

3 NEW DANCES GIVEN BY MARTHA GRAHAM

Emily Dickinson's Life Theme of One On Forum Program

Three new dances comprised the program which Martha Graham and her group offered to the Philadelphia Forum last night at the Academy of Music, and all, in their respective ways, were quite impressive.

The program, which in two of the numbers made use of spoken lines, also served to reveal an ever-increasing maturity and broadening of Miss Graham's choreographic art and depth of thought.

EMILY DICKINSON'S LIFE

Perhaps the most important item was "Letter to the World," in which the legend of Emily Dickinson, New England poet of the 19th Century, becomes a serious and introspective dramatic ballet.

Lines from Miss Dickinson's poems were expressively spoken by Jean Erdman (as one of the characters in the dance.) The poet's thoughts—those of nearly any girl or woman—are epitomized and dramatized in the episodes of the dance: her girlhood, her romance with a married man, her conscience as represented by her strict New England upbringing, her turning inwards toward the end of her life. The entire dance had an ethereal, unworldly air.

Miss Graham portrayed the central character—identified as "One Who Dances"—with superb grace and spirituality. Miss Erdman as "One Who Speaks," Jane Dudley as the puritanical Ancestress, Erick Hawkins as the Lover, were able in other important roles.

'PUNCH AND THE JUDY'

On the lighter side, but symbolical in its own way, was "Punch and The Judy," in which the Three Fates make sarcastic remarks while directing the lives of Punch, The Judy and those about them—child, other woman, idealists.

It was a not-so-delicate satire on husband and wife, their periodic squabbles, and the Mrs. Grundys who cause trouble. This, too, had its gossamer touches, and was admirably danced by Erick Hawkins as Punch, Miss Graham as The Judy, and the company.

RELIGIOUS RITUAL

The program opened with "El Penitente," a religious dance-ritual of Mexico something on the order of a medieval mystery play. Erick Hawkins mimed the title role, with Miss Graham as the figure of Mary and Merce Cunningham as Christ.

Louis Horst was at the piano, and wrote the music for "El Penitente." Music for "Letter to the World" and "Punch and The Judy" was by Hunter Johnson and Robert McBride, respectively. S. L. S.

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