MARTHA GRAHAM 66 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK

Feb. 17, 1941

Dear Aaron -

At last I have my courage up - I write to you, knowing you may be busy, or not interested with the subject, or many things - but I would forgive you anything because you are a great composer - but I hope you are interested.

I want to do a "Medea" - not with words or voice - not following the action of the play - but rather as a study of "Medea" as an eternal type, an archetype -

It would be solo primarily - dancing and miming - with chorus interludes for 2 girls - tall, heroic figures to complement Medea's

Telephone: GRamercy 7-8927

2)

frenzied being -

To me she is a barbarian princess - not Greek - who has intercourse with worlds outside the human area - animal and supernatural - She possesses the animality of the undisciplined being wherever found. This is almost like a Japanese Noh drama piece called "a revenge piece". Some place I read it might be any wife's letter to any husband." It is bitter, sardonic, wondrous, despairing. It is in that sense a picture of the despairs in the inner self or any inner self. It is as you see, not the drama "Medea", the play, I want to do - but rather the drama of Medea's mind at work upon the idea of revenge, the questioning,

Telephone: GRamercy 7-8927

3)

MARTHA GRAHAM 66 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK

planning, desires.

I want to produce it theatrically - in the theatricality of the tragic Greek theatre - I want to wear the cathurnus - the high tragic shoes almost like Manchu shoes, the huge padded cloak - which I would remove in dancing, but resume at the end - and during the short choral intermedes. He should be as though you looked at still, tragic figure, and saw no movement but only concentration upon idea - the intensity of which seemed to make visible the whirring that goes on in this strange, lonely being -

To me "Medea" is no different than the rest of us - except in time & in convention.

Telephone: GRamercy 7-8927

4)

MARTHA GRAHAM 66 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK

the time is early in history
the conventions bare of the tragic Greek stage -
the theme ever present -

there is roughly
a statement of tragedy
the invocation
the curse
the incantation of evil powers to avenge
the vision of the dead (deed)
the recurrence of the statement
of tragedy -
the defiant action - as though
in a chariot driven by frenzy -

curtain -

this is not a scenario yet - but a
rough draft of possibilities - or at
least are see her now -

Telephone: GRamercy 7-8927

MARTHA GRAHAM 66 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK

no action takes place that involves others.
She sets out what she visions -
I plan to use a shell of a palace as on the
early poses -
I had considered using one voice in
unaccompanied song - no words -
for the choral interludes when Medea
is still - brooding - dressed in cloak
& shoes - while the two girls dance -
when Medea dances the two girls hold
the cloak & shoes - on sit - in pose - as
though there were 3 figures instead of 2 -
only the shell of Medea is with them -
while her mad thoughts move her dancing
to another area - This is very sketchy,
but if you were interested I would
send a clean scenario - I do not work

Telephone: GRamercy 7-8927

b)

MARTHA GRAHAM 66 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK

to count - the composer works from sound and I work from his music -

Now as to the practical side. As you know I have no subsidy - I have been able to pay $100.00 outright at first - then $150.00 in royalties over a period - $15.00 a perform-ance. This seems so little, I know - and yet I cannot do more - unless I could get help - If you feel you could not do it I understand - but I did so want to ask you -

I hope to do this in late Spring - but perhaps will have to do it at Bennington - it depends on many things - This is my story - Please let me know -

Best always

Martha

Telephone: GRamercy 7-8927