

"Martha Graham and her Company have expanded contemporary dance's vocabulary of movement and forever altered the scope of the art form by rooting works in contemporary social, political, psychological, and sexual contexts, deepening their impact and resonance,"

— Martha Graham Dance Company

GRAHAM100

The Soraya Presents the Culmination of a Three-Season Celebration of the Martha Graham Dance Company's 100th Anniversary



GRAHAM + BERNSTEIN
Together at The Soraya for the first time!

SAT OCT
4
8PM

15 THE SORAYA

Graham100

THE MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY'S 100TH SEASON

- The World Premiere of *En Masse*, a special centennial work by Leonard Bernstein, Christopher Rountree and Hope Boykin featuring Wild Up
- The program also includes Graham's *Night Journey* (1947) and *We the People* (2024)

Saturday, Oct. 4 at 8 p.m.; Tickets Now on Sale Starting at \$59 at [TheSoraya.org](https://thesoraya.org).

(Los Angeles, CA) September 24, 2025 — The final season of Martha Graham Dance Company's (MGDC) three-year centennial celebration premieres at The Soraya with three monumental pieces: The World Premiere of ***En Masse***; Graham's 1947 ***Night Journey*** with music by William Schuman, a rarely seen work based on Oedipus; and ***We the People***, by choreographer Jamar Roberts with a folk score by Rhiannon Giddens, a 2024 creation inspired by Graham's longstanding sociopolitical critique.

En Masse, choreographed by Hope Boykin, will be a centerpiece of the Martha Graham Dance Company's 100th Season. It will be danced to new musical arrangements of excerpts from Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*, as well as another Bernstein inspired piece of music entitled "For Martha" composed by Christopher Rountree. For this new composition, Rountree used unknown musical themes written by Bernstein, found in his correspondence with Martha Graham in the 1980s. The musical selections were reviewed and approved by the Leonard Bernstein Organization, making official this first ever posthumous partnership between two of the 20th Century's greatest artists. Rountree's ensemble Wild Up will perform the new score.

The pairing of Wild Up and MGDC marks The Soraya's continuing commitment to Graham's collaborations with composers.

GRAHAM100, an event selected as one of the *Los Angeles Times*' "10 can't-miss dance shows" this fall, is one of five [Soraya 15th Anniversary](#) events specially produced to celebrate The Soraya's signature work in Los Angeles.

For story development and interview requests, please contact:

- [Marie Estrada](#), Soraya Marketing & Communications Specialist
- [Gary Murphy](#), PR Consultant
- [Click here for your press kit](#), complete with photos, and press releases.

About GRAHAM100 at The Soraya

The Martha Graham Dance Company's three-year 100th anniversary celebration is designed to include three major commissions from some of today's top choreographers. These new works are presented alongside some of Martha Graham's most important and iconic masterworks. Jamar Roberts was commissioned for the 2023-24 season, and the choreographic duo Baye & Asa created a new work for the company in the 2024-25 season. While considering what would be notable and celebratory for the Company's 100th season, Artistic Director **Janet Eilber** turned to the Company's longtime collaborators **Thor Steingraber**, Executive & Artistic Director of The Soraya in Northridge, CA, and **Christopher Rountree**.

"Thor, Christopher, and I were keen to find music by Bernstein," Eilber said. "Garth Sunderland at the Leonard Bernstein Office researched a variety of possibilities for music and when the discovery of the Graham/Bernstein collaboration surfaced, we decided on the idea of reigniting a never-completed collaboration between Graham and Bernstein. These two giants of the 20th-century began working

together to create a new work based on Graham's lost dance from 1939, *American Document*. For unknown reasons, the collaboration was never completed, and Graham used an existing score by John Corigliano. Graham's centennial seemed like the perfect time to bring this posthumous/new collaboration together."

