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HINDEMITH BALLET DANCED BY GRAHAM

By OSCAR THOMPSON.

Another new ballet, this time "Herodiade," with music by Paul Hindemith, was introduced locally last night by Martha Graham. Like Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring" of the night before, it was commissioned by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation and was first presented by Miss Graham at the Library of Congress Festival last October. Decors were by Isamu Noguchi, who designed those for the Copland ballet.

Again, the score was of first consideration. Mr. Hindemith has written smoothly and in a sense lushly. His thematic material is his own and so, of course, is his handiwork. The writing has not the assertive moments of "Appalachian Spring," but it is rhythmical and has a kind of old-world beauty in its unfolding.

Miss Graham bodied forth a woman who waits and prepares herself in an antechamber for some unknown fate. Images of the past and dream fragments pass before her on a mirror. An attendant solemnly prepares her for her mysterious destiny. As the curtain falls the woman goes to meet the unknown.

Without the note of explanation in the program some of the symbolism of the movements would be baffling. But something of the fatefulness of the old Greek dramas is communicated and Miss Graham's superb body control is exemplified with a surety that makes this one of the most grateful of her choreographic studies. May O'Donnell's Attendant was similarly expressive.

Miss Graham repeated "Salem Shore" and the favorite "Letter to the World." The latter presented Jean Erdman, Erik Hawkins, Jane Dudley, Merce Cunningham, Pearl Lang, Yuriko, Helen McGehee and others of the company. Miss Dudley and Miss Erdman reappeared with the ensemble as guests. Louis Horst again conducted.