

Martha Graham's New Dance Gesture Toward Patriotism

BY C. J. BULLIET.

REMEMBER Delsarte? I wish Martha Graham didn't. M. Delsarte worked out a science of callisthenics by which every emotion could be expressed by some gesture or other, mainly with the arms and the hands, with the body and legs as adjuncts.

Once you, the audience, learned the language of Delsarte, you could sit through an evening and be bored—intelligently.

I wish Martha Graham had in her makeup less of Delsarte and more of the priestesses of Isis and the Peruvian goddesses—more of Little Egypt, of Carmen Miranda and Carmen Amaya.

Intellect, I have been told, is a grand phenomenon, but it can be overworked in an evening of dance divertissement.

Miss Graham at the Civic Opera House Saturday night introduced a new work (premiered for the world) "Land Be Bright."

The Graham "cult" was out in force, and these are patriotic times, but "Land Be Bright," intended to be work celebrating the birthdays of Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, got little more than polite applause.

Miss Graham herself was Betsy Ross, Erick Hawkins was Chingachgook (lifted out of the Leather Stocking Tales) and Merce Cunningham was a Yankee orator.

But there was little spellbinding in Mr. Cunningham's nimble feet, little inspiration to high enthusiasm in Miss Graham's flag. Sorry!

"Letter to the World," introduced to Chicago a few weeks ago in Miss Graham's recital at the Blackstone, was repeated—with the soul substance of Emily Dickinson's poetry spread out too thin.

"Every Soul Is a Circus," founded on Vachel Lindsay's lines, older in the repertory, completed the program—a satire with amusing moments, but again monotonous after the Delsarte manner, here used satirically.

Beatrice Lillie, past mistress of

burlesque like this, would have kept her crowd in stitches for about three minutes and then quit. In the prolongation, Miss Graham too often falls into the easy ways of the sorority house cut-up you knew back in your college days.

Dear Miss Graham: Here's my letter to the world, I wish I was more of a high-brow!

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