Sept 19, 1948

No Vacations

# Martha Graham—Bride—Gives Thought To Welfare of Tomorrow's Artists

By VERNE LINDERMAN

Exit Miss Hush. Enter the bride. It is a particularly blooming Martha Graham who is paying her annual visit to her mother, Mrs. Homer N. Duffey, as the new Mrs. Erick Hawkins. Even in her severe navy blue jacket, and with her hair drawn back into a net and tied with a black velvet ribbon, she evinced a shy radiance, attributable to her new role.

The other day in Santa Fe, where she had been visiting at the home of Artist Cady Wells, Miss Graham was married to her dancing partner of 10 years. Hawkins also has his own company and begins his tour in November. He is already back in New York rehearsing. In January she begins hers, when her husband will join her as a member of her company. Theirs will be a long tour of three months. Eventually when conditions are more settled, they are to go abroad.

For Miss Graham, now America's most celebrated dancer, there are no prolonged vacations. She has had some private help, she has received fellowships, Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, and Harvard and Columbia have commissioned her. But subsidy has never come her way. The monumental things she has accomplished have been her own doing. Often she has worked "when there was nothing to work with."

"I have had to say, 'I will not be stopped.' And the worst of it is that that time is not yet past. As lately as last Winter," she confessed in the garden at the Mission Inn, where this interview took place, "I was unable to pay a pianist for rehearsals. The fee demanded by the union is steep when resources have been drained by the commissioning of a composer, the hiring of Isamu Noguchi to design the sets, the costuming, the making, the innumerable miscellanies.

### Would Help Others

This is why her thoughts are turning so much today toward ways in which artists of the future may be aided. "There is an Energy speaking through the artist, who is only an instrument and must prepare himself."

She was not as yet ready to speak of her plans. One step in the right direction for young people, she indicated, is the new High School of Performing Arts in New York, backed by Mrs. Samuel Lewissohn, noted collector of modern painting. Miss Graham is on its advisory board. It takes in music, theater, radio, as well as dancing not exclusive of tap. The hope of the sponsors is that it will destroy forever the notion that performing artists have not time to educate themselves in a rounded way.

"We have all seen persons who danced during the bloom of youth and were then through," said Miss Graham. "In this school pupils will have an opportunity to dance every day during four years of high school, and at the same time must pass the regents' academic examinations. We do not know how many artists may develop, but at least they will have learned the craft of the dance, and well. And it is increasingly apparent that to be intelligent is no detriment to an artist."

MARTHA GRAHAM
Visits Mother

Miss Graham praised Great Britain and its Council of Arts for recognition in stressful times of the importance of extending a helping hand to the artist.

Santa Barbara's noted daughter protested that she is dismayed at the persistence of Miss Hush. She was glad, she said, to lend her name to the radio contest in a good cause, and more than pleased with the project for its recognition of a modern dancer. But now it is time to drop the Hush business.

### Art Reaches Goal

This nod by a national network to a modern dancer is only one of many indications, she feels, which prove the artist in America has come into his own. The practice of "debunking" the artist simply is not followed any longer. "It is old-fashioned—it places you in time—back in the '20s. I should never have been chosen Miss Hush in the '20s," she was positive.

She sees no evidence of contemporary art having become estranged from the people. On the contrary, from what she has observed, more young people than ever are turning to the arts because of a necessity to find a deep meaning in life. Gone, she believes, is the old constraint of being "practical" and learning some incongenial means of livelihood. She finds that the new concept of youth is: "There is no practicality except in a vivid life."

"The young people in my company," she declared, "are not seeking maturity in the dance. They find in the dance a means of expressing maturity. This is in contrast to some years ago when escapism from maturity was frequent in the arts."

"There is only one way to have any freedom and that is in some manner to know ourselves and to become as whole as possible. This necessity to find some core of reality within oneself accounts for the use of psychology and psychiatry, which I feel constitute a 20th century science. It is perhaps another form of religion, a search back into myth and beginnings. It is one of the reasons for the upsweep in modern art—I mean the fact that so many people are working in art and that there is greater acceptance of it is partly due to psychology."

### Maturity an Asset

Miss Graham said she had found certain psychological books very helpful. "I could never," she said, "have done 'Night Journey' this last year without some knowledge of the workings of the heart. (The dance is based on the Oedipus myth.) The dance is 35 minutes long and is concerned with what could have gone on in Jacasta's mind when she went to her room and her death."

Miss Graham spoke of her latest work, "Wilderness Stair" produced this Summer at the Connecticut College Festival as inspired by "my favorite part of the United States"—New Mexico, and Santa Fe in particular, where she visited last Summer also. It is more of an abstraction than any work she has done in recent years when her compositions have been large theater pieces. She herself does not appear in it, but she did not agree when told that critics (she has not read them) regard her absence as detrimental. What she hoped to recreate was the feeling of space, of exaltation, of joyousness New Mexico inspires.

"The career of a dancer," Miss Graham said, "is not so short as old wives tales would have it. It can be short, she granted, if there is no cultivation or education of the inner being.

"One of the important things about contemporary dance is that it admits of maturity as an asset. It does not tear down, it builds on tradition. But we must know what tradition is. Is it only 18th century, or 8th and 18th as well? Modern dance admits of longer lineage. It sometimes goes back to the primitive. It is not interested in staying with the stylizations of the 18th or even 19th centuries. It wants to move on."