

EXCERPTS FROM THE PRESS BOOK
of
THE BENNINGTON SCHOOL OF THE DANCE

A Resume: 1934 - 1939

With the completion of six seasons as the nationwide center for the study of the contemporary American dance, The Bennington School of the Dance will be incorporated in 1940 into an enlarged project - The Bennington School of the Arts - which will undertake collaborative teaching and production in all of the arts of the modern theatre - dance, drama, music, and theatre design. A retrospective view of this first summer enterprise of Bennington College is, therefore, in order. One way to secure such a view is to look at the School through the eyes of the public. The following excerpts from its press book tell in brief the story of the six intensive summer sessions from 1934 when the School was founded at Bennington College through 1939 when it moved intact across the continent to hold a final visiting session at Mills College in California.

The picture sketched is one not only of the life of a project unique in American education, but of the growth of an art as new in American culture as it is old in human history. A style of dance indigenous to this country appeared less than two decades ago. In this brief time, it has spread literally across the forty-eight states. The history of The Bennington School of the Dance spans the liveliest of these years and stands out in this telescopic presentation as the rallying-point for the new-fledged art and the most important single factor in its evolution.

The School's relatively phenomenal record made in so short a time might well provoke skepticism if the circumstances were ignored. The School's inauguration was innocently but none the less perfectly timed to coincide with a need, only then becoming conscious, for stability, consolidation, authoritative-ness in a field alive with enthusiasms but beset at every turn by insecurities. Launched earlier, the forces gathered into it in 1934 would have been too scattered for cohesion. A collectivism bred of growing maturity in the art and the artists came to pass only because the time was ripe. The School unwittingly put itself in the way of a trend far larger than its own designs, took the full impact of focusing that trend for the first time, and was actually the agent for entering in the record of contemporary culture, a new phenomenon. This unsolicited function of making history accounts for the character of the six-year record. That record as set forth in public comment should, therefore, be read as the chronology of an American social attitude, not merely as the history of a school.

By way of introduction to the newspaper and periodical excerpts, it is illuminating to cite two references in recent critical works touching the subject.

Perhaps the best index to the present status of the dance in American culture and the definitive role of The Bennington School in respect to it, is the discussion of the subject by the eminent historians of that culture, Charles and Mary Beard, in America in Midpassage, issued in 1939 as Volume III of their comprehensive work, The Rise of American Civilization. Prominent among the "Esthetic Affirmations" which the Beards find typifying our times is dancing, popular dancing as well as a dance art, discovered in this period for the first time in American history as a prime means of social expression. In this discovery by America of an art familiar for centuries in Europe, and in what the Beards call its domestication to this country, they assign, as do other more journalistic authorities, the main parental role to the Bennington project.

In a more specialized consideration of the subject, John Martin, dance critic of The New York Times and chief spokesman for the art in this country, devotes a chapter of America Dancing, published in 1936, to what he designates as "The Bennington Group." His discussion begins in

what he designates as "The Bennington Group." His discussion bears extended quotation for the picture it presents of the organization of the School:

"To speak of such a thing as a Bennington Group is very much like speaking of the equator, which, though it is a useful concept, actually does not exist. All the individuals who comprise this group are artists who are independently active, who are by no means of one mind in their views and practices of the dance, and who have achieved high degrees of success in their individual work long before the Bennington project drew them together. They have no formal relationship to each other beyond the fact that they have agreed to work on a joint educational enterprise for a specified number of summers, each contributing annually from two to six weeks of his time. Yet the fact of the Bennington project inevitably gives them a kind of unity in spite of themselves.

The Bennington School of the Dance, an autonomous department of Bennington College, though still young, is already the most important dance institution in the country. A brief glance at its working plan, its faculty, and the type of student body it attracts will serve to

show why. It was inaugurated with the active cooperation of Robert D. Leigh, the president of Bennington College, as a strictly non-profit-making activity in July, 1934, by Martha Hill and Mary Josephine Shelly, both experienced and eminently alive young educators who happen also to be artists. Its first prospectus carried the following statement of intention: 'Under the auspices of a college which includes all the arts as an essential part of its curriculum, the Bennington School is designed to bring together leaders and students interested in an impartial analysis of the important trends in the dance. The modern dance, in common with the other arts of this period, is a diversified rather than a single style. At the same time it possesses certain identifying characteristics which are common to all of its significant forms. The most advantageous plan of study is, therefore, one which reflects this diversification and, by affording comparisons, aims to reveal the essentials of modernism in the dance. The Bennington School presents contrasting approaches to technique and composition and, by giving a large place to the related aspects of the dance, such as music, undertakes an integrated analysis of the whole structure of the art. Under this plan the student of the dance has access to the experience necessary to the formulation of a well-founded point of view.'

It was no doubt with a realization of the responsibility involved, that the faculty was selected to exemplify 'the important trends in the dance.' In it are found the three leading American dancers of the new school, all differing widely in method and style; a unique representative of the best modern European system, concerned far less with propagating an orthodoxy than with adapting its principles to a new environment; and the outstanding figure in the realm of dance education.

With such a selection it would be futile to cavil, and the Bennington Group cannot but be accepted as representing, though not by any means all the gifted individuals in the modern dance, at least its most mature and significant forces."

