

Bennington College

Presents

MARTHA GRAHAM
and
Company

With Louis Horst, Musical Director

The title is a line from a poem by Dylan Thomas

"DEATHS AND ENTRANCES"

This is a legend of the heart's life. The action takes place in a room and the halls of an ancient house. It concerns three sisters "doom-sager" as the three Brontë sisters were "doom-sager" to fulfill their destiny.

It concerns the restless pangs of the heart on some winter evening. There are remembrances of childhood, certain dramatizations of well-known objects, dreams of romance, hatreds bred of longings and madness. It is "imagination kindled at antique fires".

There are "Deaths and Entrances" of hopes, fears, remembrances, dreams, and there is ultimate vision.

This is essentially a legend of poetic experience rather than story of incident. In the secret life of the heart there are invisible actors and "Deaths and Entrances" with no barriers of period or time. Rather there is a suspension of time and the subsequent intensification of experience at the sight of some simple remembered object; a shell, a glass goblet, a vase.

All of the objects are used in this sense rather than as stage properties to accompany some specific action. The whole is presented as action due to intensification of experience rather than as everyday seen behavior of body.

The characters are:

The three sisters: Martha Graham
Sophie Maslow
Jane Dudley

The three remembered children: Pearl Lang
Ethel Butler
Nina Fonaroff

The dark beloved: Erick Hawkins

The poetic beloved: Merce Cunningham

The young men: Robert Horan
John Butler

Music composed by Hunter Johnson
 Artistic Collaborator: Arch Lauterer

Musical Director: Louis Horst
 Pianist: Helen Lanfer

The set, lighting and properties are by Arch Lauterer
 Choreography by Martha Graham

Cast: Martha Graham and Jane Dudley, Sophie Maslow, Ethel Butler,
 Nina Fonaroff, Pearl Lang

Erick Hawkins, Merce Cunningham, Robert Horan, John Butler

Lights: Merrell Hopkins, Joann Straus
 Stage crew: Rita Friedman, Audrey C. Stern

Practice Costumes designed and executed by Charlotte Trowbridge

This is presented as a pre-view rather than as performance. The costumes are practice clothes rather than the costumes designed for the work. The costumes will be designed later around the feeling and action of the piece and will probably give a sense of period, slightly, in order to theatricalize; that is, to make apparent that this is the imagined life of certain very human people.

This work was begun at Bennington last summer in that the music was planned here. The work was commissioned by Bennington College. Hunter Johnson, the composer, was in residence here at that time and consultations were held. The actual composition of the work took place in Benson, North Carolina where Mr. Johnson lives. It was then sent to Martha Graham in New York and the dance composition was begun there and finished here at Bennington College this summer.

"I feel I could not have completed this work without the help of Louis Horst in the capacity of musical director and critic, and the creative work and advice of Arch Lauterer. Bennington College has made this collaboration with Hunter Johnson, Louis Horst and Arch Lauterer possible. I am deeply grateful to Lewis Jones for making this possible and to Martha Hill for her valued cooperation. I hope that when I have completed the piece and have it fired by the act of performances that it will prove worthy of the faith and great help given me."

Martha Graham

The Theatre
 Bennington College and 25.
 Sunday Evening, July 18, 1943
 at 9:15