

**ESD**

**PRESENTS**



**MARTHA  
GRAHAM**

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**COMMUNITY PROGRAM**



# ESD PRESENTS

Welcome to **ESD Presents**, a new and exciting annual dance event produced by Eliot Smith Dance (ESD).

Each unique week-long program shines a spotlight on different iconic dance figures and includes a variety of inspiring talks, exhilarating practical sessions, performance opportunities and more!

Join us for our much-anticipated 2021 program, **ESD Presents Martha Graham**, where we will explore and celebrate the legacy of one of the most influential and creative minds in dance history.

We are delighted to present this year's digital program in collaboration with **Martha Graham Resources** (Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance / Martha Graham Dance Company).



TIME magazine named Graham "Dancer of the Century". People magazine named her among the female "Icons of the Century".

## Martha Graham

**Martha Graham is recognised as one of the greatest and most impactful artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, alongside Picasso, James Joyce, Stravinsky and Frank Lloyd Wright.**

An American modern dancer and prolific choreographer, Graham revolutionised dance as an art form. Her extraordinary legacy includes the creation of her own dance technique which has been taught extensively across the globe and continues to influence dance and the broader arts today.

As participants of the **ESD Presents Martha Graham Community Program** you will have the incredible opportunity to train with former dancers of the **Martha Graham Dance Company**, enjoy inspiring talks from our distinguished special guests and more!

# Program

We are delighted to present the **ESD Presents Martha Graham Community Program**: an inspiring suite of events open to all.

Running from **26 – 31 July 2021**, this exciting digital program features an array of incredible special guests including former members of The Martha Graham Dance Company. With something for everyone our community events include a **history lecture**, a **dance technique class**, a **virtual performance** and a **live-streamed interactive Q&A**.

## Lecture: 'Who is Martha Graham?'

An inspiring history lecture about Martha Graham and her impact on the dance world led by Blakeley White-McGuire and David Chase, former Principal Dancers with the Martha Graham Dance Company.

**Tuesday 27 July 2021, 18:30–20:00 (BST) via Zoom**

£5 single ticket, or £15 to access full Community Program

## Martha Graham Technique Class

An introductory level class led by **David Chase**, a former Principal Dancer with the **Martha Graham Dance Company**. This opportunity is open to everyone aged 18+, no prior dance experience required.

**Thursday 29 July 2021, 18:30–19:30 (BST) via Zoom**

£5 single ticket, or £15 to access full Community Program

# Gala Performance

A wonderful celebration of Martha Graham's life and legacy featuring:

**Lamentation**, Graham's iconic signature solo, performed by Blakeley White-McGuire presented by arrangement with Martha Graham Resources;

**I am not an Indian dancer**, Balbir Singh's latest work commissioned by ESD and inspired by two dancers, one grounded in Graham technique and the other in Kathak.

We are also proud to present two performances by the participants in the ESD Presents Martha Graham Professional Intensive:

An excerpt from Graham's **Dark Meadow Suite**; and

**Lament**, a new work created collaboratively by the dancers and Eliot Smith, ESD's Artistic Director.

**Saturday 31 July 2021, 19:00–20:00 (BST) via Zoom**  
£5 single ticket, or £15 to access full Community Program

# Livestreamed Q&A

Join us for an exhilarating live-streamed and interactive Q&A with our panel of expert special guests including Blakeley White-McGuire and David Chase, former Principal Dancers with the Martha Graham Dance Company, authors Dr Victoria Thoms and Paul PW Jackson, and award-winning dance artist Dickson Mbi.

**Saturday 31 July 2021, 20:00–21:00 (BST) via Zoom**  
£5 single ticket, or £15 to access full Community Program

# Teachers

David Chase was a soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company between 1973-1978 and has performed many principal roles with company.



## David Chase

David Chase was a soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company in the 1970's and also danced with Mary Anthony, Pearl Lang, Alonzo King's Lines, Chen and Dancers, and Kazuko Hirabayashi in New York City.

He has taught Graham technique at the Graham School. MUDRA Bejart in Brussels; RUDRA Bejart in Lausanne, and recently taught Zena Rommett Floor Barre at the San Francisco Ballet School. He taught at the Conservatoire Cantonal in Martigny and at the Paris Marais Dance School.

David also has acted in independent films with Benjamin Bratt and Alfre Woodard; television, and stage in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Blakeley White-McGuire is a New York-based dance performer, maker and teacher, and a former Principal Dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company.



