

Dancer Triumphs in Recital Here

By Harry B. Mills

Martha Graham demonstrated her right to be titled a leader among American dancers at her first western recital, given Monday night at the Metropolitan under the auspices of the Seattle chapter of Pro Musica.

At the same time, let's be honest and admit that the balcony and gallery gave the artist a closer attention and showed a more vivid contact with her messages than did the dress circle. It was a sad but true commentary that an audibly large share of this latter group came more to be seen than to see; and (unfortunately for some of us) spent more time asking each other when they were going to the country than they did in watching the stage.

This is generally true of artistic offerings anyway, and one supposes that artists such as Miss Graham become used to it outside of New York.

Miss Graham won her house thoroly, as evidenced by eight curtain calls at the close and triple call-backs after many of the individual numbers.

Thoroly a mistress of the dance, her work is marked by a lack of ostentation; a single mindedness which sacrifices everything to the message she would tell. For this reason, we suppose, some people have called her work an example of "ugliness." This is hardly a fair term if you consider the presentations from the standpoint of the message told.

Some of her offerings were possessed of a terrific force, and left one wondering at the vitality of the woman who could so command her physical resources to meet such a stressful demand, as her "Dance of Death" in the Ornstein suite, "Poems of 1917;" others were the complete inhesion of daintiness and charm, as her Scriabin "Fragilitie" and the Ravel "Duex Valses Sentimentales;" while still others were a story in motion, such as her "Unbalanced" to Harsanyi's mad music and her "Steerage" and "Strike" to Slavenski's music.

Less representative of the left wing among our dancers was her "Tanagra," a Grecian brought to life thru the use of exquisitely handled draperies, and "Adolescence," in which she presents to us the maiden, waiting for life to sweep her into its whirl, all the while trying to weigh herself. Undoubtedly those who see dancing only with their eyes enjoyed these numbers most.

Expressive of our machine age

was "Lamentation," a series of studied angularities. Her final number also held much to remember, being a presentation of the not always visible duality of comedy and tragedy.

Louis Horst was Miss Graham's pianist, and his interlude music was always well played and showed excellent choice.

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