Of this world premiere event, Soraya Executive and Artistic Director Thor Steingraber said, "With this year's centennial performance, The Soraya's collaboration with the Martha Graham Dance Company over the last 10 years includes four world premieres as well as four new musical scores, each commissioned by The Soraya. Martha Graham herself played such a pivotal role in 20th-Century music that it only seemed fitting to build upon that tradition by facilitating the partnership between the Graham company, composer/conductor Christopher Rountree, and his ensemble Wild Up. Likewise, we have revived some of the original Graham commissioned compositions and recorded them for future touring. To culminate this partnership with a Bernstein/Graham posthumous pairing is an honor and an extraordinary creative undertaking."

To learn more about *En Masse*, please listen to Hope Boykin in conversation with The Soraya's Executive and Artistic Director Thor Steingraber [here](#).

About the Program:

***En Masse* by Hope Boykin (2025)**

Music by Leonard Bernstein and Christopher Rountree

Journalists, to learn more about the connection between Graham and Bernstein, [click here](#).

***Night Journey* by Martha Graham (1947)**

Music by William Schuman

Set by Isamu Noguchi

Costumes by Martha Graham

One of Graham's greatest masterworks. A chilling reinvention of the tragedy of Oedipus told through the eyes of his mother and wife, Jocasta.

***We the People* by Jamar Roberts (2024)**

Music by Rhiannon Giddens

Arranged by Gabe Witcher

Costume Design by Karen Young

Lighting Design by Yi-Chung Chen

This dance of 21st Century Americana references and reverberates with our history. It's new score by Rhiannon Giddens and arranged by Gabe Witcher, offers the historic sound of American folk music. The work is equal parts protest and lament, speculating on the ways in which America does not always live up to its promise. *We the People* homes to serve as a reminder that the power for collective change belongs to the people.

About the Martha Graham Dance Company

Martha Graham has had a deep and lasting impact on American art and culture. She single-handedly defined contemporary dance as a uniquely American art form, which the nation has in turn shared with the world. Crossing artistic boundaries, she collaborated with and commissioned work from the leading visual artists, musicians, and designers of her day, including sculptor Isamu Noguchi and composers Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and Gian Carlo Menotti.

Graham's groundbreaking style grew from her experimentation with the elemental movements of contraction and release. By focusing on the basic activities of the human form, she enlivened the body with raw, electric emotion. The sharp, angular, direct movements of her technique were a dramatic departure from the predominant style of the time.

Graham influenced generations of choreographers that included Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, and Twyla Tharp, altering the scope of dance. Classical ballet dancers Margot Fonteyn, Rudolf Nureyev, and Mikhail Baryshnikov sought her out to broaden their artistry. Artists of all genres were eager to study and work with Graham—she taught actors including Bette Davis, Kirk Douglas, Madonna, Liza Minnelli, Gregory Peck, Tony Randall, Eli Wallach, Anne Jackson, and Joanne Woodward to utilize their bodies as expressive instruments.

The Martha Graham Dance Company has been a leader in the evolving art form of modern dance since its founding in 1926. It is both the oldest dance company in the United States and the oldest integrated dance company.

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.

The current company dancers hail from around the world and, while grounded in their Graham core training, can also slip into the style of contemporary choreographers like a second skin, bringing technical brilliance and artistic nuance to all they do—from brand-new works to Graham classics and those from early pioneers such as Isadora Duncan, Jane Dudley, Anna Sokolow, and Mary Wigman.

"Some of the most skilled and powerful dancers you can ever hope to see," according to the *Washington Post* last year. "One of the great companies of the world," says *The New York Times*, while *Los Angeles Times* notes, "They seem able to do anything, and to make it look easy as well as poetic." [Click here](#) to learn more about the company.

About Hope Boykin

Hope Boykin, a two-time "Bessie Award" winner from Durham, NC, is a distinguished educator, creator, mover, and motivator. Retiring in 2020 from a two-decade tenure with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, she has crafted works for numerous companies, including the American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, Ballet Black of London, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Hubbard

Street Dance Chicago, Paul Taylor Dance Company, Philadanco, The Philadelphia Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and HopeBoykinDance.

