

ARTS & CULTURE

Martha Graham Company visits the Annenberg and a dancer passes on the dancer's legacy to Philly students

Anne Souder is part of the Martha Graham crew visiting Philadelphia this weekend. She is also passing down Graham's legacy to her students at the Metropolitan Ballet Academy in Jenkintown.

by [Ellen Dunkel](#)

Updated Feb 8, 2023

When the Martha Graham Dance Company comes to the Annenberg Center this weekend, it will be bringing two Philadelphia premieres, the classic *Appalachian Spring*, and a dancer who some local students already know.

Anne Souder, a soloist with the company, has been teaching summers at the Metropolitan Ballet Academy in Jenkintown for about seven years. She is from Tennessee, but her father is from Pottstown and two siblings live in Philadelphia, so time at the Metropolitan also means time to visit with family.

CAVE choreographed by Hofesh Shechter in 2022, is one of the works premiering this weekend.

"I don't want to give too much away on that one," Souder said. "It's a piece that invites participation from the audience...It's a little wild but it's a fun piece to perform."

The other premiere is a re-creation of *Canticle For Innocent Comedians*, which Graham choreographed in 1952. One section, *Moon*, survived, and choreographers were tasked with re-creating the rest.



Anne Souder in Martha Graham's "Ekstasis." The Martha Graham Dance Company will be performing at the Annenberg Center this weekend.

HIBBARD NASH



Martha Graham dancer Anne Souder.
KAH POON

Souder dances the Water duet, which was re-created by Juliano Nunes, resident choreographer at Philadelphia Ballet. Sonya Tayeh, who created inventive pieces for *So You Think You Can Dance*, reimagined the Sun solo, the closing dance, and all the interludes.

Former BalletX dancer Richard Villaverde dances in the Earth section, which Souder also dances.

For Metropolitan, Souder will be setting Graham's 1935 work, *Panorama*, for 30-35 dancers all dressed in red. "It's a pretty rare thing," she said. "Around the United States, I would say they're going to be one of eight places that are getting licensed Graham works for the year."

"In the past couple of years, I've incorporated repertoire into the summer Intensive programming and curriculum," she said. "And the students always take so well to biting into the Graham work."

The Metropolitan students, along with their artistic director and founder Lisa Collins Vidnovic, will go see Souder perform with the company at the Annenberg, warming up for their own work.

"I love exposing our students to as many styles and creative voices as possible," said Vidnovic, who knows ballet students in Philadelphia have many excellent schools to choose from. "That's why we strive to bring in our many master teachers and choreographers at Met."

Souder came to this technique via a Graham dancer who taught a master class in the small ballet school in Maryville, Tenn. Now she is the that dancer who might inspire a student to become a Graham dancer.

"Exactly," she said. "I hope so."

Martha Graham Dance Company. 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 3680 Walnut St. \$29-\$89. 215-898-3900 or pennlivearts.org

Metropolitan Ballet Company's Variations/Collaborations program, including Martha Graham's *Panorama*. 7 p.m. April 1, Kurtz Center, William Penn Charter School, 3000 West School House Lane. \$25. metballet.ticketleap.com

Published Feb. 8, 2023



Anne Souder in Martha Graham's "Immediate Tragedy".
MELISSA SHERWOOD