

Second Concert Of Season for Graham Group

By PATRICIA SIMMONS

The dance and Constitution Hall are two things that never seem to mix. We are happy to report, however, that last night Martha Graham and her group were really performing on home ground. At least that's the way it seemed to us. The vastness of stage and limitless void which just about swallows up the ballet lent to Miss Graham's group exactly the right dimensionless effect.

The hall's capacity audience, undoubtedly a part of the overflow from the dancer's November concert in the Library of Congress, also seemed aware of this sense of staging and lighting, so much a part of Miss Graham's art. Truly, the woman is a wizard. With a single prop or two, a mere box-like affair for a grandstand, a flag-bedecked pole and there's her circus. No more trouble than the addition of a little choreography and music; the former surely was appreciated by more than one gentleman in the audience.

You see Miss Graham's circus is not the literal one of canvas and sawdust. It's one just as real, however, and lives in the heart of every woman—the circus of her life, in which she is her own most appreciative spectator. Here is satire at its best. Miss Graham is the woman, Erick Hawkins the ringmaster and the show is on!

The subtle nuances in the choreography of "Every Soul is a Circus" are absolutely unrivaled. Miss Graham imagines herself first as the apex of a triangle with Mr. Hawkins and Merce Cunningham; later as the beloved of a duet (again Mr. Hawkins). The most entertaining single moment of the dance is a satire on the classic ballet where the dancer diligently ties a piece of rope around her foot and forces it painstakingly into the air.

"Deaths and Entrances," second work on the program, fell short in no one place. It was simply too much of a good thing. The program notes shed little light on the dance and vice versa. Its main fault, how-

ever, is its length. As a legend of poetic experience and emotion the dance achieved a starkness of beauty and strength which was impossible to sustain throughout the entire work. The audience just plain "got tired."

Concerning "Appalachian Spring" premiered here in November we can only repeat what we said then that it employs the entire group to their best advantage. Dedicated to Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, it has to do with early America and its firm belief in a promised land. Miss Graham brings magnificent restraint to her role of the bride. Both Merce Cunningham and Erick Hawkins project themselves ably as the Revivalist and the Husbandman. The four followers, Nina Fonaroff, Pearl Lang, Marjorie Mazia and Yuriko, inject their all into the work's higher vein. Costumes for all three numbers were done by Edythe Gilfond. Musical direction was under Louis Horst.

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