



MARTHA GRAHAM

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ABSTRACT

MARTHA GRAHAM IS ONE OF THE MOST CELEBRATED ARTISTS IN MODERN DANCE. THIS PROJECT ALLOWED STUDENTS AND FACULTY OF THE MUSIC AND THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENT THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY MARTHA GRAHAM, HER TECHNIQUE, AND HER BODY OF WORK IN DEPTH. THIS PROJECT HAD THREE MAIN GOALS, AND REACHED TWO ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES. THE GOALS WERE: TO RESEARCH MARTHA GRAHAM AS A CHOREOGRAPHER AND PRIME MOVER IN MODERN DANCE, TO RESEARCH CHOREOGRAPHIC WORKS OF MARTHA GRAHAM, AND TO RESEARCH THE TECHNIQUE OF MARTHA GRAHAM. ACHIEVING THESE THREE GOALS LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR COMPLETION OF TWO ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES. THE FIRST OBJECTIVE WAS CREATING A STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHED WORK USING THE TECHNIQUE OF MARTHA GRAHAM. SECOND, THE RESEARCHERS DEVELOPED A TECHNIQUE BASE UTILIZING THE CHOREOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS OF THE PIECE TO TRAIN DANCERS TO PERFORM THE WORK.



METHODOLOGY: IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

WHAT IS IT THAT SETS MARTHA GRAHAM'S WORK APART FROM ALL OTHER DANCE TECHNIQUES? HOW DID MARTHA GRAHAM'S PERSONAL LIFE AND EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE THE PIECES SHE CREATED? HOW MUCH OF MARTHA GRAHAM'S TECHNIQUE BASE IS USED BY DANCERS TODAY?

METHODOLOGY: PRACTICE

CREATE A NEW WORK IN OUR OWN STYLE USING NARRATIVE FORM AND ORIGINAL MUSIC.
DEVELOP A TECHNIQUE BASE TO TRAIN DANCERS TO PERFORM THIS PIECE



FINDINGS REGARDING IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

MARTHA GRAHAM'S WORK WAS UNIQUE BECAUSE SHE TOOK AN ABSTRACT ART AND TRANSFORMED IT IN SUCH A WAY THAT PEOPLE COULD UNDERSTAND AND RELATE TO IT; THE CONSEQUENCE BEING THAT CONTEMPORARY DANCE WAS BROUGHT TO THE FOREFRONT OF THE DANCE WORLD.

MARTHA GRAHAM WAS INFLUENCED BY EVERYTHING SHE SAW. THE MOTIVES OF HER PIECES AND HER PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WERE INTIMATELY CONNECTED; HER LIFE CAN BE OUTLINED BY THE PIECES SHE CREATED

MARTHA GRAHAM MADE MANY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONTEMPORARY DANCE
Use of breath through contraction and release
Expanded use of floor work

SALIENT FINDINGS FROM LITERARY REVIEW

GRAHAM CHOREOGRAPHED IN THE NARRATIVE FORM: HER PLOTS DERIVED MOSTLY FROM MYTHOLOGY, HISTORY, POEMS, AND PIECES OF ART.

GRAHAM CREATED PIECE-SPECIFIC TRAINING ROUTINES IN ORDER TO BEST PREPARE HER DANCERS TO PERFORM THE CHALLENGING ROLES.

"WHAT WAS EXTRAORDINARY IS THAT DANCERS DIDN'T GET HURT. I DON'T KNOW WHY, BECAUSE WE DIDN'T USE PLIES VERY MUCH."

SOPHIE MASLOW

GRAHAM'S REPERTOIRE AND TECHNIQUE EVOLVED WITH HER LIFE AND EXPERIENCES: SHE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN RECREATING PAST WORK, RATHER SHE STRIVED TO CREATE NEW WAYS TO MOVE.

"SHE DISCOVERED A LOT OF NEW MOVEMENTS. AND SHE JUST KEPT WORKING ON FINDING....THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW THAT SHE BRINGS IN."

LOUIE HORST, 1929



CONCLUSIONS

RESEARCHERS UTILIZED GRAHAM'S TECHNIQUE AND STYLE TO CREATE A WORK OF THEIR OWN USING THE FOLLOWING FIVE STEPS:

- EXPLORED POSSIBLE SUBJECTS THAT MARTHA GRAHAM WOULD CHOREOGRAPH ABOUT IF SHE WERE ALIVE TODAY
- CREATED MOVEMENT BASED ON THAT SUBJECT
- ACQUIRED A COMPOSER TO CREATE AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION SET TO THE MOVEMENT
- COSTUMED THE PIECE IN SUCH A WAY THAT GRAHAM WOULD HAVE DONE
- PERFORMED PIECE AS A METHOD OF COMMUNICATION TO AN AUDIENCE WITH THE INTENT OF INSPIRING THROUGH MOVEMENT