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# Dances By Martha Graham Pleasing, Meanings Vague

BY REED HYNDS.

Martha Graham, outstanding American dancer, presented her company in a highly stimulating dance concert in Kiel Auditorium Opera House last night. Three of her compositions, "Appalachian Spring," "Letter to the World," and "Every Soul Is a Circus," were given, the music being played by a small orchestra directed by Louis Horst.

While Miss Graham's intensely personal idiom did not always serve to make her meanings clear, her own dancing and that of her company was consistently interesting on its own account. Considered simply as choreographic pattern, each dance disclosed great variety of device and plasticity of movement. From the point of view of execution, the dancing was precise, spirited and frequently breathtaking in sheer skill.

But surely only the most devoted

of Miss Graham's special coterie fully understand what she intends in "Appalachian Spring." The program notes, always beautifully vague on these occasions, were of little help. There were suggestions of spring; there was an unusually sprightly revivalist and his followers, and there was a man and a woman. But there was a great deal of errant action evidently not susceptible of itemization.

Aaron Copland's music, which was the brightest of the evening, gave no special clues beyond that of suggesting spring. For all its beauty of gesture and group movement, "Appalachian Spring" failed to generate any definite emotion.

Coming after it, "Letter to the World" seemed a specimen of plain statement, though it, too, was not without its tenuous moments. In a presentation of various aspects of the personality Emily Dickinson imagined she had, a voice was employed to speak lines from the poems. This was dramatically ef-

fective, and while it is a matter of some doubt whether literary subtlety can be translated into dance terms on the spur of the moment, the work had surprise, gayety and some poignance.

Perhaps, because of its clarity and its comic ebullience, "Every Soul Is a Circus" was most satisfactorily received of the works presented. This little satire on woman's vanity, with crisp music by Paul Nordoff, very imaginatively uses a circus as its modus operandi. Miss Graham deftly overstated the frivolous ambitions of the Empress of the Arena in her relations with the ring master, the chief acrobat and the various other performers. The work ended in a gay whirl of color and comedy.