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MARTHA GRAHAM GIVES DANCE WITHOUT MUSIC

*Her First Adventure of the Kind
Seen in Repertory Theatre
Program.*

Five new dances were included in Martha Graham's program at Maxine Elliott's Theatre last night, the fourth event in the season of the Dance Repertory Theatre. One of these, "Project in Movement for a Divine Comedy," marks Miss Graham's first adventure in the field of dancing without music. It is a heroic concept for soloist and ensemble cast in the mold of hypothetical Blake illustrations for Dante, and is strikingly of the theatre. It is in this direction that the dancer's path is bent more and more evidently from concert to concert. If such were not the case, her program, which includes, among its titles, "Petulance," "Remorse," "Politeness," "Vivacity," "Futility," "Pessimist," "Optimist," "Monotony," "Supplication," "Requiem," "Tragedy" and "Comedy," would be suspiciously like a modernist's Delsarte. These creations of dramatic essences in dance form are obviously only sketches for a larger canvas that is yet to come, else they would incline dangerously toward sameness.

"Harlequinade," which consists of two sketches, "Pessimist" and "Optimist," was the most finished of the new compositions and had all the eloquence and devastating satire of the more familiar "Four Insincerities." Of the "Two Chants" by Krenek, the first, called "Futility," was far superior to the second, "Ecstatic Song." It had, indeed, a strongly tragic desperation that places it among Miss Graham's most outstanding creations. "Lamentation," by Kodaly, relied on a decorative and ingenious costume for the bulk of its effect in line and mass. The fifth of the new dances was a group number entitled "Prelude to a Dance," delightful in the humor and aliveness of its conception and design.

When the curtain rose on the "Dance" of Honegger, it was evident that the dancer was in excellent form, and her performance maintained a high level throughout the evening. "Immigrant" appeared especially to have taken on new life and depth. Indeed, in all of Miss Graham's dancing there is evident an increasing richness of feeling and a constant laying off of the marks of her merely revolutionary period. The group, though plastically admirable, is theatrically ragged and scarcely does justice to the beautifully wrought material that is entrusted to it.

The audience was consistently enthusiastic and Louis Horst, the pianist, shared, as usual, in the expression of their appreciation.

Tonight's program will be given by Doris Humphrey and Charles Weldman and their ensemble and will include further new compositions.