



UAPRESENTS STUDENT CRITIC PROGRAM

Martha Graham Dance Company

Review by Claire Rudder

I've been a dancer all my life, so I was so excited with the idea of getting to see the Martha Graham Company. However, all of my dance experience has been with more traditional styles such as ballet and jazz, so the idea of modern dance was not something I had really encountered before. Each piece was unique and striking in its own way, and I thought the entire performance was beautifully done.

First, the audience got to catch a glimpse of the various types of modern dance through four shorter solos done by some of the most advanced dancers in the company. While the first and third piece were more traditional in their form, the second and fourth were extremely interesting to me. I think what fascinated me so much was the lack of music- one of the soloists danced to what sounded like the noise of street traffic, and the other danced to the soundtrack of a woman speaking. This was extremely different to me. I have never really seen a dance before where the tone and rhythm of a piece of music were not one of the most integral parts of the performance. I found it to be extremely unique, but it did strike me as a little bit strange.

"Panorama", which was danced by the UA students, was even more interesting to me. Here, it was not just the music that was different, but the actual style of the dance itself; It was even farther from what I was used to. I know that in the world of modern dance, this piece is extremely renowned and respected. But to me, it just looked a little bit strange. I believe that this is because of my personal dance background. Because I grew up learning ballet, I find ballet to be much more beautiful and impressive. Ballet has deep roots in technique and precision. Modern dance, however, was created to counter this- it was even introduced as a dance that normal people could study. So while this dance was incredibly interesting to watch, it was not what I would consider to be exceptionally moving.

The three variations on the "Lamentations" solo gave me a similar impression. However, I did prefer the actual performances much more than the video shown of Martha Graham

performing it herself. I thought the idea of her just moving around in a purple sheet was very odd, and it didn't even seem like dance to me. In spite of this, I thought that the three *live* dances were very beautiful, and well done by the different choreographers.

"Appalachian Springtime" though, I really enjoyed. It was more like the ballet that I am accustomed to, and I loved the way that it told a story. I thought that the costumes, the music, and the dance itself were beautiful, and I absolutely adored watching it.

Overall, I did really enjoy the performance. I do not believe that I am the right person to judge it in terms of modern dance, because I am not really familiar with this style, or honestly, even very fond of it. However, I did enjoy what I saw for the most part, and I was very pleased to have the opportunity to do so.