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with the company. He admired her disciplinary approach to dance and the fact that Graham "was very poetic even in her speech, her images."

"The ensemble started out as an outreach group and evolved since then," said Topping, artistic director of the ensemble since 1996. "The ensemble comes first to the community, to introduce

them to Martha Graham, who was a pioneer in modern American dance. For Martha Graham, dance class was not for exercise but to train the mind, body and spirit. The entire technique class is choreographed from beginning to end to prepare dancers for the stage."

Today, Topping was the disciplinarian as he led dancers

through a series of bouncing exercises. From the third row of seats, the audience could see every muscle of the dancers' bodies contracting and releasing. Silence prevailed throughout most of the program as students sat in awe of the movement; the dancers were able to perform.

"All movement in Graham is initiated from the hips. One of Graham's most inspiring images was the Pieta," Topping told the students as the dancers arched and stretched their bodies in imitation of Christ coming down from the cross.

"Martha Graham also developed a series of falls. There's a death and a resurrection to each fall. Martha Graham believed that out of emotion came form."

A dancer's life

After changing into street clothes, Martha Graham dancers Sebastian Sabatier-Curial and Penny Diamantopoulou took a minute to cool down after the performance.

The power of a Martha Graham performance in prompted Sabatier-Curial to leave a career as musician/singer/actor in France to study dance in America. He became a member of the ensemble in January 1997.

"The first time I saw the

Martha Graham technique I said this is more than dancing," said Sabatier-Curial. "It is living."

Sabatier-Curial and the rest of the ensemble spend much of the year on the road. The metro Detroit residency is lengthy compared to other cities. The dancers have given presentations at two schools a day for the last two weeks in the outreach program sponsored by Music Hall and Hudson's Project Imagine.

"It's physically easier," said Sabatier-Curial. "We're leaning toward longer residencies rather than traveling one day and performing the next then moving on to the next city."

"It's a huge responsibility to expose people to modern dance," said Diamantopoulou. "We feel we're contributing. You can give the audience something they might not otherwise had. If we can touch just one person."

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and the Minotaur as its story. The company also will perform *But Not For Me*, a Broadway-style dance set to music by George Gershwin.

While Graham is considered one of the founders of modern dance, her effect on physical movement in performance is more pervasive. She helped set the groundwork for Broadway-style dance and, in time, impacted movement in popular culture.

"She revolutionized not just dance but theatrical movement," says Talbot. "She introduced movements that you see everywhere, even in exercise - yoga or Pilates - for example."

Beyond art and present-day culture is her ability to stimulate the senses and provoke the imagination.

Graham's dancers aren't alone on the stage; they're part of a larger composition that uses costume, set design, lighting, music and movement to create vital drama.

"A smorgasbord for the senses" is how Talbot describes Graham's choreography. "It's very athletic. It is very theatrical."

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and excitement.

"We all had done ballet and tap in lessons at dance studios for years," said Rosahwanda Derrick a sophomore. "This exposed us to a dance we'd never seen. I could feel the emotion by the way they expressed themselves."

Victoria Healy-Koester is making sure students all over the state have the opportunity to see the Martha Graham Dancers. They will feature 10-11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 17 on a Wayne RESA program broadcast live on the educational access channel.

This is first year North Farmington High School has offered a dance program, and Poli isn't wasting any time introducing her students to contemporary dance. A master class with a member of the Detroit Dance Collective followed the Martha

Graham program.

"As we build the dance program, students will have lots of studio experience so at least everybody gets a chance to take a dance class," she said. "We also plan to have students perform in the community, and also hope to take the group to elementary and middle schools to expose students to dance. We want to put Farmington on the map in terms of dance education."

Dance programs will be introduced at Farmington High School and Harrison High School over the next few years. Farmington Public Schools music coordinator Paul Barber and North Farmington principal Ron Jones believe dance is a necessary component of a strong arts program.

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opportunity for students to grow, I'd like to think we're enriching the arts."

The Barbers started their own children in musical training early just as their parents had done. Paul first picked up trombone, and Fern clarinet, in the fourth grade. Nurtured by Harold Arnold, his teacher at Redford High School, Paul went on to study music at the University of Michigan where he played in the Rose Bowl with the marching band. He recently received the administrator of the year award for Michigan from the American String Teachers Association in conjunction with the National School Orchestra Association.

Fern took a few years off from teaching after the births of

daughter Julie and son Randy but went back to teaching and is now a music instructor at Walnut Creek Middle School in the Walled Lake Public School District. Julie is a freshman at the University of Michigan and plays trombone in the orchestra. Randy earned a degree in music education at Central Michigan University. He is currently working with the brass sections at Orchard Lake Middle School, and helping band director Mark Phillips at Harrison High School in Farmington. "Through brain research," said Paul, "we're finding that people coming out of the arts are happier and smarter."

Have an interesting idea for a story? Call arts reporter Linda Ann Chomita at (313) 953-2145.

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to improvise."

Plymouth Symphony conductor Nan Waahburn is hoping the experience of hearing the orchestra play jazz will instill a love for the American art form in the audience at Our Lady of Good Counsel.

"The concert is a crossover or fusion, blending the styles of classical and jazz," said Wash-

burn. "For an orchestra, it's the opportunity to work on rhythm in a big way. For the audience hearing this program, they realize jazz is such a big part of American music. Just about any style of music has elements of jazz."

The program ends "upbeat" with Ellington's "It Don't Mean a Thing."



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STATE OF MICHIGAN, IN THE PROBATE COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF OAKLAND.

CLAIMS NOTICE

INDEPENDENT PROBATE

In the estate of the Estate of Edward A. Fran, Decedent, E. 4399 03 0239.

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Your interest in the estate may be harmed or affected by the following: The decedent, whose last known address was 8338 York Line, Royal Oak, MI 48073 died June 1, 1998. An instrument dated August 19, 1993 has been admitted as the will of the decedent. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to the independent personal representative, Lydia A. Fran, 3550 York Line, Royal Oak, MI 48073, or to both the independent personal representative and the Oakland County Probate Court, Pontiac, Michigan 48341, within 4 months of the date of publication of this notice.

Notice is further given that the estate will be hereafter assigned and distributed to the persons named herein.

Attorney for Petitioner: **JAMES P. DEAN**, 601 W. Big Beaver Road, Suite 600 Troy, MI 48064 (248) 357-1100

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