

GRAHAM DANCE GROUP OFFERS 'JOHN BROWN' N. Y. "Times"

Erick Hawkins' duologue called "John Brown" was added to the repertoire of Martha Graham and her dance company at the Plymouth Theatre last night. It is unfortunately not a very good work, and having proved to be so at its première last season it might reasonably have been expected to disappear from circulation. It is virtually all spoken—excerpts from orations, letters and so forth, interrupted occasionally by brief bits of movement which are neither evocative nor significant in themselves. Formally it is neither drama nor choreography, and about all that can be said in its favor is that its heart is in the right place.

Mr. Hawkins is certainly no actor, his voice and diction are both obviously untrained and his reading is mechanical and uncharacterized. Erik Martin as the other figure in the piece, an "Interlocutor" who does not dance, does rather better with fragmentary and ungrateful lines. The music of Charles Mills is necessarily incidental but serves its purpose well.

That Miss Graham should add works to her repertoire in which she does not appear is a sound idea, for it not only lightens her extraordinarily taxing assignment but also relieves her programs of some of their overabundance of substance. They should ideally be considerably better works than this, however.

The remainder of the program consisted of "Dark Meadow," which remains completely fascinating upon frequent seeing, and "Appalachian Spring." The theatre was once again full to overflowing.

Jan. 30, 1946

J. M.