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Editors: Images are available upon request.

The legendary Martha Graham Dance Company makes a rare Philadelphia appearance with four Graham's classics including *Appalachian Spring* November 3-6

(Philadelphia, PA) One of America's most celebrated and visionary dance troupes, the Martha Graham Dance Company (MGDC), returns to Philadelphia after a decade on the NextMove Dance Series, November 3-6 in six performances at the Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut Street. Named by Time Magazine as the "Dancer of the Century," founder/choreographer Martha Graham has left a deep and lasting impact on American art and culture through her repertoire of 181 works. The program includes Graham's masterworks *Appalachian Spring*, *Errand into the Maze*, *Dark Meadow Suite* and a re-imagining of Graham's poignant solo *Lamentation* in *Lamentation Variations* by contemporary choreographers.

Performances take place Thursday, November 3 at 7:30pm; Friday, November 4 at 8:00pm; Saturday, November 5 at 2:00pm and 8:00 pm; and Sunday, November 6 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm. Tickets cost \$20-\$60 and can be purchased in person at the Prince Theater box office, by phone 215-422-4580 or online <http://princetheater.org/next-move>.

Opening the program is *Dark Meadow Suite* (2016), set to Mexican composer Carlos Chavez's music. Artistic Director Janet Eilber rearranged highlights from one of Graham's most psychological, controversial, and abstract works. *Dark Meadow* (1946) is a 50-minute dance with tall-spare sets by Isamu Noguchi, making it impractical for 21st Century touring and programming. This edited version as part of the Graham Deconstructed Series is on a bare stage and performed by two soloists and a chorus affording audiences a glimpse into Graham's original ritualistic masterwork.

Errand into the Maze (1947), a popular Graham ballet for two dancers and set to music by Gian Carlo Menotti, is based on the Greek myth of Ariadne and the Minotaur. Graham danced the original role of the protagonist and Mark Ryder as the Minotaur creature. Walter Terry, writing for the *New York Herald Tribune* (March 9, 1947) noted, "...the demon is fear, the deity is courage. Aspects of the evil and the good, then, in humankind, are given substance for us to regard in that pantheon which is Miss Graham's theatre of dance...It is a distinguished and appealing work."

Lamentation Variations (2007) commemorated the anniversary of 9/11. Based on Graham's iconic solo, *Lamentation*, as seen in a 1940 film, contemporary choreographers were invited to create a movement study based on their spontaneous reaction to the film. The Philadelphia program includes *Pagarlava Variation* set to Gustav Mahler's music by Taiwanese choreographer Bulareyaung Pagarlav. He was also commissioned to create another work, *Chasing*, for the MGDC. Downtown choreographer Richard Move is known for his award-winning "Martha" shows. He choreographed a solo, *Move*

Variation, to the sounds of DG Savage. Noted contemporary choreographer Larry Keigwin created *Keigwin Variation*, a full-ensemble work to Chopin based on the sorrowful, haunting and passionate gestures from Graham's original work.

Closing the program is Graham's masterpiece, *Appalachian Spring* (1944), named after a poem by Hart Crane. It is set to Aaron Copland's music, which earned him a Pulitzer Prize. Isamu Noguchi's bare-bones set with a Shaker rocking chair depicted the American frontier as a place for optimism and hope. Created at the end of World War II, this ballet was built on a story of a young couple on their wedding day and represented for many a more prosperous future. In a letter to Aaron Copland, Graham wrote she wanted the dance to be "a legend of American living, like a bone structure, the inner frame that holds together the people." The dance explores themes from American culture reflected in the characters (the Husbandman, his Bride, a Pioneering Woman, a Preacher and his followers), Copland's Shaker tune "Simple Gifts" as well as the movement vocabulary consisting of square dance patterns, skips, hops and curtsies. The Toronto Globe notes, "it is one of the most rewarding and moving experiences in modern dance."

Additional activities include pre-performance introductory remarks by artistic director Janet Eilber and two post-performance chats following the Friday 8pm performance and Saturday 2pm performance.

ABOUT MARTHA GRAHAM

Martha Graham single-handedly defined contemporary dance as a uniquely American art form. 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. Classical ballet dancers Margot Fonteyn, Rudolf Nureyev, and Mikhail Baryshnikov sought her out to broaden their artistry. She taught actors including Bette Davis, Kirk Douglas, Madonna, Liza Minnelli, 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 dances. 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."

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The Martha Graham Dance Company has been a leader in the development of contemporary dance since its founding in 1926. Today, the Company is embracing a new programming vision that showcases masterpieces by Graham alongside newly commissioned works by contemporary artists. With programs that offer a rich thematic narrative, the Company creates new platforms for contemporary dance and multiple points of access for audiences. The Martha Graham Dance Company has received international acclaim from audiences in more than 50 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Russia, and the Middle East. The Company has performed at the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, the Paris Opera House, Covent Garden, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as at the base of the Great Pyramids in Egypt and in the ancient Herod Atticus Theatre on the Acropolis in Athens. In addition, the Company has also produced several award-winning films broadcast on PBS and around the world.

Dance Affiliates/NextMove Dance

Artistic director Randy Swartz created the first annual dance series in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre in 1970. In 1983, he launched the Dance Celebration series at the Annenberg Center for a 32-year run and initiated a new annual series at the Prince Theater in October 2015. Dance Affiliates, renamed NextMove Dance, is known as one of the nation's finest dance presenters. Known internationally for award-winning presentations for more than three decades, Dance Affiliates/NextMove Dance provides a wealth of opportunities for the Delaware Valley community to interact with the artists through talk-backs, master classes, artistic collaborations, workshops, children's programs and much more.

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