## Blakeley White-McGuire

Blakeley holds an MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College, USA. Critically acclaimed as a Principal dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company (2002-2016, 2017), she has embodied the iconic roles of 20th-century Modern dance to critical acclaim. Blakeley is a leading practitioner of Graham's technique.

Throughout her career, Blakeley has created with and performed in new works by numerous 21st Century contemporary artists. She has served on the faculties of the Ailey School, the New School, The Actors' Studio & NYC's famed LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts. As a faculty member of Martha Graham Center since 2002, she is also a coach and official regisseur, restaging Martha Graham's repertory internationally.

Blakeley continues to create, collaborate, research, lecture and perform as a faculty member of the American Dance Festival. A passionate teacher, she leads master classes and residencies for companies, universities, studios, and festivals worldwide.

Eliot Smith is the Artistic Director of Eliot Smith Dance and is the innovator behind various pioneering Graham initiatives.



## Eliot Smith

A critically acclaimed British dancer and choreographer, born in Newcastle upon Tyne, Eliot Smith FRSA is the founder and artistic director of Eliot Smith Dance (ESD).

Recently shortlisted for One Dance UK's People's Choice Award, and in 2018 and 2019 for their Dance Personality of The Year, Eliot was also a finalist in the Performing Artist of the Year category at The Journal Culture Awards 2018. Eliot was an Associate Artist at Dance City in 2017 and an Artist in Residence at The Bowes Museum in 2018.

Upon graduating from The London Contemporary Dance School, Eliot studied for a short time in New York at The Martha Graham School. He returned to MGDS in 2017 as part of his successful project 'Inviting Martha Graham back to the UK', supported by Arts Council England's Artists' International Development Fund.

Eliot has also self-published a book "Martha & Me" which traces his passion for Martha Graham. As a result, and with the imprimatur of The Martha Graham Dance Company, Eliot founded and directed 'Graham in UK in 2018', a platform for dancers and others passionate about the life and work of the great American choreographer Martha Graham – subsequently launching ESD Presents programme.



Angela Reay is a Master teacher specialising in classical ballet who enjoyed an extensive international career as a professional ballet dancer.

## Angela Reay

Angela Reay (ARAD QTLS) is a Ballet Teacher trained in Classical Ballet and Modern Dance at Northern Ballet School in Manchester. On completing her training she secured a position as a soloist ballet dancer with the Stadtischen Bühnen Muenster in Germany. She then went on to have an extensive international 12-year career as a professional dancer in the State Theatres of Germany, performing in classical and neo-classical ballets, contemporary dance works, musical theatre productions, dance theatre, operas, and operettas as well as working in television.

Angela later trained as a specialist classical ballet teacher with the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) and worked as a freelance RAD teacher for 4 years whilst teaching ballet at the Performing Arts Academy at Newcastle College.

Angela teaches ballet at Dance City delivering the Professional Ballet Classes for regional, national and international dance artists. She works on a weekly basis with independent dance artists and the dancers from the regional dance companies.

# Guests

Paul Jackson has enjoyed an extensive career in the arts and education and is an award-winning writer.



## Paul R W Jackson

Paul Jackson is trained in both music and dance, he has performed with numerous companies and has created roles for artists as varied as Rudy Perez, Gus Solomon Jr and Walter Nicks. To date he has choreographed 35 works which have been performed worldwide.

In the 80s he was a member of the education teams of London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Extemporary Dance Theatre and Ballet Rambert. As a pianist he has worked with the Nevada Symphony Orchestra and as an accompanist to most of the major figures in dance including; Martha Graham.

In 1997 Paul was awarded the Chris de Marigny Dance Writers Award, and was a regular contributor to Dance Now. He is the biographer of Oscar winning composer Sir Malcolm Arnold CBE, and the founding father of British contemporary dance Sir Robert Cohan CBE, with whom he worked closely for 15 years.

Until his recent retirement Paul was Reader in Choreography and Dance at Winchester University and was an Artistic Assessor for Dance and Music for Arts Council England.

Dr Victoria Thoms is an award-winning writer and is co-editor of *Dance in Dialogue* published with Bloomsbury.



## Dr Victoria Thoms

Before doctoral study in the United Kingdom, Victoria trained in ballet, contemporary dance, and choreography in Canada, studying with teachers such as Grant State (Ballet) and Judith Garay (Graham Technique).

