

# MARTHA GRAHAM

DANCE COMPANY

## MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY TO PREMIERE NEW WORKS ALONGSIDE GRAHAM CLASSICS AT INAUGURAL CITY CENTER DANCE FESTIVAL APRIL 6–10, 2022

New York, NY (February 16, 2022) – The world-renowned **Martha Graham Dance Company** returns to New York City Center April 6–7 and April 9–10 as part of the inaugural City Center Dance Festival. The Company’s season features Graham masterworks ***Appalachian Spring*** and ***Chronicle***, a world premiere by internationally acclaimed choreographer **Hofesh Shechter**, co-produced by and featuring **Daniil Simkin**, and the New York premiere of a new *Canticle for Innocent Comedians*, created by eight extraordinary choreographers, **Sonya Tayeh, Kristina and Sadé Alleyne, Sir Robert Cohan, Jenn Freeman, Juliano Nunes, Micaela Taylor, and Yin Yue**, and set to an original score by renowned composer **Jason Moran**.

“It’s staggering to think that we are premiering nine new creations by nine exciting and diverse choreographers at New York City Center in April,” said Artistic Director Janet Eilber. “Creating new work has never been more challenging than in the past many months, which makes the accomplishments of the choreographers, our dancers, and the entire creative team even more resonant. Each of these dances provides a visceral, ecstatic, and even cathartic response to the restrictions the world has endured.”

The season features the world premiere of *CAVE* by celebrated UK-based choreographer Hofesh Shechter. A visceral exploration of collective movement, sound, and shared kinetic energy, *CAVE* is performed by ten Graham dancers and international ballet star Daniil Simkin, who also serves as the project’s creative producer. Costumes are by Taylor McNeill and lighting design is by Yi-Chung Chen. Co-produced by Studio Simkin.

“It has been my absolute pleasure and honor to work with the Graham Company—a group of incredibly talented, generously hardworking, humble, and fully committed dancers who connected with my work fully, a work that is made to stir and inspire the driving beat of the body, and by that to awaken that euphoric human spirit with a sense of togetherness,” said Shechter. “I couldn’t have hoped for a better match than these fierce dancers for this work. They are joined by the incredible Daniil Simkin, who dreamt up this collaboration and whose relentless drive is truly inspiring.”

Another highlight this season is the new *Canticle for Innocent Comedians* inspired by the themes and format of Graham’s 1952 work. The original work was built around eight virtuosic vignettes that each celebrated a different aspect of nature and our relationship to it. Though the work was well received, there is little record of it, and it is considered lost. Artistic Director Janet Eilber conceived the new production in which the vignettes have been created by eight different choreographers of diverse dance backgrounds.

Tony Award winner Sonya Tayeh, the lead choreographer for *Canticle*, was tasked with creating the cohesive overview of the work and is choreographing the opening and closing dances, the interludes for the full company, and the vignette titled *Sun*. Choreographers Kristina and Sadé Alleyne (Alleyne Dance), Jenn Freeman, Juliano Nunes, Micaela Taylor, and Yin Yue are creating *Earth, Water, Fire, Stars, and Death*. Sir Robert Cohan, who danced in the original cast in 1952, created a new *Wind* for *Canticle* in 2020. *Moon* has the original choreography by Martha Graham. *Canticle* features an original score by jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran, costumes by Karen Young, and lighting design Yi-Chung Chen.

“To be a part of recrafting a Graham work is one of my greatest honors,” said Tayeh. “As the lead choreographer on the project, I get to be in threes of history being brought back to the forefront by Graham and seven other stellar choreographers. To me Graham’s works are relics of resilience, and *Canticle* is full of that vivid energy.”

The season also features Graham’s celebrated masterpiece *Appalachian Spring* (1944), with a luminous score by Aaron Copland and a spare set by Graham’s longtime collaborator Isamu Noguchi. This iconic and enduring work has been called “shining and joyous” and “a testimony to the simple fineness of the human spirit” (*The New York Times*).

Graham’s stark, powerful work *Chronicle*, from 1936, set to a score by Wallingford Riegger, will also be presented. Performed by the women of the Company, *Chronicle* was created as a response to the rise of fascism in Europe; its underlying theme of political activism continues to reverberate today.

The Company’s gala on April 7 will include a special performance of *Ritual to the Sun*, an ode to Graham’s classroom technique, from her 1981 work *Acts of Light*.

The music for *Appalachian Spring* and *Chronicle* will be performed live by **The Mannes Orchestra** under the direction of **David Hayes**.