The following newspaper and periodical excerpts have been chosen from among the many hundreds of clippings gathered over the six years. They are selected and chronologically arranged to show, for each session, the kind of public attention paid to the opening of that session, the size and distribution of the student body, something of the plan of work followed, the concerts given and particularly the evolution of the Festival which began as a modest adjunct of the teaching program and gathered headway until in 1938, as reported, nearly four thousand persons poured into the little town of Bennington for the event. They reflect the trend of public opinion toward the dance in this country by such contrasts as the opening headline in which dance is classified as a kind of athletic exercise to some of the closing excerpts five and six years later in which leading metropolitan dailies from as far away as the Middle West and such periodicals as The Nation, Theatre Arts Monthly, and even Time pay serious attention to the School's existence and to the Festival as an important event, not in the world of sport, but in the world of contemporary art.

SESSION OF 1934

MODERN DANCE GAINS RATING WITH SPORTS IN GIRLS' COLLEGES
Athlete's Ability Required for Rhythmic Movements
New School of Dancing, Which Is Enrolling
Teachers and Students from All Parts of
U.S. Will Soon Be Opened at Bennington

New York Herald-Tribune, June 3, 1934

DANCE MAY BOOM, TOO

Shades of John Stark, Seth Warner, Elijah Dewey and other Battle of Bennington patriots! What would those Revolutionary stalwarts think of such goings-on in the shadow of Bennington Battle monument as the School of Dance which is to open at Bennington College on July 7? One hundred students of Terpsichore from 27 states and Canada will study and give recitals where once the American and British guns boomed. But after all, our ancestors fought and bled that the arts might flourish in the "Land of the Brave" so doubtless they will turn with satisfaction in their graves.

Bennington (Vermont) Banner, July 11, 1934

STUDY OF MODERN DANCE IN AMERICA PIONEERING VENTURE

Adult education and the arts march hand in hand in the Bennington School of the Dance, which opened at Bennington College two weeks ago. The latest manifestation of the growing interest in this country in adult education, the Bennington School takes its place with the various pioneer summer schools.....

Launched under the auspices of Bennington College, itself a pioneer venture in the field of modern education for women, the School of the Dance is, nevertheless, an independent enterprise, self-supporting, non-partisan and non-profit-making, devoted to the end of presenting a just and intelligent cross-section of the modern dance so called. Music, the theater, painting, all have their spokesmen, their day in the sun; the dance generally speaking has been presented as the personal expression and possession of whoever happened to be doing the presenting. Thus the School takes on the added intellectual value of impartiality and comparative analysis. Thus also the adult education movement gains an important recruit.....

The Springfield (Mass.) Union, July 22, 1934

THE DANCE: A VERMONT EXPERIMENT

Unique Venture at Bennington College Provides Centre for Modern Art

It is not often that an event in the arts can safely be pointed to as a milestone of progress until time has given it perspective, but the Bennington School of the Dance, which has just closed its first session at Bennington College, would seem to be exactly that kind of event. This is perhaps not extraordinary, since the idea of the school was rooted in a need that has become progressively more evident during the past five or six years, the need for an integration of the modern dance. That the Summer's experiment has provided the groundwork for such a result makes it a significant achievement.....

New York Times, August 26, 1934

SESSION OF 1935

BENNINGTON TO OPEN A DANCE "WORKSHOP"

Concert Production Will Be A Feature of Course at Summer Session

The second session of the Bennington School of the Dance at Bennington College will open Friday with a capacity enrolment of 143 students from all parts of the United States and Canada. The school convenes for a six-week period of concentrated study in all phases of the modern dance.....

Beginning with this session, the school will add a "workshop" in concert dance production for a limited number of advanced students. The director this year will be Miss Graham, whose concert group of twelve girls will be resident at the school throughout the session as the nucleus group.....

New York Times, June 30, 1935

TINA FLADE SCORES

Young German Dancer Reappears in the East After An Absence

In order to open the series of dance events which is to be given this Summer in the theatre of Bennington College, Tina Flade crossed the country from California to Vermont and gave last week her first recital in the East since her American debut in the Fall of 1933. The event was one of singular interest in that it showed more clearly than has yet been shown just what happens to a sensitive artist under the influence of a new environment.

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New York Times, July 21, 1935

A NEW WORK

Doris Humphrey Gives Brilliant Composition at Bennington

Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman took their concert group to Bennington College, Bennington, Vt., last week for the second performance in the Summer series there, and found such an extensive audience awaiting them that the little College theatre was packed to the doors, and enough people were turned away to have filled the hall several times over.

When the College last year inaugurated its Summer school of the dance and opened to the public the formal recitals incidental to the course, it was not foreseen that the whole project would in the short space of a year become something in the nature of a national festival. Such a development appeared as a distant likelihood at the close of last year.

come so quickly, and with such definiteness, was completely unsuspected. At last week's performance there were visitors from as far away as Honolulu, and some who had driven as much as two or three hundred miles were unavoidably turned away at the door.....

New York Times, August 11, 1935

"PANORAMA"

The second annual dance festival sponsored by the Bennington School of the Dance at Bennington College closed in a burst of enthusiasm with two performances by Martha Graham and a group of thirty-six dancers in the State Armory. Miss Graham's production, entitled "Panorama", was the climactic event of a series which had included performances by Tina Flade and Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman and their group.

With the houses sold out far in advance, with audiences assembled from practically every State in the Union and from several foreign countries, there was great excitement in the air and the little Vermont town heard itself referred to persistently as an American Salzburg and "the dance capital of the world." After the performances the limited restaurant accommodations were taxed beyond their capacity and flocks of people in evening dress were to be seen in the streets seeking some agreeable spot for a bit of celebration. When Miss Graham herself entered the grill-room of the little Putnam Hotel she was greeted with resounding cheers, and the customary reserve of the New England atmosphere was replaced by a revival of that exuberance which once upon a time used to cause the young blades to take the horses from the carriage of the reigning star of the moment and pull it through the streets themselves.....

