



Advance Program Notes

Classic Graham

Martha Graham Dance Company

Saturday, March 29, 2014, 8 pm

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.



Artistic Director: Janet Eilber
Executive Director: LaRue Allen

The Company

Principals

Tadej Brdnik
Katherine Crockett
Maurizio Nardi
Miki Orihara
Blakeley White-McGuire

Soloists

PeiJu Chien-Pott
Lloyd Knight
Mariya Dashkina Maddux
Ben Schultz
Xiaochuan Xie

Dancers

Natasha Diamond-Walker
Abdiel Jacobsen
Lloyd Mayor
Lauren Newman
Ying Xin

Lorenzo Pagano, *new dancer*
Tamisha Guy, *apprentice*

Senior Artistic Associate: Denise Vale

Major support for the Martha Graham Dance Company is provided by:

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation



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Program Notes

Appalachian Spring

Choreography and costumes by **Martha Graham**

Music by **Aaron Copland**†

Original lighting by **Jean Rosenthal**; adapted by **Beverly Emmons**

Appalachian Spring premiere: October 30, 1944, Coolidge Auditorium, Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Springtime in the wilderness is celebrated by a man and woman building a house with joy, love, and prayer; by a revivalist and his followers in their shouts of exaltation; and by a pioneering woman with her dreams of the Promised Land.

The Bride

The Husbandman

The Preacher

The Pioneering Woman

The Followers

Mariya Dashkina Maddux

Lloyd Mayor

Maurizio Nardi

Natasha Diamond-Walker

Tamisha Guy, Lauren Newman, Xiaochuan Xie, and Ying Xin

Commissioned by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The original title chosen by Aaron Copland was *Ballet for Martha*, which was changed by Martha Graham to *Appalachian Spring*.

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Lamentation Variations

Choreography by **Larry Keigwin, Richard Move, and Bulareyaung Pagarlava**

Music by **Frederic Chopin, DJ Savage, and Gustav Mahler**†

Lighting by **Beverly Emmons**

Conceived by **Janet Eilber**

Lamentation Variations premiere: September 11, 2007, Joyce Theatre, New York City

The *Lamentation Variations* is an event that was conceived in 2007 to commemorate the anniversary of 9/11. The work is based on a film from the early 1930s of Martha Graham dancing movements from her then new (and now iconic) solo, *Lamentation*. The choreographers were each invited to create a movement study in reaction to the Graham film for the current company of Graham dancers.

Pagarlava Variation

Move Variation

Keigwin Variation

Xiaochuan Xie, Tadej Brdnik, Lloyd Mayor, and Ben Schultz

Natasha Diamond-Walker

Full company

Lamentation Variations was commissioned by the Martha Graham Center with support from Francis Mason.

†Frederic Chopin: *Nocturne in F Sharp*, Op.15 No.2; DJ Savage (Richard Move): *Ballet for Martha*, based on material from *Symphony No.5* by Ludwig van Beethoven; Gustav Mahler: "Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz," from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*

--INTERMISSION--

Program Notes, continued

Errand

Choreography for *Errand into the Maze* by **Martha Graham**

Music by **Gian Carlo Menotti**†

Lighting by **Beverly Emmons**

Directed by **Luca Veggetti** with **Miki Orihara**

Errand into the Maze premiered: February 28, 1947, Ziegfeld Theatre, New York City

There is an errand into the maze of the heart's darkness in order to face and do battle with the Creature of Fear. There is the accomplishment of the errand, the instant of triumph, and the emergence from the dark.

Blakeley White-McGuire

Abdiel Jacobsen

Errand is an arrangement of *Errand into the Maze* that does not use the original sets and costumes. It has been designed to give audiences a new perspective on the Graham classic choreography.