The dancers of the Martha Graham Dance Company are **So Young An, Alessio Crognale, Laurel Dalley Smith, Natasha M. Diamond Walker, Lloyd Knight, Jacob Larsen, Devin Loh, Lloyd Mayor, Marzia Memoli, Anne O’Donnell, Lorenzo Pagano, Kate Reyes, Anne Souder, Richard Villaverde, Leslie Andrea Williams, and Xin Ying.**

### **New York City Center Programs**

#### **Program A | Wednesday, April 6 and Saturday, April 9 at 7:30pm**

##### ***Chronicle***

Choreography by Martha Graham  
Music by Wallingford Riegger

##### ***Canticle for Innocent Comedians***

Choreography by Sonya Tayeh with Kristina and Sadé Alleyne, Sir Robert Cohan, Jenn Freeman, Martha Graham, Juliano Nunes, Micaela Taylor, and Yin Yue  
Music by Jason Moran

##### ***CAVE***

Choreography by Hofesh Shechter

**Gala | Thursday, April 7 at 7pm**

***Ritual to the Sun from Acts of Light***

Choreography by Martha Graham  
Music by Carl Nielsen

***Canticle for Innocent Comedians (excerpts)***

Choreography by Sonya Tayeh with Kristina and Sadé Alleyne, Sir Robert Cohan, Jenn Freeman, Martha Graham, Juliano Nunes, Micaela Taylor, and Yin Yue  
Music by Jason Moran

***Appalachian Spring (excerpts)***

Choreography by Martha Graham  
Music by Aaron Copland

***CAVE***

Choreography by Hofesh Shechter

**Program B | Sunday, April 10 at 1pm**

***Appalachian Spring***

Choreography by Martha Graham  
Music by Aaron Copland

***Canticle for Innocent Comedians***

Choreography by Sonya Tayeh with Sadé and Kristina Alleyne, Sir Robert Cohan, Jenn Freeman, Martha Graham, Juliano Nunes, Micaela Taylor, and Yin Yue  
Music by Jason Moran

Bios for all of the artists can be found [here](#).

To download images [click here](#).

Tickets start at \$35 and are available at CityTix: 212-581-1212 / nycitycenter.org. New York City Center is located at 131 West 55th Street (between 6th and 7th Avenues), in Manhattan. New York City Center's health and safety protocols can be found [here](#).

For information about the Martha Graham Dance Company's Gala on April 7, please contact Fran Kirmser at 212-229-9200 x25 or [fkirmser@marthagraham.org](mailto:fkirmser@marthagraham.org).

**About The Mannes Orchestra**

Led by maestro David Hayes, Artistic Director, the Mannes Orchestra is the premiere large ensemble at The New School's Mannes School of Music. The orchestra strives to foster the highest level of music-making by engaging with a wide range of repertoire in a focused, dynamic, and supportive environment that mirrors the culture and practices of professional orchestras. The Mannes Orchestra performs a multitude of concerts each season at venues including Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, City Center, and the Tishman Auditorium at The New School.

Now in its second century as a dynamic musical center, the Mannes School of Music is a standard-bearer for innovative artistry, dedicated to developing citizen artists who engage their communities and the world through music. Through its undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies and preparatory programs Mannes offers a curriculum as imaginative as it is rigorous, taught by world-class faculty and visiting artists. As part of The New School's College of Performing Arts, together

with the School of Jazz and Contemporary Music and the School of Drama, Mannes makes its home on The New School's Greenwich Village campus in a state-of-the-art facility at the newly renovated Arnhold Hall.

### **About New York City Center**

New York City Center (Arlene Shuler, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. Manhattan's first performing arts center, City Center was founded by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia with the mission of making the best in music, theater, and dance accessible to all audiences. This commitment continues today through celebrated dance and musical theater series including the Fall for Dance Festival, the Tony-honored Encores! and Encores! Off-Center, and the newest series, Artists at the Center and the City Center Dance Festival. The distinctive neo-Moorish theater welcomes over 300,000 annual visitors to experience internationally acclaimed artists on the same stage where legends like George Balanchine, Leonard Bernstein, Barbara Cook, José Ferrer, Martha Graham, and Paul Robeson made their mark. Home to a roster of renowned national and international companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, City Center's Principal Dance Company, and Manhattan Theatre Club, City Center's dynamic programming, art exhibitions, studio events, and master classes, are complemented by education and community engagement programs that bring the performing arts to over 11,000 New York City students, teachers, and families each year. NYCityCenter.org.

### **About Martha Graham Dance Company**

The Martha Graham Dance Company has been a leader in the evolving art form of modern 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 House, 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 Odeon of Herodes Atticus theater on the Acropolis in Athens. In addition, the Company has also produced several award-winning films broadcast on PBS and around the world. For more information about the Company, visit [www.marthagraham.org](http://www.marthagraham.org).

### **Follow the Company on social media:**

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