New York Times, September 1, 1935

DANCE HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Pyrotechnics in the air, if not against the sky, marked the closing days of the second session of the Bennington School of the Dance. Enthusiasm burst like skyrocket and thrills of accomplishment ignited into sparklers. The quiet town of Bennington in the Green Mountains of Vermont was alight with bright events, assertive of present fruition and shining with future promise. In two successive summer seasons, Bennington had figured in a new sort of history-making and become "the dance capital of America."

Electric with expectancy were the audiences that greeted the final dance concert, given in the Vermont State Armory instead of the College Theater, and in two evening performances instead of the scheduled one, because of the demand for seats. Here was to be seen the culmination of the dancers' summer of work, a dance composition made in their own factory, by a master choreographer, using the best tools, only experienced dancers being admitted to the Workshop Group under Martha Graham's direction. These audiences were comprised of fellow students who had been trying out the modern technique for themselves, artists and musicians, dancers and dance teachers and others who for kindred reasons were keen-edged to response. They included visitors from all over the world.

Miss Graham's new dance, composed, rehearsed and produced within the six weeks of the course, is titled "Panorama." It deals with phases of the American consciousness. The exposition is in three themes, each a separate group dance with solo passages.....

Christian Science Monitor (Boston) August 24, 1935

From An Article entitled A SCHOOL OF THE MODERN DANCE

✓ Educational enterprises of considerable significance often have very small beginnings. The Bennington School of the Dance began in a small black notebook in the hands of Mr. Robert Leigh, President of Bennington College, on a snowy Vermont afternoon in November, 1933. On this occasion, Mr. Leigh, with the future director and administrative director of the school, sketched the outline of a plan which has now been realized in two sessions of the school and which has proved so right for the purposes originally set that it is likely to hold firm as the framework of a project to be continued at least through another few summers.....

From this standpoint, it is a prediction of what may come to be a common instance in the educational scheme - a center where the artist both works and teaches, where art is both made and taught, and where the way of working and teaching stem entirely from the material itself.

Progressive Education Magazine, October, 1935

SESSION OF 1936

THE DANCE: SUMMER TIME

Projects for the Vacation Season From Vermont to California

The summer season, as it grows in intensity from year to year, takes on a decided character of its own quite different from that of the more formal periods. Apparently its dominant note is a migratory one; dancers, teachers, students, do their best to separate themselves from their customary orbits of activity and either show their own work in other fields or else attempt to find out what is going on in these fields. Some still go to Europe for observation or study, or less frequently for performance; but the advent of the Nazi regime in Germany cut off by far the largest territory for this kind of thing. Time was, indeed, when a new kind of "grand tour" had got itself established, and American dancers scrambled through Germany and Austria, spending a week at each of the well-known schools so that they could come home and teach with the advantage of a European background. Possibly the general turning away from this section of the world has had something to do with the growth of Summer educational projects at home, but whatever the causes there has been a notable growth in this direction.

The Bennington School of the Dance will open its third season at Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont on July 6, with Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman conducting professional "workshop" groups leading to the presentation of a new work in the festival which will close the session the middle of August.....

New York Times, June 21, 1936

DANCE SCHOOL ENROLLS 160

Students Arrive from 23 States and Canada; Ages Range 15 to 50

The School of the Dance, at Bennington College, started its schedule of classes this morning. During the weekend its 160 students, 12 of whom are men, arrived by automobile, train and bus from all parts of the country. Its enrollment represents 23 different states and Canada. Although many of the students come from New England and New York state, there are 22 from states west of the Mississippi river, and half of this number are from the Pacific coast. Among the states represented are Tennessee, California, Nebraska, North Dakota, Georgia, Florida, New Mexico, Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, and Oklahoma.....

Bennington (Vermont) Banner, July 6, 1936

BALLET CARAVAN TO DANCE AT BENNINGTON

Group of Soloists From the American Ballet To Appear This Week

The first dance concerts open to the public this season at The Bennington School of the Dance will be presented this Friday and Saturday evenings of this week in the Bennington College Theatre, by the Ballet Caravan, a visiting company of dancers. The Ballet Caravan is a company of 12 dancers, all soloists with the American Ballet which has just closed its first season at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City.....

Pittsfield Eagle, July 15, 1936

.....Last Friday and Saturday evenings at the Bennington School of the

.....Last Friday and Saturday evenings at the Bennington School of the Dance, Martha Graham presented a solo recital which clearly demonstrated her dance beliefs. An audience of several hundred people applauded and cheered Martha Graham the dancer, and Martha Graham, the creator.....

Boston Herald, August 4, 1936

HANYA HOLM

Artist and Group Make Debut in Bennington Festival

Though as these lines are written the major event of the Bennington Festival, which will consist of two new productions by Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman and their groups in the State Armory, has not yet taken place, a pair of recitals by Hanya Holm and her group, was of especial interest because it was to all intents and purposes the formal debut of Miss Holm in this country and of her group in any important dance series.....

What a composer with such a rich knowledge of her materials and such a

flair for group composition can conceivably accomplish with a large company such as the annual Bennington "workshop" project provides, makes next Summer's festival production already a matter of great promise.....

