

# Six Dances Offered By Martha Graham In Season's Finale

Artist Appears at the Guild  
Theater With Her Com-  
pany of Pupils

By Mary F. Watkins

Martha Graham, whose activities and achievements have been many during the season just ebbing, but whose local recital appearances have been regrettably few, vouchsafed us a final glimpse of herself and her celebrated group last evening at the Guild Theater.

To celebrate the occasion there was the usual full-sized audience, divided between devotion, mystification and a less than usual modicum of derision, and there were six new compositions on a meaty and characteristic program. Of these novelties, three, "Prelude," by Chavez; "Elegiac," to music by Hindemith, and "Ekstasis" (a pair of "lyric fragments"), to music by A. Lehman Engel, were solos. The remaining three were for Miss Graham and group. Designated as a sequence of "choric dances for an antique Greek tragedy," they were particularized as "Dance for Suppliants," "Dance for Maenads" and "Chorus for Furies." The last one is said to be an elaboration and development of the "Choric Dance" presented on the ill-fated opening bill of the Radio City Music Hall.

Almost all these compositions disclosed Miss Graham still in the period of her development whose keynote is the tremendous tour de force "Dithyrambic," a number also included on last evening's list. They revealed the artist herself to be a little more meager and spirituelle than ever—if such a thing is conceivable—quite at the top of her form, a very dizzy height indeed. For whether or not one is an admirer of Miss Graham's conception of the Dance, whether one is able to read meanings into her plastic raptures, or whether he is merely baffled and dismayed and irritated, it is immediately necessary for him to recognize her sheer mastery of movement and line. From this simplified point of view it is possible to have an evening of intense pleasure and excitement in witnessing her work. In horse language, Miss Graham's coformation in extraordinary, and as for her transitions, her sudden startling changes of tempo and interruptions of pace and swing, her poised moments of calm, her plunges into hysterical action are achievements in virtuosity which should move the merest tyro to outbursts of joyous amazement.

The startling effects of foreshortening which she contrived in "Elegiac," the fine-drawn, sensitive abandon of the "Ekstasis" were cases in point. The group number, paraded against the startling blue of the old "Primitive" cyclorama, comprised an absorbing study in ceremonial mood, to which much was contributed by the white-clad accuracy and abnegation of the devoted young Graham priestesses. Miss Graham's own part was at times reminiscent of her spectacular Dance of Death in the "Sacre de Printemps" some seasons ago, and was received with shouts of approval, especially at the conclusion of the "Maenads" episode.

Music for the recital was contributed by flue, oboe, clarinets, cello and barytone voice. The accompaniment of "Tragic Patterns" was the work of Louis Horst, Miss Graham's musical director.

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