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Echo

Choreography by **Andonis Foniadakis**

Music by **Julien Tarride**

Costumes by **Anastasios Sofroniou**

Lighting by **Clifton Taylor**

World premiere: March 19, 2014, New York City Center, New York City

PeiJu Chien-Pott, Lloyd Mayor, and Lorenzo Pagano

Tadej Brdnik, Mariya Dashkina Maddux, Natasha Diamond-Walker, Lloyd Knight, Ben Schultz, Xiaochuan Xie, and Ying Xin

This work was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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Notes on the repertory

***Appalachian Spring* (1944)**

In 1942, Martha Graham received a commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation for a new ballet to be premiered at the Library of Congress. Aaron Copland was to compose the score. Graham called the new dance *Appalachian Spring*, after a poem by Hart Crane, but for Copland it always remained *Ballet for Martha*. Choreographed as the war in Europe was drawing to end, it captured the imagination of Americans who were beginning to believe in a more prosperous future, a future in which men and women would be united again. With its simple tale of a new life in a new land, the dance embodied hope. Critics called *Appalachian Spring* “shining and joyous,” “a testimony to the simple fineness of the human spirit.” The ballet tells the story of a young couple and their wedding day; there is a Husbandman, his Bride, a Pioneering Woman, a Preacher, and his Followers.

In a letter to Copland, Graham wrote that she wanted the dance to be “a legend of American living, like a bone structure, the inner frame that holds together a people.” As Copland later recalled, “after Martha gave me this bare outline, I knew certain crucial things—that it had to do with the pioneer American spirit, with youth and spring, and with optimism and hope. I thought about that in combination with the special quality of Martha’s own personality, her talents as a dancer, what she gave off, and the basic simplicity of her art. Nobody else seems anything like Martha, and she’s unquestionably very American.” Themes from American folk culture can be found throughout the dance. Copland uses a Shaker tune, *Simple Gifts*, in the second half of his luminous score, while Graham’s choreography includes square dance patterns, skips, paddle turns, and curtsies, even a grand right and left. The set by Isamu Noguchi features a Shaker rocking chair. *Appalachian Spring* is perhaps Martha Graham’s most optimistic ballet, yet it does contain a dark side. The fire and brimstone Preacher and his condemnation of earthly pleasures recalls the repressive weight of our Puritan heritage, while the solemn presence of the Pioneering Woman hints at the problems of raising families in remote and isolated communities. In this newly cleared land, life was not simple, and Graham’s vision pays homage to that as well.

—Ellen Graff

Lamentation Variations

The *Lamentation Variations* is an event that was originally conceived to commemorate the anniversary of 9/11. It was premiered on that date in 2007. The work opens with a film from the early 1930s of Martha Graham. We see her dancing movements from her then new (and now iconic) solo, *Lamentation*. The variations that follow were developed under specific creative conditions by choreographers Larry Keigwin, Richard Move, and Bulareyaung Pagarlava. Each was asked to create a spontaneous choreographic sketch of their reaction to the Graham film, and was required to adhere to the following conditions: 10 hours of rehearsal, public domain music or silence, and basic costumes and lighting design. Though it was planned to be performed on only one occasion, the audience reception for the *Lamentation Variations* was such that it has been added to the permanent repertory of the Martha Graham Dance Company.

Notes on the repertory, continued

Errand into the Maze (1947)

Errand into the Maze premiered in 1947 at the Ziegfeld Theater in New York City. With a score by Gian Carlo Menotti and set design by Isamu Noguchi, the dance was choreographed as a duet for Martha Graham and Mark Ryder. It is loosely derived from the myth of Theseus, who journeys into the labyrinth to confront the Minotaur, a creature who is half man and half beast. In *Errand Into the Maze*, Graham retells the tale from the perspective of Ariadne, who descends into the labyrinth to conquer the Minotaur. Substituting a heroine for the hero of Greek mythology in her dance, Graham created a female protagonist who would confront the beast of fear, not just once, but three times, before finally overpowering him. Influenced by the theories of the great psychologist Carl Jung, Graham was exploring the mythological journey into the self in this dance.

—Ellen Graff

Echo (2014)

The work is inspired by the Greek myth of Narcissus and Echo but does not retell their story. Narcissus and his reflection, Echo and her multiple voices; the impossibility love; and the vanity of beauty — these themes are explored in a complex and vivid dance vocabulary that aims to create an emotional landscape.

Notes about Martha Graham

Martha Graham has had a deep and lasting impact on American art and culture. She single-handedly defined contemporary dance as a uniquely American art form, which the nation has in turn shared with the world. Crossing artistic boundaries, she collaborated with and commissioned work from the leading visual artists, musicians, and designers of her day, including sculptor Isamu Noguchi and composers Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and Gian Carlo Menotti.