New York Times, July 20, 1936

DORIS HUMPHREY COMPLETES HER TRILOGY AT BENNINGTON FESTIVAL

The third annual Bennington Festival came to a brilliant conclusion with four performances in the State Armory in Bennington, Vermont, August 12-15, by Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, their concert company and the "workshop" group of the Bennington School of the Dance, of Bennington College.....

The New York Times, August 23, 1936

BENNINGTON FESTIVAL

Until three years ago there was no modern dance school in America. There were private studios..... But there was no school where different methods and opposing points of view might be studied and a thorough grounding in all the aspects of the modern dance be acquired..... Today, at last, a school exists where the young dancer can obtain a well-rounded and comprehensive view of the modern dance.....

Brooklyn Eagle, August 23, 1936

DANCE GROUPS CENTER ABOUT BENNINGTON, VERMONT

.....The dance is not yet to be classed among the major audience-attractions in this country - or in any country, for that matter - but it makes its presence very much felt, and occasionally an organization like the Monte Carlo Ballet Russe manages to become quite prosperous.

Of the various dance forms the "modern" dance arouses provocative attention, and this coming season will see the beginning of some radical innovations in its composition, if the dance festival recently held at Bennington, Vt., is any sign. Bennington, at the present, is a sort of national dance center.....

Cincinnati Enquirer, August 30, 1936

A NEW CENTER OF THE DANCE

At Bennington Has Been Established A "Choreographic Baireuth"

To most Americans "the dance" refers to a social pastime geared to the beat of a jazz orchestra. To others it signifies the toe-shoes, pirouettes and Degas skirts of the venerable ballet. For an ardent and growing group, however, it denotes a vital art form whose possibilities have only begun to be sensed and one preeminently suited to expressing the attitudes and values of men as they strive to find meaning for their existences.

On the campus of the East's youngest and most advanced woman's college the leaders of the "modern" American dance concluded last month the third annual session of the Bennington School of the Dance. As a result of the zeal and diligence that has been displayed, this historic Vermont community is already being designated "the choreographic Baireuth." Surely, if the compositions and colors of natural scenery at its best contribute to the dancer's inspiration, then this campus knoll, flanked by the Green Mountains to the east and the Taconic Range to the west, offers much to those who seek "the divine expression of the human spirit through the medium of the body's movements."

Taconic Range to the west, offers much to those who seek "the divine expression of the human spirit through the medium of the body's movements."

Baltimore Sun, September 15, 1936

BENNINGTON WITH ITS "WORKSHOP" EXCITING FOR THOSE
WHO WOULD STUDY AND COMPREHEND THE MODERN DANCE

"Exciting" is the word for Bennington.....

Lewiston (Maine) Journal, October 2, 1936

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS (W. J. Henderson)

.....The author, John Martin, continues with studies of Isadora Duncan, the Neighborhood Playhouse, the Bennington Group, and such creative artists as

Martha Graham, Charles Weidman and others well known to the followers of the new art.....

New York Sun, November 7, 1936

BOOK PRAISES DANCE SCHOOL
Summer Course at Bennington College Most Important in Country

"American Dancing", a new book by John Martin, dance critic of the New York Times, devotes a considerable space to the Bennington Summer School of the Dance, under the heading "The Bennington Group". Started in the summer of 1934, the school in southern Vermont almost immediately became the most important dance center in America.

Speaking of the growing interest in the modern dance evidenced in women's colleges, Mr. Martin writes: "The climax of this achievement is the annual festival held at Bennington, Vermont in connection with the summer dance school of Bennington College. Here in the summer of 1934 was held the first American dance festival, and the quiet little New England town began to hear itself referred to as 'the Salzburg of America and 'a choreographic Bayreuth'".
.....

Chicago Tribune, November 15, 1936

ON WITH THE DANCE
Bennington the Focus of This New Movement

Whether the Bennington School of the Dance is an outgrowth of the increased interest in the dance in America or one of the chief contributing causes of that interest, is a question. In any case, it is a potent factor in the extraordinary development of the dance in this country, both as art and as education.

In three great strides over as many summers, Bennington has become the focal point of the modern American dance, the terminal station drawing dance-thinking people from all over the land and sending them out after a six-weeks' intensive session, to spread the new dance doctrine. In these three summers, 400 pupils from 28 states in the Union (ranging in ages from 15 to 50) have passed through the Bennington turnstile. They have come in touch with greatness, for the faculty list of 38 teachers is comprised of leaders in the modern field. This year's enrollment consisted of 160 pupils - with a waiting list tagging on behind.

The country seat of the modern American dance began as an experiment. Bennington College itself is new in the education world. It graduated its first four-year students in 1936. Dedicated to progressive education, it is among the few colleges offering opportunity to major in dance as one majors in history, philosophy, literature, or science. It has an extensive dance library and its president, Robert D. Leigh, has a more than nominal, though still a layman's interest in the dance.....

One of the most interesting things about the Bennington School of the Dance is that nobody knows what is going to happen there next. That does not mean that the work is not highly organized and successfully carried through. It means that it has grown so fast it has almost outgrown itself. It means that like all growing organisms, it is constantly presenting new phases, new problems, taking on new shapes. There are no stereotypes at Bennington. Its course has never been either stilted or haphazard. But it has always been, and still is, utterly unpredictable.

