



For Immediate Release

**Martha Graham Dance Company Announces GrahamFest95  
A Three-Day Virtual Festival Celebrating the Company's 95th Anniversary  
April 30–May 2, 2021**

New York, NY, March 25, 2021 – The world-renowned **Martha Graham Dance Company's** 95th season culminates in a three-day virtual festival featuring livestreams of Martha Graham classics, the Company premiere of **Elisa Monte's** signature work, *Treading* (1979), four solos by **Sir Robert Cohan**, *Lamentation Variations* by **Kyle Abraham**, **Richard Move**, and **Nicolas Paul**, and the duet from **Troy Schumacher's** *The Auditions*, created for the Company in 2019. The festival also features a collaborative project with international art gallery **Hauser & Wirth**. This collaboration involves the creation and premiere of four films that place three Graham dances and one Cohan work in conversation with the works of four acclaimed visual artists—**Rita Ackermann**, **Mary Heilmann**, **Luchita Hurtado**, and **Rashid Johnson**. The festival wraps up with a closing-night Zoom cocktail event with the dancers. GrahamFest95 runs Friday, April 30–Sunday, May 2.

"This past year has required us to embrace—if not celebrate—uncertainty and change. Our physical survival has depended on distancing and our artistic and spiritual survival has depended on discovering new ways to connect," says Artistic Director Janet Eilber. "GrahamFest95 will showcase a range of experimental digital offerings as well as the first steps in the return to live performance. Our collaborations with great Graham alumni Elisa Monte and Sir Robert Cohan, as well as those with some of today's most extraordinary visual artists, speak to both the past and the future of our creative legacy. We see the festival not so much as the end of a challenging year, but as a launch into whatever our 96th season and beyond may hold."

GrahamFest95 will feature renowned choreographer and former Graham principal dancer Elisa Monte's landmark duet *Treading*. Set to music by Steve Reich, this mesmerizing, critically acclaimed work was commissioned by Martha Graham and created while Monte was a dancer with the Company. Eilber and Monte will discuss Graham's roles for women and how *Treading* came to be.

"It is with great pleasure that I continue to be a part of Martha's remarkable sphere of creation," says Elisa Monte. "Martha offered me the opportunity to create in 1979 when I was a dancer in her company. Now, after a 40-year span, I joyfully return to close the circle of a creative path. *Treading* was a labor of love, and I offer it back in admiration of Martha's genius. She challenged all those she admired, and I welcomed her challenge and am grateful for it. It propelled me to who and what I am."

The festival will also feature works by another Graham alumnus, the legendary Sir Robert Cohan, considered the founder of contemporary dance in the UK. The solos *Lloyd* and *Lorenzo* from *Afternoon Conversations with Dancers* will be presented along with two excerpts from *Communion*, Cohan's last major group work, set to music by Nils Frahm.

The films created in collaboration with Hauser & Wirth pair four artists represented by the gallery with dance works that resonate with each artist's work.

Rita Ackermann's *Mama Paintings* are layered compositions of figurative drawings and bold gestural abstractions in paint. Her images are the product of automatic gestures, a subconscious unfolding on canvas. These are paired with the newly reimagined *Immediate Tragedy*, Graham's solo representing a woman's challenge to move forward against all odds.

Mary Heilmann's wit and colorful geometric paintings are presented with *Satyric Festival Song*, one of Graham's abstract modernist solos, performed by Xin Ying.

Luchita Hurtado created a series of abstract paintings that, like Graham's *Dark Meadow*, evoke a figure in the landscape of the American Southwest. Both artists use a spiritual simplicity that references space and the body as metaphors. Hurtado's work will be seen in relation to *Saraband*, the duet from *Dark Meadow*.

Rashid Johnson's series, titled *Anxious Red Paintings*, renders an audience of anxious faces in red oil stick. This is paired with a solo by Robert Cohan in which a man slowly trembles and crumbles before our eyes. Lloyd Knight, who collaborated with Johnson on *The Hikers* in 2019, will dance the solo.

Graham solos *Deep Song*, *Spectre-1914*, and *My River Runs to Thee* from *Letter to the World* and duets *Conversations of Lovers* and *Moon* from *Canticle for Innocent Comedians* will also be presented.

#### **GrahamFest95 Ticketing information:**

Full GrahamFest95 pass: \$95 (programs will remain available until May 30, 2021). Single tickets for one livestreamed program: \$30. Single tickets to watch Company rehearsals: \$15. Single tickets for Closing Night Cocktails: \$40. Patreon members at \$100 level receive a full festival pass. Tickets can be purchased at [www.marthagraham.org](http://www.marthagraham.org). To join the Company on Patreon, go to [patreon.com/marthagrahamdance](https://patreon.com/marthagrahamdance).