Victoria was a member of the Off-Centre Performance Company at the Center for Contemporary Art at Simon Fraser University and her choreography for the company was showcased at the American Dance Festival West Conference.

Victoria is author of the award winning (CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title 2014) *Martha Graham: Gender and the haunting of a dance pioneer* (2013).

Victoria's new research projects work with literary theory and trauma studies to understand how theatre dance in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century was a form of bearing witness to the era's upheaval and violence. She has published in *Dance Research Journal*, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, and *Research in Dance Education*. She was Chair of the Society for Dance Research in the UK until 2018. Victoria is presently co-editor of the book series *Dance in Dialogue* published with Bloomsbury.



Dickson Mbi is an award-winning dance artist who is world-renowned for Popping which plays an integral part of his work.

## Dickson Mbi

Born in Cameroon, Dickson grew up in London, completed the studied dance at Lewisham College and graduated from the London Contemporary Dance School with a BA and MA in choreography.

Dickson has travelled around the world to compete and judge Popping competitions, whilst performing for various artists (Robbie Williams, Corrine Bailey-Rae, Black Eyed Peas), and has performed for Russel Maliphant Company and Boy Blue Ent. In 2017, he founded the Dickson Mbi Company with producer Farooq Chaudhry. Dickson presented his first solo work *Duende* produced by Akram Khan Company for Portraits in Otherness presented at Sadler's Wells.

Dickson choreographed BBC Young Dancer's winning piece: UNSTRUNG (performed by Max Revell) and was commissioned by Sadler's Wells to create work with Sadler's Wells resident company The Company of Elders.

Mbi received a co-commission from The Barbican, The Lowry and Dance East to create his first full length work *Enowate*, due to premiere in 2021. He was also commissioned by Hong Kong Art Festival to create a piece on local artists from Mokita premiering in 2021.

# Registration

Tickets £5 per event or  
£15 for full access to the entire Community Program!  
**Book here > [www.eliotsmithdance.com/esdpresents](http://www.eliotsmithdance.com/esdpresents)**

Experience in dance/contemporary dance or Graham Technique specifically is not required to participate in any of our community events. If you have any access requirements, please advise in advance.

This Community Program will be delivered via Zoom. Details on how to access the event(s) will be sent via email to all participants ahead of the start date. All times listed here and during the booking process are in GMT (UK - London) unless otherwise specified.

To ensure you get the best experience, you will require a dance-safe space large enough for you to move freely (home or studio).

If you have any questions about the Community Program, please email:  
**[info@eliotsmithdance.com](mailto:info@eliotsmithdance.com)**

In addition to our Community Program we are offering an exciting **Professional Intensive** as part of ESD Presents Martha Graham. Designed for professional dancers, recent graduates and aspiring professional dancers, the intensive daily training schedule includes **Martha Graham Technique™** and **Graham repertory** as taught by former members of the **Martha Graham Dance Company**. For more information > [www.eliotsmithdance.com/esdpresents](http://www.eliotsmithdance.com/esdpresents)

# Gala Performance

ESD Presents Martha Graham

Saturday 31 July 2021, 19:00 - 20:00 (BST)

This landmark virtual Gala Performance is a climactic finish to a week-long celebration of the life and legacy of the great American choreographer **Martha Graham**.

***Lamentation***, Graham's iconic signature solo, performed by Blakeley White-McGuire and presented by arrangement with Martha Graham Resources.

***I am not an Indian dancer***, Balbir Singh's latest work commissioned by ESD and inspired by two dancers, one grounded in Graham technique and the other in Kathak.

We are also proud to present two performances by the participants in the ESD Presents Martha Graham Professional Intensive: an excerpt from Graham's ***Dark Meadow Suite*** and ***Lament***, a new work created collaboratively by the dancers and Eliot Smith, ESD's Artistic Director.



# ESD PRESENTS MARTHA GRAHAM

## PHOTO CREDITS:

### Front cover:

Blakeley White-McGuire

Photo © Christopher Jones

### Inside front cover:

Martha Graham & Bertram Ross

Photo by Carl Van Vechten

### Martha Graham biography:

Martha Graham in Heriodiade

Photo by Cris Alexander

Image courtesy of Martha Graham Resources

### Inside back cover:

Eliot Smith and Abirami Eswar in Balbir Singh's I am not an Indian dancer?

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