

The mother of modern dance

Business



Martha Graham's revolutionary artistic vision made a huge impact on the American culture of art and dance.

She changed the way people viewed modern dance and movement. Known as "The Mother of Modern Dance", Martha Graham innovated a new system of movement, which is a series of "contract and release." Not only was she successful as an individual, she was successful when working with other famous choreographers and composers. Martha Graham was born on May 11, 1894 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She was inspired to dance after seeing Ruth St. Denis perform at the Mason Opera House in Los Angeles.

Her parents were strong Presbyterians, so they wouldn't allow her to dance. After her father died, she enrolled in The Denishawn School of Dancing and Related Arts. She was enrolled for eight years, as a student and an instructor. A few years after, she left the Denishawn School of Dancing and Related Arts, she went to work with the Greenwich Village Follies. She ended up working there for a total of two years. At this time, Martha's career really began to take off.

She was then hired to teach and choreograph at various places such as, The Eastman School of Music, Dance, and Theater, and the John Murray Anderson School. In 1926, Graham established the Martha Graham Dance Company. There, she found her true voice and style of dance technique. Martha Graham's technique was a major turning point in the dance world, and is still used to this day. In 1930, the new system of movement was created. As part of Martha Graham's technique, she used the method of breathing through movement called "contract and release".

She always choreographed very hard movement that was full of angles.

During this time, this style of dance was very unfamiliar to dancers, before Graham, there was only smooth/lyrical dancing. Martha Graham had many innovations. The first innovation was the “contract and release” movement system, the second was her hard-hitting technique, lastly, she was the first modern dance choreographer to fully collaborate with modern artists.

Because of these accomplishments, Graham completely changed the world of modern dance.

Martha lived to dance and choreograph as long as possible. One of her most popular successes was her lead role in composer, Igor Stravinsky's, premiere of Rite of Spring in 1930. She also toured the U. S. for four years in the production of Electra.

Graham won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1976. She died on April 1, 1991, as the twentieth centuries most revolutionary artists.