Graham's groundbreaking style grew from her experimentation with the elemental movements of contraction and release. By focusing on the basic activities of the human form, she enlivened the body with raw, electric emotion. The sharp, angular, and direct movements of her technique were a dramatic departure from the predominant style of the time.

Graham influenced generations of choreographers that included Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, and Twyla Tharp, altering the scope of dance. Classical ballet dancers Margot Fonteyn, Rudolf Nureyev, and Mikhail Baryshnikov sought her out to broaden their artistry. Artists of all genres were eager to study and work with Graham—she taught actors including Bette Davis, Kirk Douglas, Madonna, Liza Minelli, Gregory Peck, Tony Randall, Eli Wallach, Anne Jackson, and Joanne Woodward to utilize their bodies as expressive instruments.

During her long and illustrious career, Graham created 181 dance compositions. During the bicentennial she was granted the United States' highest civilian honor, The Medal of Freedom. In 1998, TIME Magazine named her the "Dancer of the Century." The first dancer to perform at the White House and to act as a cultural ambassador abroad, she captured the spirit of a nation. "No artist is ahead of his time," she said. "He is his time. It is just that the others are behind the time."

Notes about the company

The Martha Graham Dance Company has been a leader in the development of contemporary dance since its founding in 1926. Informed by the expansive vision of its pioneering founder, the company has expanded contemporary dance's vocabulary with masterpieces such as *Appalachian Spring*, *Lamentation*, and *Chronicle*, rooted in social, political, psychological, and sexual contexts.

Always a fertile ground for experimentation, the Martha Graham Dance Company has been an unparalleled resource in nurturing many of the leading choreographers and dancers of the 20th and 21st centuries. Graham's groundbreaking technique and unmistakable style have earned the company acclaim from audiences in more than 50 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Today, the company continues to foster Graham's spirit of ingenuity. It embraces a new vision that showcases classics by Graham, her contemporaries, and their successors, alongside newly commissioned works. The company is actively working to create new platforms for contemporary dance and multiple points of access for audiences.

Biographies

Janet Eilber (*Martha Graham Dance Company artistic director*)

Janet Eilber has been the company's artistic director since 2005. Her direction has focused on creating new forms of audience access to Martha Graham's masterworks. These initiatives include designing contextual programming, educational and community partnerships, use of new media, commissions, and creative events, such as the *Lamentation Variations* and *Prelude and Revolt*. Earlier in her career, as a principal dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company, Eilber worked closely with Martha Graham. She danced many of Graham's greatest roles, had roles created for her by Graham, and was directed by Graham in most of the major roles of the repertory. She soloed at the White House, partnered with Rudolf Nureyev, starred in three segments of *Dance in America*, and has since taught, lectured, and directed Graham ballets internationally. Apart from her work with Graham, Eilber has performed in films, on television, and on Broadway—directed by such greats as Agnes deMille and Bob Fosse, and has received four Lester Horton Awards for her reconstruction and performance of seminal American modern dance. She has served as director of arts education for the Dana Foundation, guiding the foundation's support for teaching artist training and contributing regularly to its arts education publications. Eilber is a trustee emeritus of the Interlochen Center for the Arts. She is married to screenwriter/director John Warren, with whom she has two daughters, Madeline and Eva.

Denise Vale (*senior artistic associate*)

Denise Vale joined the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1985, attaining the rank of principal dancer. Roles performed include the Pioneer Woman in *Appalachian Spring*, Woman in White in *Diversion of Angels*, Chorus Leader in *Night Journey*, Chorus in *Cave of the Heart*, the Attendant in *Hérodias*, Leader in the 1980s reconstruction of *Steps in the Street*, and *Night Chant*, a ballet created for Vale by Martha Graham in 1989. Graham solos performed include *Lamentation*, *Frontier*, *Satyrical Festival Song*, and *Serenata Morisca*.

Biographies, continued

Tadej Brdnik (*principal*)

Tadej Brdnik began his career in Slovenia, joining the company in 1996. He has danced with Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project, Robert Wilson, and Battery Dance Company, among others, and in works by Maurice Béjart, Nacho Duato, Lucinda Childs, Yvonne Rainer, Susan Stroman, Anne Bogart, Doug Verone, Andonis Foniadakis, Larry Keigwin, and others. He teaches internationally, at the Graham School and for Dancing to Connect. He is a former director of Teens@Graham and education director for the Downtown Dance Festival. He is a manager of special projects at the Graham Center and owner of smARTconcierge. He is a recipient of the Benetton Dance Award and the Eugene Loring Award.

