

# fjord

## You Cannes Dance

Cannes' Festival de danse in 2021

<https://fjordreview.com/cannes-dance-festival/>

The last edition of Cannes' Festival de danse was a kind of mirror of the times. Biennial, it skipped last year's lockdown but called to account the new incertitude of this season. Director Brigitte Lefèvre, at her last mandate before the arrival of the newly appointed Didier Deschamps, rooted her last program in the metaphoric security of two themes: "earth" (after the other three elements: water, air, fire) and "femininity." A link with the territory was also essential in the program: in cooperation with the Cannes based École Supérieure de danse, professional students could benefit from masterclasses, the Nice University organized a thematic conference, the city offered films projections and expositions, one of them dedicated to the famous ballerina Rosella Hightower, founder of the local academy.

In a 15-day program with 28 companies, French and international, we caught two performances representative of the festival's artistic line.

In spite of the difficulties, Lefèvre managed to invite the Martha Graham Dance Company from the US to open the program. Moreover: a photo of one of the company's dancers, So Young An, was chosen as the image of the festival. After some years absent from Europe, the (good) feeling was that of an evening through the company's history. The director Janet Eilber chose a program featuring pieces by Martha Graham, opening with the signature choreography "Steps in the Street," from 1936's

“Chronicle.” Performed by 10 female dancers in the iconic black dresses signed by Graham herself, it still remains one of the most contemporary pieces in the company’s repertory, perfect to open every show.



Martha Graham Dance Company in “Acts of Light” at Cannes Dance Festival. Photograph by Nathalie Sternalski

In comparison “Acts of Light,” a piece from 1981, looked very “vintage.” Anyway, it was historically interesting and appreciated by today’s audience, the big group of 16 dancers impressed with their sunny costumes. An interesting way to pursue the company’s life is through the “creative reconstructions,” such as “Exstasis,” based on a solo choreographed in 1933 by Graham (who signed also the extensible costume) now staged by Virginie Mécène. While the choreographic

future of the company could be exemplified by a piece like “Umbra” by Andrea Miller. Maybe not so original but finely composed and exciting at the same time, with its passionate taking and leaving of four couples, very different lines and colours, styles and costumes.