For instance, it is modern dance that is taught there, modern dance in all its various techniques and ramifications of musical accompaniment, choreography, costume, staging and so on. Yet this last season it unexpectedly presented two programs by the Ballet Caravan, a summer offshoot of the American Ballet with Lincoln Kirstein, its founder, author of a learned

American Ballet, with Lincoln Kirstein, its founder, author of a learned history of ballet called "Dance," giving a talk on that aristocratic, ancestrally European art.

This was more than a generous gesture. It was a recognition that ballet exists, however much on the opposite side of the fence from the aims and purposes of the school.....

And there is another point about the dance school at Bennington. It is alive with oppositions. It is a discussion place as well as a dancing place - a place of conflicts as well as of unified dance culture.

For this reason, only key people belong among the student body, as only key people comprise the faculty. No, it is not a normal school - for teachers only. Neither is it a summer camp or country club for the young. It may have the setting, but that is not its spirit. The beautifully equipped plant of the College was built for work - pleasurable work to be sure, but not pleasure-seeking. Winter or summer, none but the worthy should ascend that high green hill of learning.....

Christian Science Monitor (Boston), November 10, 1936

SESSION OF 1937

BENNINGTON FESTIVAL

The fourth annual session of The Bennington School of the Dance will be held this year from July 2 to August 14 at Bennington, Vt.

Thus far each year's advance announcement has added at least one innovation to the program, and the current year is no exception. For the first time there will be set up this Summer a series of annual fellowships, by the terms of which young artists of proved ability in the modern dance will be provided with "the hospitality and facilities needed for a period of independent work." The fellows for 1937 are Esther Junger, José Limon and Anna Sokolow. "The establishment of fellowships," says the official Bennington College Bulletin, "extends the scope of the school to include a sharing of responsibility for the important developments of the future in the modern dance."

In the final week of the season one program in the festival series will be given jointly by the three fellows.....

New York Times, March 21, 1937

DANCE SCHOOL OPENS TODAY

160 Students Arrive for 4th Session at Bennington College

The Bennington School of the Dance opens its annual session at Bennington College today, with the arrival of many of its 160 students during the afternoon and with a public concert in the Armory tonight. This is the fourth annual session of the school, and four of its students are returning to Bennington for the fourth consecutive summer. These four, all of whom are enrolled in the special advanced group in the program in Choreography, come from Chicago, Ann Arbor, Detroit and Cleveland.....

Bennington (Vermont) Banner, July 2, 1937

BENNINGTON FESTIVAL

In four brief summers Bennington, Vermont, has become an American center nationally known. The Bennington School of the Dance, with which we are here concerned, in its festival of August 12 to 14 assembled an audience from Ohio, Utah, California, and intermediate points, and will send out 160 new students and teachers this season as far west as Hawaii. From the factional quarrels with the ballet Martha Hill of New York University and Bennington College and Mary Jo Shelly of the University of Chicago have taken all the pieces that constituted the modern dance and welded them into a perceptual unity. In this process, beginning in 1934, they have made possible the creation of new dancers, new choreographers, new major works, and new audiences for what was once a maligned and upstart art.....

The festival opened with a joint performance by the Fellows..... Hanya Holm's presentation of the Workshop production, Trend, on the following two nights concluded the festival..... Both concerts are a brilliant finale to the four years. They push the modern dance many years ahead of where it might have been without Bennington, acquaint one with three more than promising new choreographers, and leave one with the hope that other Fellows may be afforded this testing ground.

The Nation, August 28, 1937

On this date the Times Rotogravure Section printed a full page of pictures entitled "Silhouettes in the Vermont Sky at the 'Summer Dance Capital'".

New York Times, August 29, 1937

SESSION OF 1938

FIFTH ANNUAL SUMMER SERIES IS ANNOUNCED FOR BENNINGTON

Plans for the fifth annual session of the Bennington School of the Dance to be held next Summer at Bennington College, were announced in the quarterly bulletin of the College which was issued last week.

Several changes are to be noted in this year's schedule. For one thing, all the festival events are to be concentrated within one week, August 8-13, instead of being spread throughout the six weeks of the school's summer session

as heretofore. For another thing, the four leading dancers whose work has been featured in previous festivals will all be in residence at the school during the entire term, and each will create a new work for group and soloists to be presented for the first time in the festival programs. The four artists concerned are Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm and Charles Weidman.....

Besides these production units, the plan inaugurated last Summer of appointing three Fellows will be repeated, with Eleanor King, Louise Kloepper, and Marian Van Tuyl as this year's appointees. They also will contribute to the festival performances the results of their creative effort during the Summer.....

The New York Times, March 20, 1938

HONORED ARTISTS OF BENNINGTON

Three young women of the modern American dance have recently received awards without medals, diplomas not inscribed on parchment, but none the less invaluable in the recognition they convey and the opportunities they offer. They are Eleanor King and Louise Kloepper of New York and Marian Van Tuyl of Chicago, recipients of the three Bennington Fellowships for 1938.

It was only last season that The Bennington School of the Dance inaugurated the practice of bestowing three fellowships a year on promising younger dancers in the field.....

A Bennington Fellowship means six weeks of freedom to work, to experiment, to compose and finally to direct and produce a new composition in a plant completely equipped with every facility for studying and presenting the contemporary dance in all its phases, and in an atmosphere saturated with dance.

Such a prize is not to be won without the winning. Each dancer elected has developed her talent by concentrated work. Each has studied with a master teacher. Each represents a different part of the country. And each has an individual background and approach to the dance.....