As a creator and director, Hope released “Beauty Size & Color,” a short film earning her a NY Emmy nomination. In 2021, she developed “An Evening of Hope” at 92nd Street Y, followed by performances at Chelsea Factory and the Guggenheim Museum Works & Process with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. She adapted Jacqueline Woodson’s children’s book, “The Other Side,” at the Kennedy Center Family Theater and choreographed the 50th Anniversary of Leonard Bernstein’s MASS at the Kennedy Center in 2022. Featured on Dance Magazine’s October 2023 cover, her first evening-length work, “States Of Hope,” ran for a week at The Joyce Theater to great acclaim.

Hope founded HBArts Collective, serves as Artist-In-Residence at USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance, is an Adjunct Professor at Howard University, Artistic Advisor for Dance Education at the Kennedy Center, and Artistic Lead for the Kennedy Center Dance Lab. She firmly believes, there are no limits.

About Chris Rountree

Christopher Rountree is a three-time Grammy Nominated conductor, composer, curator, band leader, and educator. He is the Founder and Artistic Director of the orchestral collective Wild Up, Music Director of Long Beach Opera, co-founder of the Los Angeles Conducting Co-op, and curator of numerous festivals including *FLUXUS* with the LA Phil and Getty Research Institute, *Silence at Descanso Gardens*, *To The Fullest: The Music of Arthur Russell and Julius Eastman* with the LA Phil and REDCAT, *Democracy Sessions* during the 2024 election cycle at MOCA, and Wild Up’s travelling festival of drone music in warehouses and natural public spaces called *Darkness Sounding*.

Rountree has become regarded as one of the most iconoclastic conductors and programmers in classical music, his inimitable style leading to collaborations with: Björk, John Adams, Yoko Ono, David Lang, Scott Walker, La Monte Young, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Alison Knowles, Ragnar Kjartansson, Dev Hynes, Sigourney Weaver, Tyshawn Sorey, Sarah Davachi, Julia Holter, Ryoji Ikeda, John Luther Adams, Allora and Calzadilla, Raven Chacon, and many of the planet’s greatest orchestras and ensembles including the National, San Francisco, Houston, Cincinnati, New Jersey, and Chicago Symphonies, the LA Philharmonic, Roomful of Teeth, Orchestre de Paris, the Washington National, Los Angeles, Omaha, San Diego, Detroit, and Atlanta Operas, and the Martha Graham Dance Company who tours the world with his revival of Graham’s solo *Immediate Tragedy*.

He has presented compositions and concerts at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Palais Garnier, Mile High Stadium, The Metropolitan Museum, Kennedy Center, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Hammer, The Getty, LACMA, The National Gallery, behind NPR’s Tiny Desk, in a grove of old California oak trees, on a basketball court, in a museum bathroom, and at Lincoln Center on the New York Philharmonic’s Biennale.

About the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for The Performing Arts (The Soraya) is an award-winning, state-of-the-art 1,700-seat theatre that opened in 2011 as the Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC). Through a transformative gift by Younes and Soraya Nazarian, the venue was renamed The Soraya in 2017.

The Soraya is located on the campus of California State University Northridge, the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley. Executive and Artistic Director Thor Steingraber, in his 12th year leading the organization, sums up what makes The Soraya a central piece of Los Angeles arts and culture. "At The Soraya, we hold a high standard of excellence for every performance from a vast array of artistic disciplines, and we hold steadfast to our commitment to the value and impact of the performing arts in community-building, for the Valley's 1.8 million residents and beyond."

The Soraya's 2025-26 Season is a journey through the expansive sounds of orchestras, the freestyle vibes of jazz, the innovations of dance luminaries, and a vast array of global voices. The Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to excelling, innovating, and amplifying access for Valley residents, students, and arts lovers across Southern California.

What: **GRAHAM100**
Tickets: \$59-\$117

En Masse by Hope Boykin
Music by Leonard Bernstein and Christopher Rountree

Night Journey by Martha Graham
Music by William Schuman

We the People by Jamar Roberts
Music by Rhiannon Giddens

Where: The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

Website: www.TheSoraya.org

Tickets Office: 818-677-3000

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