seldom paralleled in so vigorous and lusty a composition. The third group number was *Sketches from the People*, subtitled *Monotony*, *Supplication*, and *Requiem*, and in it was noticeable the same sinister emphasis contrived for the *Apocalypse*, although the motivation and the action were more graphic and more obvious, being an essay on socialism.

The final appearance of the group also included Miss Graham herself in the solo motif, and was named *Heretic* (old Breton song) to the traditional folk-music of de Sivry. It consisted of a repetition of the verses over and over, in a crescendo of dramatic sequence which was almost hair-raising in its intensity. The name of the piece supplied the theme, and Intolerance the counterpoint, while the action outlined the elaboration of stiff-necked recrimination, cruelty and oppression which colored the composition with dread and despair. It was dynamically performed.

The program also contained several trio numbers by Betty, Evelyn and Rosina which deserved enthusiastic commendation. The first of these, a *Bach Chorale*, was in a beautiful Gothic design called *Spires*, and the second a somewhat less effective *Dance Piece* to music by Hindemith. A charming and suggestive *Danse Languide* followed and a delightfully costumed and atmospherically projected. *Ronde* by Rhene-Baton completed their list.

Miss Graham herself was seen in five solo dances, including her delicate and sensitive *Adolescence* which has been only recently added to her repertoire. There was also the familiar quartet of *Insincerities*, the two priceless tragic and comic *Fragments*, the obscure and less convincing *Resurrection* and as an opening number of the program, a new *Dance* to music by Honegger which impressed us as rather dry and lacking in any but cerebral impulse.

As always, Mr. Horst's accompaniments were sympathetic and invaluable.

MARY F. WATKINS