Christian Science Monitor (Boston), April, 1938

SCHOOL OF DANCE OFFERS COURSE IN STAGE DESIGN

An experimental course in stage design for the dance, which promises to be revolutionary in its import, is being offered this year for the first time at the Bennington School of the Dance which opened its fifth session here this week. The course, under the direction of Arch Lauterer, member of the faculty in drama at Bennington College, is designed to make evident the place of the dance in the theater and the role of the designer in it.....

Albany Knickerbocker, July 5, 1938

ASSEMBLE

Twelve years ago U. S. concertgoers and gallery gawpers were already used to the dissonances of modernist music and the distortions of modernist painting. But U. S. dance audiences were familiar only with romantic ballet and the rose-garlanded capers of "interpretive dancers." Shocked by this backwardness of the U. S. dance, a group of younger U. S. dancers decided that something ought to be done to bring it up to date. To these reformer-minded dancers, sex appeal, pretty costumes, toe technique were not enough. They wanted to express and depict serious things, to comment on present-day problems.

First of them to break away was the mask-faced zealot, Martha Graham, who left a lucrative job with the then-popular Ruth St. Denis company to brood and prance alone in a Manhattan studio. Results of this brooding, Graham's Manhattan concerts in 1926-29, were the first doses of modernist dance Manhattan-

prance alone in a Manhattan studio. Results of this brooding, Graham's Manhattan concerts in 1926-29, were the first doses of modernist dance Manhattanites had ever taken. Soon, however, two other former Denishawn dancers, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, joined the procession. When famed German Modernist Dancer Mary Wigman visited the U. S. in 1930-31, the U. S. home-grown modernist dance had already taken root. But Wigman's U. S. tours added a trail of disciples to the modernist ranks. Chief among these was blonde, muscular Hanya Holm.

Today, modern dance, like modern music and modern painting, is no longer modern. But last week its devotees from 34 states converged on Bennington, Vermont, where Bennington College opened its fifth annual Festival of the Modern Dance. In the sprawling white farm buildings which house Vermont's youngest and most experimental College, some 150 acolytes, many of them heads of dance departments in other Colleges, leaped and squatted with ardor, preparing for big stage events with which the Festival will close next month. Present besides High Priestesses Graham, Humphrey and Holm, High Priest Weidman, were portly, dachshund-toting Louis Horst, patriarch of the movement, prim N. Y. Times Dance Critic John Martin, its principal evangelist. While London's ballet

world was rent in a grand écart, Bennington's modern dancers heaved together in a lusty assemblée.

Time Magazine, July 18, 1938

PAUL BOEPPLE FETE SPEAKER

Paul Boepple, director of the Dalcroze School of Music, New York City, and conductor of the famous Desoff choirs, will speak on "Space and Rhythm in Music" at the Bennington School of the Dance, Bennington, Vermont, tonight at 8 o'clock in the Bennington College theatre.

Mr. Boepple's lecture is one of a series of events of special interest to music lovers being conducted at the Bennington School of the Dance both before and during the fifth annual Bennington festival of the Modern Dance, August 4-10. Among these will be a lecture by Dr. Curt Sachs, author of "World History of the Dance" who will speak on "The Dance and Music" August 5.

Albany Times Union, July 31, 1938

YALE PUPPETEERS AT BENNINGTON FRIDAY

Sponsored by the Bennington School of the Dance, the Yale Puppeteers, America's foremost adult puppet company, will present their new musical revue, "It's A Small World," on Friday at 8:45 P.M. (E.D.S.T.) in the Bennington College Theater on the college campus at Bennington, Vt.

With lyrics and music by Forman Brown and puppets by Harry Burnett, the revue is composed of 20 hilarious topical scenes, of which one, "Tremors on Toid Avenue," features a lifelike puppet of Martha Graham, famous American dancer who is on the faculty of the Bennington School of the Dance and who has given annual concerts in the Bennington Festival of the Modern Dance.

Boston Herald, July 17, 1938

ANTHROPOLOGIST VISITS DANCE SCHOOL

Among the distinguished visitors to the Bennington School of the Dance this week are Dr. Franz Boas, world-famous anthropologist of Columbia University, New York and Miss Margaret Einert of the staff of the London Dancing Times, London, England.....

Bennington (Vermont) Banner, July 8, 1938

HOME FESTIVALS RIVAL ANY EUROPE OFFERS THIS SUMMER

The summer festival season is upon us and stay-at-home citizens of these United States are discovering that no longer need they cast envious eyes over itineraries of friends who are off for foreign shores. Aside from operatic festivals which still are being held, despite troubled conditions, in various European countries more good music and varied entertainment is available on this continent this summer than in any other land.

Unique in the wide range of new works to be presented, and unusual in the outstanding group of leading American artists participating, will be the cycle of concerts comprising the Fifth Annual Bennington Festival of the Modern Dance, to be held at Bennington, Vt., on August 4, 5, and 6 and August 8, 9, 10, according to an announcement made by Martha Hill, director of the Bennington School of the Dance.

New works, ranging all the way from a Bach Passacaglia, danced in the

New works, ranging all the way from a Bach Passacaglia, danced in the modern manner, to compositions based upon early American themes, are now being prepared at Bennington for the festival by the four leading American dancers - Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, and by the three young Fellows of the school - Eleanor King, Louise Kloepper and Marian Van Tuyl.

The festival will open with a concert by the three Fellows on Thursday, August 4 and this program will be repeated on Monday, August 8..... The second evening of the festival, Friday, August 5, will feature programs by Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm and their companies. This program will be repeated on Tuesday, August 9.....

