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DANCE RECITAL

Martha Graham and Her Group Give Modern Program at Broad

Martha Graham, one of the most constantly active pioneers for the modern dance in the country, gave a matinee recital in the Broad St. Theatre, yesterday, under the auspices of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters, and the Philadelphia Art Alliance. Philadelphia's most vivid memories of Miss Graham are associated with her memorable performance of the ballet "Sacre du Printemps," a few seasons ago.

Yesterday, as then, Miss Graham's amazing technical equipment was a source of wonder and admiration. Her inventive powers and the fine sense of form displayed in the majority of her dance compositions gave artistic distinction to the recital. Although her art bears a limited similarity to the dance as expounded by Mary Wigman, Miss Graham, to judge from yesterday's recital, seems constrained to a certain rigidity of mood that remains at moments where flexibility would be entirely appropriate.

The one piece which showed most graphically the wide range of the dancer's accomplishments was a "Dithyrambic" by Aaron Copland. The music was of little merit, but by taking advantage of the composition's form—piano variations—Miss Graham gave an amazing exhibition of inventiveness and of dancing technique. Kodaly's "Lamentation" and Honegger's "Danse" offered smaller and less comprehensive examples of the same qualities.

In the second half of the program she turned to lighter subjects. Among them were "Four Insincerities" by Prokofieff and a "Harlequinade" by Ernst Toch. These the dancer approached with the appropriate humorous exaggerations, but the intentness of her artistic treatment made itself somehow apparent through the humor. The genuine lightness of Wigman, for instance, dancing her "Tzigeuner Lieder" was missing, and it would have been most welcome in a program somewhat weighted down with seriousness.

Miss Graham was assisted by her dance group of 12 girls. The dances in which the ensemble participated were among the outstanding artistic achievements of the afternoon. The girls are admirably trained, and their cooperative endeavors bespeak many rehearsals and sincere hard work.

Added to this, the choreographic compositions designed for them by Miss Graham showed the artist's sensitivity for group tableaux and for the progression from one contrasting pose to another. Poulenc's "Rustica," the first of the group offerings, was the only really light moment of the afternoon, and the girls took full advantage of their opportunity in this ingratiating folk dance. In the "Primitive Mysteries" of Louis Horst, incidentally the excellent pianist of the afternoon, one might question the affect of the slow marches on and off the stage between the various episodes of the composition. But in the Bacchanale of Wallingford Riegger and in the setting entitled "Heretic" from an old Breton song, the group efforts were a constant delight.