

## Martha Graham Rocks

CHUCK STROUSE | JANUARY 25, 2018 | 10:50AM

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Courtesy of Larry Blackburn, South Florida Symphony

Last night amazing dancers, half nude, turned the stage of the Knight Concert Hall of the Adrienne Arsht Center into a fusillade of athleticism, color, and beauty. There was old-timey, contemporary, and timeless gyration that brought the audience to two standing ovations and at times left even veteran dance fans in awe. The building was beautiful, the symphony outstanding, and the whiskey smooth.

So how come the place was less than half full? What is wrong with South Florida? It is still two full months till Ultra.

The South Florida Symphony and Martha Graham Dance Company did a tripartite show last night that certainly had flaws, but was impressive. It started with an Aaron Copland classic, moved on to a world premiere of a dance called "A New Place," and finished with a truly incredible performance of Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring."

Now and then, particularly in the first two parts, there was an unnecessary knee slap or a dancer slightly off rhythm, but in sum, this capper of a three-show series that started in Key West was one of the most beautiful things that has graced a South Florida stage in years.

Of particular note were performances by the followers (Co Young An, Laurel Dally Smith, Marzia Mermoli, and Anne Souder) in Copland's "Appalachian Spring," the film by Darshan Singh Bhuller that accompanied "A New Place," and pretty much everything and everybody in "The Rite of Spring."

Just wow.

This is the symphony's 20th-anniversary year, and though you have now missed perhaps the most spectacular show of the season, there are plenty more ahead. "POPS Series II: And the Tony Goes To" on February 7 and "MW Series IV: Symphonie Fantastique" April 18 both take place at the Arsht. And there are numerous other shows from Key West north. For details see the [symphony calendar](#).

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**Chuck Strouse** is editor in chief of *Miami New Times*. He has shared two Pulitzer Prizes and won dozens of other awards. He is an honors graduate of Brown University and has worked at newspapers including the *Miami Herald* and *Los Angeles Times*.

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