Katherine Crockett (*principal*)

Katherine Crockett joined the company in 1993. Her favorite roles include Clytemnestra, Jocasta, and Phaedra. She is Cate Blanchett's dancer double in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* and starred with Baryshnikov in his White Oak Dance Project. Crockett represented the U.S. for UNICEF, performing in Kosovo with Vanessa Redgrave. She worked with Robert Wilson, Lucinda Childs, Martha Clarke, Susan Stroman, and Yvonne Rainer, and performed in the Gala of the Stars, at the Vogue Awards, and on runways for Alexander McQueen. Crockett played Helen in SITICompany's *Trojan Women* and is currently starring off Broadway as the Queen in *Queen of the Night*.

Maurizio Nardi (*principal*)

Maurizio Nardi joined the company in 2002 dancing many leading roles. A native of Florence, Italy, he came to New York with a scholarship to the Graham School in 1998 and became a member of Graham II. Nardi has also danced with Pearl Lang Dance Theater, Mary Anthony Dance Theater, and Battery Dance Company, and has worked with Carla Fracci, Nacho Duato, Doug Varone, and many other artists. He has starred in galas throughout Europe and the U.S., is the winner of the 2007 Les Etoiles de Ballet2000, and acts as the artistic director of Key West Modern Dance.

Miki Orihara (*principal*)

Miki Orihara joined the company in 1987 and has performed almost every major role in the Graham repertory. She serves as a Graham regisseur and has performed with many companies and choreographers, including the Broadway Production of *The King and I*, Twyla Tharp, Robert Wilson, Stephen Pier, and Lotuslotus. She was a special guest artist for Japan's New National Theater, and has premiered her works internationally and nationally. She teaches often in Japan, Amsterdam, Peridance, the Ailey School, and NYU, among many others, and works as an assistant for dancer Yuriko (Kikuchi). She received a New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award in 2010. She is presenting her first solo concert at LaMama May 8-11, 2014.

Blakeley White-McGuire (*principal*)

Blakeley White-McGuire joined the company in 2002 and has performed the major roles of Graham's iconic repertoire including *Appalachian Spring*, *Cave of the Heart*, *Deep Song*, *Errand into the Maze*, *Frontier*, *The Rite of Spring*, and the re-imagining of *Imperial Gesture*. She has also performed in new choreographic works including those by Lar Lubovitch, Richard Move, Robert Wilson, and SITI/Company. Ms. White-McGuire has served on the faculties of The Graham Center, The Ailey School, and New School University. She holds a master's degree of the fine arts in interdisciplinary arts from Goddard College, and she is a choreographer and published writer.

Biographies, continued

Peiju Chien-Pott (*soloist*)

Peiju Chien-Pott joined the company in 2011 and performs lead roles in *Chronicle*, *Diversion of Angels*, *Echo*, *Errand into the Maze*, and *Witch Dance*. Chien-Pott received a bachelor's degree of fine arts from Taipei National University of the Arts and was the Merce Cunningham studio scholar. She has worked with Taipei Royal Ballet, Taipei Crossover Dance Company, Buglisi Dance Theatre, Korhan Basaran Artists, and Nimbus Dance Works. Chien-Pott has been invited to perform with the Morphoses under the production of Luca Veggetti.

Mariya Dashkina Maddux (*soloist*)

Mariya Dashkina Maddux joined the company in 2007 and dances lead roles in *Appalachian Spring*, *Embattled Garden*, *Serenata Morisca*, and *Lamentation Variations*. She was born and raised in Kiev, Ukraine, where she began her dance training. She continued her studies at Thomas Armour Youth Ballet in Miami, under the directorship of Ruth Wiesen. She then attended New World School of the Arts, under the directorship of Daniel Lewis, where she received a bachelor's degree of fine arts in 2006, graduating summa cum laude.

