Brooklyn (N.Y.) "Eagle."
Oct. 10. 1938.

Music of the Day

By MILES KASTENDIECK

Martha Graham Presents 'American Document';

Martha Graham

Cheers greeted Martha Graham and her Dance Group as she brought further challenge to dancing America and opened the dance season by presenting "American Document" at Carnegie Hall last night before a capacity house. In this new creation she turns from the concert dance field where she has been a leader from the start, to the theatrical dance, though this classification may not be entirely correct. The work was first presented at the Bennington Festival during the Summer.

"American Document" is built loosely upon the form of the American minstrel show and employs as characters a chorus, principals, end figures and an interlocutor. With the last excepted, all the characterizations are danced. It begins with a "walk around" and proceeds to a Declaration in answer to the question, what is America? The answer to this and following questions is spoken as well as interpreted in several parts entitled Indian Episode, Puritan Episode, Emancipation Episode, and After Piece—1938, with both solo and group dancing. Its build-up is impressive and the whole idea rather strikingly projected.

Space limits further discussion. It is colorfully costumed by Edythe Gilfond, effectively danced by Martha Graham and Erick Hawkins, and chorus, dramatically voiced by Houseley Stevens Jr. In many ways it is an achievement of considerable importance.

To introduce the work, Martha Graham danced "Imperial Gesture" and "Frontier." The evening was given under the auspices of "The New Masses."

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