New work by Charles Weidman and Martha Graham will be presented on the third evening of the festival, Saturday, August 6, and this program will be repeated on Wednesday, August 10. For the first time in her career Miss Graham will use a male dancer in one of her own works, and, also for the first time, she will utilize speech, the phrases of which are to be drawn from classic American documents and spoken by an actor. Eric Hawkins, who will dance with Miss Graham, is a regular member of the Ballet Caravan, of which Lincoln Kirstein is the director.

New music for the festival dances is being composed by Harrison Kerr,

Norman Lloyd, Vivian Fine, Ray Green, Harvey Pollins and Gregory Tucker. Arch Lauterer, formerly of the Cleveland Playhouse and a member of the Bennington College faculty, who has been offering a course in experimental production and stage design for the dance during the summer, will design the staging and will deal with the problem of adapting the same basic stage for a cycle of widely differing productions.

Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, July 24, 1938

CYCLE'S END

Bennington Festival Concludes Five-Year Schedule

The five-year project of the Bennington School of the Dance at Bennington College was brought to a close last week with the most brilliant of its annual festivals. Whereas in every previous year only one leading dancer contributed a new major work, with smaller performances by other artists from time to time during the six weeks' session of the school, this year four leading dancers were in residence with their companies throughout the session and all of them contributed new compositions in a concentrated series of performances. There were also three fellows, chosen from among the younger dancers, who added their compositions to the series, so that in all there were premieres of eight group works and two solos besides revivals of older numbers.

In spite of the fact that two performances of each program were given, every house was completely sold out and the whole series could easily have been repeated. Tragic stories are on the record of people who came from long distances (as far as Seattle, in one case) only to find that there was no possibility of securing even standing room in the totally inadequate little State Armory where the festivals have been held each year.....

Certainly the final season has provided a fine climax. Its schedule has been distinguished not alone by quantity but by quality and novelty as well. If the high points were a delirious piece of nonsense by Charles Weidman called "Opus 51", and the emergence of a brilliant young dancer among the fellows in the person of Louise Kloepper, there were also other notable accomplishments, all of which are worthy of considerably more than the bare cataloguing that can be given them here.....

There is every reason to believe that most of these works will be seen in New York during the coming season, and will, indeed, constitute the bulk of the new work to be presented in the modern dance field. The festival, then, was scarcely less than a season in little, and marked in a spectacular manner the conclusion of a unique project.

New York Times, August 14, 1938

BENNINGTON CURTAIN

The Bennington Festival of Modern Dance took its final curtain call in the State Armory on the evening of August 10..... Next year the Bennington School of the Dance, with approximately the present faculty, will hold its six-weeks session at Mills College, Oakland, California, minus festival events. Mills College is already renowned for an important summer session of its own, having courses in sculpture, painting, drawing, creative writing, French, music, drama, dance, and sports. The Bennington School visit, for one session only, will make its highly specialized personnel and program accessible to the large number of students and teachers up and down the West who are interested in the modern dance movement.

What the summer of 1940 will bring forth is still open to conjecture. There are rumors of a center of performing arts in a new theater building to be established on the College grounds here. Whatever the outward shape or extension into allied arts, the Bennington School, now ending its first five-

year plan in full flood of popularity, will in some form, assuredly go on.....

Christian Science Monitor, (Boston), August 16, 1938

SESSION OF 1939

BENNINGTON AT THE GOLDEN GATE

The Bennington School of the Dance, born and bred in New England, is going travelling to the Golden Gate, not of heaven, but as near heaven as California. Five years ago, when Bennington began, no dance project could safely have ventured far from the little spot it had warmed for itself in some corner of America. But 1934 was the verge of an amazing development. In five years the lines of growth radiating out from focal centers in the East, the Middle West, and the Far West have spread a network of modern dance activity across every

state in the Union.....
So Bennington is literally picking itself up intact and moving in a piece
three thousand miles. The plan and personnel will be transplanted with only
those changes imposed by the new setting.....

Chicago Dancer, April, 1939

NATIONAL DANCE CENTER WILL BE AT BAY COLLEGE

The Bennington School of the Dance, famous Summer project of Bennington College, Vermont, will move for a season to the Mills College campus in Oakland.

The school, established in 1934 and since recognized as the outstanding center for the study of the contemporary American dance, will be transported intact to the Pacific Coast and conducted from July 1st through August 11th as a part of the Summer session of Mills College.....

Oakland, California Post-Enquirer, January 26, 1939

BENNINGTON GOES WEST

The wind lists westward, carrying with it the knowledge that the Pacific shore, specifically Mills College at Oakland, will be the center of dance activity this summer. Bennington moves west on June 15th to carry on the valuable contribution to the dance it has sponsored these past five seasons in its own Vermont hills. For six weeks the bay country will be host to America dancing, under the aegis of President Aurelia Henry Reinhardt and the trustees of Mills College, offering to the dancers of the East and West an invaluable opportunity for consolidating their efforts and enriching their field in the arts.....