Lloyd Knight (*soloist*)

Lloyd Knight joined the company in 2005 and performs starring roles in *Appalachian Spring*, *Embattled Garden*, *Errand into the Maze*, and others. Born in England and raised in Miami, he trained at Miami Conservatory of Ballet and graduated from New World School of the Arts, under the direction of Daniel Lewis. There he worked with choreographers Donald McKayle, Robert Battle, and Michael Uthoff. He received scholarships to the Alvin Ailey Center and Dance Theatre of Harlem. *Dance Magazine* named him one of the Top 25 Dancers to Watch in 2010.

Ben Schultz (*soloist*)

Ben Schultz joined the company in 2009 and has danced many leading roles, including King Hades in *Clytemnestra* and Jason in *Cave of the Heart*. He premiered Martha Graham's work in Russia, performing *Errand into the Maze* with prima ballerina Diana Vishneva at the Mariinsky Theatre, Saint Petersburg. Schultz attended Indiana University, where he studied ballet, theatre, and opera. Earlier dance credits include the Tony Award-winning *Blast*, the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, and Hannah Kahn Contemporary Dance. Schultz has served as faculty and resident choreographer for the Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities.

Xiaochuan Xie (*soloist*)

Xiaochuan Xie joined the company in 2010, dancing many solo roles. This season she will dance the Chosen One in the revival of Graham's *The Rite of Spring*. Born in Nanjing, China, she trained in ballet and modern dance at Nanjing Secondary School for Dance Performance and danced for the Qianxian Art Theater in China for six years. She performed for the former President Jiang Zemin and President Hu Jintao and won the first prize for modern dance performance in the National Dance Competition in China in 2007.

Natasha Diamond-Walker (*dancer*)

Natasha Diamond-Walker joined the company in 2011, touring with the Italian production of *Cercando Picasso* and has performed lead roles in *Appalachian Spring*, *Diversion of Angels*, and *Cave of the Heart*. She holds a bachelor's degree of fine arts from Fordham University and the Alvin Ailey School, and has danced with the Francesca Harper Project, 360 Dance Theater, Buglisi Dance Theater, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Biographies, continued

Abdiel Jacobsen (*dancer*)

Abdiel Jacobsen joined the company in 2011, performing several leading roles, including partnering prima ballerina Diana Vishneva in *Errand into the Maze*. He is a professional champion ballroom and Latin dancer and instructor. Born on the Ivory Coast, Jacobsen received a bachelor's degree of fine arts in modern dance from the University of the Arts, performing works by Roni Koresch, Scott Jovovich, Christine Cox, and Louis Johnson. Jacobsen was also a company member of the Smoke Lillies & Jade (SLJ) Arts Initiative, directed by Zane Booker.

Lloyd Mayor (*dancer*)

Lloyd Mayor joined the company in 2012 and performs lead roles in *Appalachian Spring*, *Diversion of Angels*, and *Echo*. He trained at the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance in London. With a gymnastic, hip-hop, and ballet background, he joined the Martha Graham School in 2011 and became a member of Graham II. Last January, Mayor was honored with the Clive Barnes Award.

Lauren Newman (*dancer*)

Lauren Newman began her early training with Jacksonville Ballet Theater and Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, and toured Italy with the company in its special project, *Cercando Picasso*. She received a bachelor's degree of fine arts in dance and a bachelor's degree of arts in art history from Southern Methodist University, where she performed lead roles in *Diversion of Angels*, *Steps in the Street*, and *Acts of Light*. In 2007, she joined Graham II and completed the Martha Graham School teacher training program.

Ying Xin (*dancer*)

Ying Xin joined the company in 2011. She performs lead roles in *Diversion of Angels* and *Maple Leaf Rag*, among others. She received the 2008 China Dance Lotus Award, and has acted as faculty at Mianyang Arts College and a guest teacher at the Beijing Dance Academy. She graduated at the Nanjing University of the Arts, received a full scholarship to the Graham School, and became a member of Graham II.

Lorenzo Pagano (*new dancer*)

Lorenzo Pagano joined the company in 2012. Pagano has danced at Impulstanz Tanz Wochen in Vienna and the Doris Humphrey Foundation in Chicago. He received scholarships to both the School at Jacob's Pillow and the Martha Graham School. He was a member of Graham II.

Tamisha Guy (*apprentice*)

Tamisha Guy joined the company in 2013. A native of Trinidad and Tobago, she began her dance training at Ballet Tech, and attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School and SUNY Purchase College as a double major in dance and arts management, where she graduated with honors. She has performed works by William Forsythe, among others.

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