

REVIEWS OF THE MONTH

Martha Graham
and Company46th Street Theatre
December 26, 1943

BEFORE an enormous and excited audience Martha Graham and her company appeared at the Forty-sixth Street Theatre on the evening of Dec. 26 after an absence of a season, bringing two new works, *Salem Shore* and *Deaths and Entrances*, and the familiar *Punch and The Judy*. Since Miss Graham has never danced more brilliantly and since *Deaths and Entrances* is one of the most powerful and original of her creations, the almost hysterical enthusiasm of the spectators was fully justified.

Termed a "legend of the heart's life" concerning three sisters who were "doom eager" as were the Bronte sisters, *Deaths and Entrances* is really a fantasia of the subconscious, touching upon reality at times, but never bound by the conventions of ordinary thought and existence. In this work the form of dance-drama which Miss Graham created in *Letter to the World* is stripped of its specific literary and dramatic connotations. Images of remembered youth, physical desire, anger, hatred, jealousy, madness and desperate triumph succeed each other in the dancing with an ease of transition which conceals the artistry of construction. For Miss Graham employs a counterpoint of movement and a vocabulary of expression unique in the theatre.

The characters are three sisters, danced by Miss Graham, Sophie Maslow and Jane Dudley; three remembered children, Ethel Butler, Nina Fonaroff and Pearl Lang; the dark beloved, Erick Hawkins; the poetic beloved, Merce Cunningham; and two cavaliers, John Butler and Robert Horan. Among the finest passages in the work is the battle between the lovers, splendidly danced by Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Cunningham. Miss Graham has given the men a range of emotional and plastic expression far greater than in any previous work, to the benefit of balance. And the superb dancing of Miss Dudley and Miss Maslow deserves special mention.

Hunter Johnson's music for this mystical work is a fine achievement of an enormously difficult task. Phrase by phrase it weaves the intricate pattern,

and sustains in color and mood the terrific intensity of the stage action. The setting of Arch Lauterer, the costumes of Edythe Gilford and the lighting of Jean Rosenthal were completely integrated. And the performance of Louis Horst and the group of instrumentalists was also an indispensable contribution to the effect.

Salem Shore, a "ballad of a woman's longing for her beloved's return from the sea", is one of the most beautiful solos that Miss Graham has given us in many a season. It does not have the hard-etched line and the dynamic stir of many of them, but it is exquisitely proportioned. The setting evokes a lonely stretch of beach without being too literal and Paul Nordoff's music expresses the romantic longing of the character, with its momentary outburst of fierce despair.

Punch and The Judy, freshened up, was more delightful than ever, especially since Mr. Hawkins danced the Punch, as he did his other roles of the evening, with a dramatic vigor and technical power beyond anything he has previously accomplished. In fact the whole company seemed to be keyed up for the occasion. *Deaths and Entrances* is a masterpiece of symbolism in dance form, and one cannot do it more than faint justice within the narrow spaces of a review. It is artistic news of the first order.

R. S.

REPEAT PERFORMANCE BY POPULAR DEMAND!

MARTHA GRAHAM

and DANCE COMPANY

LOUIS HORST, Musical Director

NEW DANCE, 'DEATHS AND ENTRANCES',
ACCLAIMED YESTERDAY!

"BRILLIANT DANCE holds an immense audience with rapt attention... extraordinary experience in the dance theatre... demands not only to be seen but reseen." —N. Y. Times

"MARTHA GRAHAM, no doubt the greatest celebrity in American dance... Her distinction as comedian extraordinary." —N. Y. Herald Tribune

"NEW WORK, 'Deaths and Entrances', intensely moving." —N. Y. Sun

"TREMENDOUS POWER... vitality and originality." —PM

"AUDIENCE LARGE and wildly enthusiastic." —N. Y. WORLD-TELEGRAM

Mall orders and reservations now at mgt. office. Seats beginning Jan. 3 at box office.

46th ST. THEATRE, SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 9th

TICKETS: \$3.30, \$2.75, \$2.20, \$1.65, \$1.10

Mgt. Austin Wilder, 745 Fifth Ave. PL 3-8034