

THE DANCE

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Activity in the New York dance world has stepped up considerably during the last fortnight, but there is relatively little to report on artistic development or any important new works. This can be said in spite of Graham's presentation of two new works, a revival and a revision; in spite of a world premiere by Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and concerts by Rosario and Antonio, Juana, and Leticia with a company including Ragini Devi, Michiko and Gina.

Martha Graham's engagement at the Ziegfeld Theatre opened, on Feb. 24, with familiar works—Appalachian Spring, Dark Meadow and Every Soul is a Circus. The first novelty, Stephen Acrobat, was presented on Feb. 26. Conceived and performed by Erick Hawkins (The Acrobat), and with Anthony Manino (The Trainer) in a non-dance role

reciting lines of Robert Richman, it impressed as not much more than a personal exhibition piece. There was a Noguchi tree, an apple, and a stand for the trainer. There was music by Robert Evett and costumes were designed by Kenn Barr. There was also a general air of bewilderment in the audience. Dark Meadow and Letter to the World were the accompanying works. The latter presented several new personalities who deserve comment. Angela Kennedy (One Who Speaks) quoted the Emily Dickinson lines with charm and excellent diction, and was attractive and graceful in appearance. Mark Ryder displayed exceptional lightness, elevation and style in the "Dear March, Come In" passage.

"Cave of the Heart" in Revision

Cave of the Heart, a revised edition of the work presented by the Ditson Fund at Columbia University, under the title

of Serpent Heart, was shown for the first time on Feb. 27. While the mention of the Medea myth has been dropped from the notes, and the characters now are simply called Sorceress, Adventurer, Victim and Chorus, the theme of the work is essentially the same. The program note thus merely states the basic thought of the original work: "This is a dance of possessive and destroying love, a love which feeds upon itself and, when it is overthrown, is fulfilled only in revenge." The cast, too, remains unchanged. Martha Graham and Erick Hawkins are the Sorceress and Adventurer rather than "Ones like Medea and Jason," while Yuriko and May O'Don-

nell assume their roles under the titles of Victim and Chorus. The action, though edited and tightened, remains fairly familiar, with an added brilliant and gripping bit of theatre in the final phrases achieved mostly by highly imaginative lighting. Appalachian Spring and Letter to the World were repeated.

El Penitente, the revival, and Errand Into the Maze, the second new work, were both given on Feb. 28, along with Deaths and Entrances and Every Soul is a Circus. Pearl Lang was seen for the first time in the Graham role (the Mary figure) in El Penitente. Miss Lang is an attractive and accomplished dancer but this work is not sympathetic to her particular gifts. Graham is able to bring an intensity to her interpretation that is foreign to Pearl Lang's style. The latter is highly spirited, lithe, and far more suited to lighter subject matter. Erick Hawkins was the Penitent and John Butler the Christ figure.

"Errand Into the Maze"

Errand Into the Maze is one of Graham's more literal efforts. According to the notes: "The title comes from a poem by Ben Belitt. The action has its core in that errand-journey into the maze of the heart in order to face and do battle with the Creature of Fear. There is the accomplishment of the errand, the instant of triumph, the emergence from the dark." And that is just about it. Martha Graham and Mark Ryder are the dancers involved. They journey and battle to a rather light-weight musical score by Gian-Carlo Menotti. As in Serpent Heart, a Grecian myth is utilized. This time the legend of the Minotaur is suggested, since Graham's action conveys the digressions of a maze and since Ryder appears with a bull's mask. Isamu Noguchi is again responsible for the setting. Other works given during the season were John Brown, Punch and Judy and Herodiade.

Miss Graham has assembled a first rate company. The productions are tastefully costumed, the performances smooth and the dancing exact. Every dancer is not only perfectly trained, but reverence for their work is also evident. Those in the company not already mentioned include Ethel Winter, Helen Mv-Gehee, Dorothea Douglas, Nalanya Neumann, Robert Cohan, Graham Black and Stuart Gescheldt.