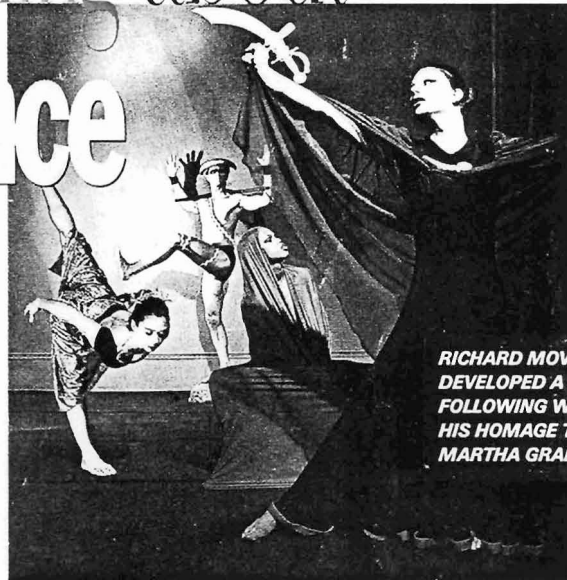


VOGUE

DEC

people are talking about

dance



RICHARD MOVE HAS DEVELOPED A CULT FOLLOWING WITH HIS HOMAGE TO MARTHA GRAHAM.

and then, 'I want to be her' or anything," recalls Move, 30, reaching down to pet Kathy, his pit bull. "That would be a little too weird, even for me." He rolls his neck, in the way that friends of the dance often do, and turns his cheek to the sun, sipping Merlot in profile. "But I began to feel more and more possessed by her brilliance and vision and oracular qualities. . . ."

By the time he was 28 (and six feet four inches tall), Move could deny Martha no longer. His hilarious, technically perfect impersonation, *Martha @ Mother*, named for the baroque New York modern nightclub that hosts it, has become a hot ticket. Here you will see—

martha after dark

Whenever she was asked to assess her talent, Martha Graham would scoff. Ha! You can have talent and desire and all the right slippers, Graham would insist, "but without a technique . . . you can go out and fall flat on your face."

Graham, of course, never fell—unless she wanted to. Having inspired Baryshnikov, Nureyev, Hawkins, Cunningham, and Taylor, she performed well into her seventies—a deranged, barely five-foot-tall Hecuba, for instance—and was still creating dances at the time of her death, at the age of 95, in 1991. Graham routinely described herself as a goddess flouting mortality, and according to the dancer/performance artist/night creature Richard Move, she is a spirit "begging to be channeled." For years, he resisted the calling. It began, Move says, when he was sixteen—with his first class in Graham technique, where he was taught to breathe from his pelvis. "It wasn't like I just said right there

Francesco Clemente or someone who can somehow snag one of the 60 seats—outrageous abbreviations of Graham's greatest works, often performed by current and former Graham-company members. The monthly series works both as loving homage and as a raucous, rather liberating introduction to the mysteries of modern dance. It belongs, of course, to the newly minted theatrical genre Night of the Living Diva, wherein the Callases and Vreelands and Hellmans and Dinah Washingtons hold forth on this and that, making us love them and hate them and quote them. His contribution is refreshingly technical, satirizing and adoring Martha with the actual tools of her art. "We start from an exacting factual base," Move confides. "That's the only way we can sort of get away with the parody, with the female-impersonation thing." He looks around the café to see who might be listening. "You see, Martha was quite nervous about, um, female impersonators." And, after all, you don't mess with Martha.—BOB ICKES *photo* ▶ 158