

# MARTHA GRAHAM GIVES NEW DANCE

## 'American Document' Seen at Carnegie.

By IRVING KOLODIN.

Martha Graham danced her faith in America last night, by way of initiating her own and the local dance season in Carnegie Hall. This affirmation was embodied in a new hour-long composition titled "American Document," which utilizes the spoken word and the services of a male partner for Miss Graham, both of them revolutionary accessories for her.

It would be redundant to describe Miss Graham as socially conscious; and not quite fair to call her socially self-conscious. This new creation, with its long panorama from the America of the Indians and the Puritans to the America of today, calls for a new epithet, but not one to be arrived at hastily. Certainly it was inspiring to hear phrases from the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln's Gettysburg address and the Bible blended with the spacious movement that Miss Graham knows so well how to plan; but there was, ever and again, the feeling that it was the text that had the basic significance and not the movement.

From the purely choreographic viewpoint, Miss Graham has added new territory to her already extensive domain. There has been much talk about the use of the old minstrel-show plan as the basis of the work, but the composition owes less of its quality to this convention than it does to logic and firmness with which the movement has been endowed by her fertile brain. Aside from calling the initial assembly of dancers a "walk around" and dubbing her narrator an "interlocutor," the minstrel-show resemblances were vague.

But it was good to see that Miss Graham's artistic vision can embrace gayety as well as portentousness, that color can be a valuable ally to her movement, that she works well with a male partner. It was also plain that taking her dancers more off the floor than she usually does had given freshness and variety to the reappearance of her more characteristic devices. "American Document" was exceptionally well danced, not only by Miss Graham and Erick Hawkins, who had the principal roles, but also by the supporting group headed by Anita Alvarez and Thelma Babitz. Housely Stevens Jr. delivered the text admirably. "Frontier" and "Imperial Gesture" preceded the new work. All of them were received rapturously by the capacity audience.

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