

N.Y. "Journal-American" Feb. 25, 47
Miss Graham
At Ziegfeld

By MILES KASTENDIECK

Martha Graham came to the Ziegfeld Theatre last night. Dancing better than ever, she renewed the challenge of her unique art. The spectators sat fascinated as usual. Even though baffled at times as to what the meaning was, they cheered the performances.

Two of the works on the opening bill were familiar. "Appalachian Spring" remains a joy because it is a thing of beauty. "Every Soul Is a Circus" continues to be a delight because it sparkles with humor. Both are fairly easy to understand.

The other work is still comparatively new. "Dark Meadow" is frankly a problem because it is encased in symbolism. Trying to follow it is an arduous task. This is psychological ballet at its thickest. Perhaps that man from Mars might understand. Most of the audience groped in the dark again last night.

Theoretically, it should not be difficult to grasp the meaning of the adventure of seeking. Re-enacted in the symbolism of the "mysteries," it became too involved. The easiest thing to do was to forget the "remembrance of the ancestral footsteps," the "terror of loss," the "ceaselessness of love," and "recurring ecstasy of the flowering branch" except as emotional states. These could be perceived and felt. The rest was subject to speculation.

So "Dark Meadow" becomes a study of line and of movement. As such, it is a revelation of proportion and of grouping. Miss Graham's episode with the long strip of black cloth is sheer virtuosity. But there is too much ballet and too much droning music. Chavez's score served to wear down the listener last night. The resulting impression was that "Dark Meadow" is still too opaque for general consumption.

Watching the dancing was highly stimulating. Erick Hawkins, May O'Donnell, Pearl Lang, and the company are so in harmony with their medium. Martha Graham gives so completely of herself. There is no question that an evening with them is an unforgettable experience.

* * *