

• **None But the Great . . .**

The Boston dance season had a most auspicious opening in the appearance of Martha Graham and her group at John Hancock Hall last night, as the second event in the Y. W. C. A.'s Evenings of Adventure series.

The audience, in size and enthusiasm, was worthy of a Sunday night Graham concert at the Guild Theater in New York. Cries and cheers, mixed with vociferous applause, made it plain that the artist was not only well and warmly met, but that a near return engagement would be in order.

It is good to know that Boston is at last awake to America's No. 1 Modern Dancer. Amid all the excellences to right and to left of her, Martha Graham stands alone. Her technique (in practice and execution) should be labelled, "For artists only," so unimaginably difficult it is, so far it probes into the vast reservoir of movement. Or, almost it would seem that exclusive rights should be hers, in spite of such fine dancers as Anita Alvarez, Sophie Maslow and Jane Dudley in her group.

When it comes to the beaten gold of communication, when it comes to commanding a raptness of attention that admits not the dropping of a pin, Miss Graham holds indisputable sway.

And for all her essays in Americanism, heartfelt and sincere though they be, it was "Deep Song," a solo inspired by the sufferings of the Spanish people, that brought the breathless moment, the tense hush that is an audience's greatest tribute.

This solo, substituted for the previously announced "Jubilee," is a prolonged wail in movement, out-distancing the torturous "Lamentation," which was performed earlier in the program. The same funereal bench provides the axis. But

whereas "Lamentation" is done in place, "Deep Song" moves, anguished, not knowing whither to turn, making singular designs, not thinking of designing, tracing an odd floor pattern, where no floor pattern is in mind. A hint of Spanish feeling in red touches leaves the gray and black costume related to all people, as Spain's passion is related to the world.

That the tragedienne of "Deep Song" and "Lamentation" is capable of humor is evident in her "Satyric Festival Song" (Weiss-haus), an evocation, without clowning, of strange laughter, as if among gargoyles; and in her older and more obvious "Harlequinade" of the Pessimist and Optimist (Toch). Here the artist's own costuming—horizontal stripes for the former, billowing black taffeta, with a large red property handkerchief, for the latter, are punctuation marks.

For the rest of the program, the glowing solo of spatial content, "Frontier," with its decor of ropes and stile functioning no less intrinsically than Louis Horst's luminant score; the witty summation of Arrogance in "Imperial Gesture," (Engel); the inhibited Puritanism of Act of Piety, the venomous self-righteousness of Act of Judgment, in "American Provincials," (its splendid score also by Louis Horst) stood out for the masterpieces they are.

The group dance, "Celebration," magnificently choreographed, was magnificently rendered, and the closing "American Lyric," with Miss Graham and group, brought a stirring program to a stirring close.

Mr. Horst played the piano accompaniments. M. L.

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