#### **GrahamFest95 Schedule**

*All events listed in Eastern Time*

*Livestreams from the Martha Graham Studio Theater*

#### **Friday, April 30, 6pm – The EVE Project**

*Deep Song* by Martha Graham, performed by Leslie Andrea Williams

*Immediate Tragedy* by Martha Graham, performed by Anne Souder

*Spectre-1914* by Martha Graham, performed by Natasha M. Diamond Walker

Martha Graham's *Satyric Festival Song*, performed by Xin Ying, artwork by Mary Heilmann (film premiere)

*Treading* by Elisa Monte, performed by Charlotte Landreau and Lloyd Knight

Conversation with Janet Eilber and Elisa Monte

#### **Saturday, May 1, 1:30pm**

Behind-the-scenes look at the dancers' warm-up and rehearsal led by Senior Artistic Advisor Denise Vale

#### **Saturday, May 1, 5pm – Past/Present**

Two excerpts from *Communion* by Robert Cohan, performed by Laurel Dalley Smith and Lloyd Mayor

*Lorenzo* from *Afternoon Conversations with Dancers* by Robert Cohan, performed by Lorenzo Pagano

Robert Cohan's *Lloyd* from *Afternoon Conversations with Dancers*, performed by Lloyd Knight, artwork by Rashid Johnson (film premiere)

*Conversations of Lovers* by Martha Graham, performed by Xin Ying and Lloyd Knight  
*Lamentation Variations* by Kyle Abraham (performed by Lloyd Knight and Lloyd Mayor), Richard Move (performed by So Young An), and Nicolas Paul (performed by Anne O'Donnell, Anne Souder, and Leslie Andrea Williams)

**Sunday, May 2, 11:30am**

Behind-the-scenes look at the dancers' warm-up and rehearsal led by leading Graham dancer Ben Schultz

**Sunday, May 2, 3pm – Other Places**

Martha Graham's *Saraband*, performed by Xin Ying and Lloyd Knight, artwork by Luchita Hurtado (film premiere)

Martha Graham's *Immediate Tragedy*, performed by Xin Ying, artwork by Rita Ackermann (film premiere)

*My River Runs to Thee* by Martha Graham, performed by Anne O'Donnell

*Moon* by Martha Graham, performed by So Young An and Jacob Larsen

Duet from *The Auditions* by Troy Schumacher, performed by Marzia Memoli and Lorenzo Pagano

*Treading* by Elisa Monte, performed by Charlotte Landreau and Lloyd Knight

**Photos and Biographies**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rugegxy589qjiwh/AAyjqzoOfI4IFKIBnFawYoa?dl=0>

The Graham Company's 95th season, which kicked off in June with the digital premiere of *Immediate Tragedy*, has included 16 unique Martha Matinees, six Studio Series, six Zoom Q&A sessions with Graham experts, 72 live Zoom classes with Company members, and performances with Fall for Dance, the Annenberg Center in Philadelphia, and Museum of the City of New York.

**About Hauser & Wirth**

Hauser & Wirth was founded in 1992 in Zurich by Iwan Wirth, Manuela Wirth, and Ursula Hauser, who were joined in 2000 by partner and president Marc Payot. A family business with a global outlook, Hauser & Wirth has expanded over the past 29 years to include outposts in Hong Kong, London, New York, Los Angeles, Somerset, Gstaad, and St. Moritz. The gallery represents over 80 artists and estates who have been instrumental in shaping its identity over the past quarter century, and who are the inspiration for Hauser & Wirth's diverse range of activities that engage with art, education, conservation, and sustainability.

Hauser & Wirth has built a reputation for its dedication to artists and its support of visionary artistic projects worldwide. In addition to presenting a dynamic schedule of exhibitions, the gallery collaborates with renowned curators to present museum-quality surveys and invests considerable resources in new scholarship and research. [www.hauserwirth.com](http://www.hauserwirth.com)

**About the Martha Graham Dance 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 unite the work of choreographers across time within a rich historical and thematic narrative, the Company is actively working to create new platforms for contemporary dance and multiple points of access for audiences.

Since its inception, the Martha Graham Dance Company has received international acclaim from audiences in more than 50 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, 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. [www.marthagraham.org](http://www.marthagraham.org)

Support for GrahamFest95 is provided by Digital Season Sponsor Jody and John Arnhold | Arnhold Foundation with additional support from The Hayes Foundation, and by Opening Night Sponsor Morgan Stanley. Major support for the Martha Graham Dance Company is provided by the Howard Gilman Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

**Follow the Company on social media**

Instagram: [@marthagrahamdance](https://www.instagram.com/marthagrahamdance)

Facebook: [facebook.com/marthagrahamdance](https://www.facebook.com/marthagrahamdance)

YouTube: [youtube.com/marthagrahamdancecompany](https://www.youtube.com/marthagrahamdancecompany)

Press contact:

Janet Stapleton – 212-633-0016 / [stapleton.janet@gmail.com](mailto:stapleton.janet@gmail.com)