Dance Observer, April, 1939

Travel, this year, is not limited to individual voyagers. Nations are on the move in a cheerful as well as in a tragic sense. The two World's Fairs the United States will bring the industries, the sciences, the arts and even, in the transplanted villages, the *modus vivendi* of foreign countries to New York and San Francisco, and everyone within the United States will be tempted to make the circuit. Not to be outdone, the Bennington School of the Dance has decided to pick up stake - staff, personnel, curriculum, and all - and, leaping lightly over the three thousand miles separating Vermont from California - establish itself at Mills College in Oakland from July 1 to August 11. This is more than a gesture of friendliness, more even than the provision of an opportunity for teachers and students of the dance in the Far West to take part in the Bennington courses, which have proved so vital and important an element in the development of the modern dance in America. It is a recognition of what Mills College has done in this field; an indication that 'a common enthusiasm for the art and a common energy in promoting it identify the two regions'. A leader in the service of the arts, Mills College will be conducting this summer its fourteenth annual session which will include, as always, courses in Music and Art. In joining with Mills College in this major venture in cooperation, the Bennington School of the Dance looks forward to returning to Bennington in 1940 with a 'new enrichment of experience and a stronger consolidation for the whole field of the dance'.

Theatre Arts Monthly, May, 1939

U. S. SEEN LEADING DANCE DEVELOPMENT AS AN ART
College Director Tells Convention Members Europe Far Behind America

"The United States is the center of whatever is happening to the dance as an art at the present moment," Mary Jo Shelly, administrative director of the arts division of Bennington College, said Thursday evening in the civic auditorium at a general session of the Western Arts Association, which opened a four-day convention here Wednesday.....

Grand Rapids, Michigan Herald, May 5, 1939

DANCE SCHOOL OPENS AT MILLS COLLEGE

From 29 States, Canada, the Hawaiian Islands, France, England, and India,

some 165 students of the modern dance are on the Mills College campus for the sixth annual session of the Bennington School of the Dance, and for its first session away from the place of its founding, Bennington, Vermont.

Miss Mary Josephine Shelly, administrative director of the school, released the registration statistics of the school.

"This marks the largest number of students ever admitted in the history of the enterprise," Miss Shelly explained. "There has always been capacity enrollment at Bennington, but it was decided to increase the quota somewhat this year to take care of the many requests for admission."

San Francisco, California News, July 3, 1939

THRILLS OF LIFETIME AT MILLS COLLEGE
Bennington School is Adventure in Arts

The use of speech as well as choral, instrumental, and percussive sound, stage design, lighting, and costume as complementary factors in the production of modern dance is being essayed in many ways in the Experimental Production class of the Bennington School of the Dance now in session at Mills College.....

Oakland, California, Tribune, July 30, 1939

A PROGRAM OF PERCUSSION

That Western concert music has much to learn from its orchestra step-children, the percussion instruments, was suggested last night at Mills College with the presentation of a full program of recent compositions for percussion, given under the auspices of the Bennington summer school of the modern dance.....

San Francisco, California, Chronicle, July 28, 1939

CONCERT OF MODERN DANCE IS ANNOUNCED

Four young artists, faculty members of the Bennington School, will present a concert of modern dance at Mills College tomorrow evening at 8:30 o'clock in Lisser Hall.

The four are Ethel Butler, Louise Kloepper, José Limon and Katherine Manning, assistants respectively to Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, Charles Weidman, and Doris Humphrey.

The pianists for the program will be Ralph Gilbert, Freda Miller and Lionel Nowak. There is no admission charge and the public is invited to attend.

Berkeley, California, Gazette, August 3, 1939

CONCERT OF MODERN DANCE

The Bennington School of the Dance drew a crowded house when Ethel Butler, Louise Kloepper, José Limon, and Katherine Manning gave their joint concert at Lisser Hall, Mills College on August 4. This year it was the assistants who gave the concert rather than the principle artists themselves, and they were met by an audience that applauded with stamping feet and bravos....

Dance Observer, August-September, 1939

FINAL DEMONSTRATION OF COMPOSITION

The final demonstration of student work in dance composition, music and percussion composition, and stage design took place in Lisser Hall, Mills College, Friday afternoon, August 11. The program was the culmination of the summer's work in composition for which the best works of the various courses had been chosen. Despite the fact that much of the work began from a purely experimental basis the results produced one of the best demonstrations of this nature that the Bennington School of the Dance has presented.....

SO BENNINGTON WENT WEST?

By Rosalind Cassidy, Director of the Mills College Summer Session

As long ago as August 1937 Mills College sent an invitation to the Bennington School of the Dance to make that traditional American move westward -

"Come to Mills College in 1939!" What hazards faced,, what decisions in the two years between that August 1937 and the middle of June 1939 produced only Martha Hill, Mary Josephine Shelly and I know. An entire drawer of steel file in my office at Mills College holds the record of what looked so impossible as to budget and plan then, but so plausible and justified now that this New England school of the dance has spent a successful and exciting six weeks' session on this California campus.....

Dance Observer, August-September, 1939

1940 BENNINGTON PLANS

Summer, 1939, has rolled away into history, but the record of its activities in the dance, in spite of weather and parlous times, is impressive. Foremost in those activities, as it has been for several years past, the work of the Bennington School of the Dance, guest this year of Mills College at Oakland, California, looms as the most important accomplishment of the season. For that reason we turn over this issue, as we have done before, in major part, to the chronicling by staff members and students of activities at Mills during the dance session.

Beginning with summer, 1940, the School of the Dance will be incorporated as a dominant unit in a school at its native Bennington College in Vermont, which will include independent divisions in each of the performing arts, dance drama, and music and, parallel to these, a division of theatre design which will serve all three. The dance division of the enlarged school will carry on the present program of the Bennington School of the Dance. It is apparent that the dance, as a theatre art, must have access to sympathetic collaboration with and make itself available to the other performing arts of drama and music, not only as co-existent, but in a working partnership.....

Dance Observer, August-September, 1939