

Dancer Wins Plaudits



Martha Graham is seen here in her opening dance last night, "Columbiad," a classic dance in the manner of the declamatory poetry of the Revolution.

Martha Graham's Interpretations Strike Deep Into Realm of Satire

By Georgia L. Wilson

If you happen to be one of the few relics left of the golden age of Kentucky colonels and mint juleps and saw Martha Graham in "Every Soul Is a Circus" last night, you probably came out of the University theater rapping your cane sharply and snorting, "It's an insult to the glory of American womanhood, suh!"

But if you are a modern young woman, you probably felt as one young woman was overheard to declare with 1940 frankness, "Well, I hope the audience doesn't understand everything she's telling about us."

For sheer daring in this dance, which is a treatise in motion, Martha Graham gets the palm. We do not agree with those Eastern critics—some few of them—who called the dance a comedy. It strikes deeper than that—into the realm of satire. It is keen, clever, and biting enough to be tonic. Humor? Certainly. But humor

of the sharp, subtle, and caustic type—hardly the kind with which to spice a comedy.

Is More Than Dancer.

Miss Graham is more than a dancer. For added to a superb technique, there is in her dancing an underlying intelligence and character that raise her work above the level of mere physical perfection in dance routines.

In an interview here yesterday she made the statement that

the musician, no matter how his soul is stirred, must have the technique for expressing his emotions. "Beneath every art is a craft," she said. As we left the theater last night, the thought came to us that beneath every great art there are character and intelligence for that benediction of genius which sets it apart from the mediocre.

In that lies the secret of Martha Graham's greatness. For not only does she do this dance with technical authority, it is her own

composition. In this delicious satire of a silly woman's life, she has gone Clare Booth one better.

Mention must go also to Erick Hawkins, her capable young partner, for an excellent interpretation.

'American Comment.'

First mention has been given to this satiric dance, probably because it has been so much in the news. It is hardly impossible to compare it with "American Document," the concluding dance, since they stem from such entirely different conceptions. Thematically, "American Document" is superior in its presentation of the spirit of democracy as exemplified in the national history. It was presented by the entire group with Houseley Stevens, Jr., acting as interlocutor to give the thematic background. Its superb execution was nowhere more clearly shown than in the masterful balance of its presentation—one shade more of less dig-

nity could so easily have turned it to grandiloquent trivia. This dance, introduced by Miss Graham two years ago, is also of her own design; the music by Ray Green, and lovely costumes by Edythe Gilfond. Miss Gilfond also did the costumes for "Every Soul Is a Circus," music for which is by Paul Nordoff.

The program opened with "Columbia," a classic dance in the style and manner of the declamatory poetry of the revolution. The music is by Louis Horst, musical director for Miss Graham. The classic "Frontier," Miss Graham's tribute to the pioneer woman of America, was the fourth dance of the program. For this Mr. Horst also composed the music.

Even if you are a Kentucky colonel, if you ever have a chance to see Martha Graham and her dancers, don't miss it.

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