

The Many-Splendored Sound of Los Angeles



An opening-night audience in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion—"Los Angeles's glamorous new Music Center is now in full operation."

—Julian Wasser.

By RAYMOND KENDALL

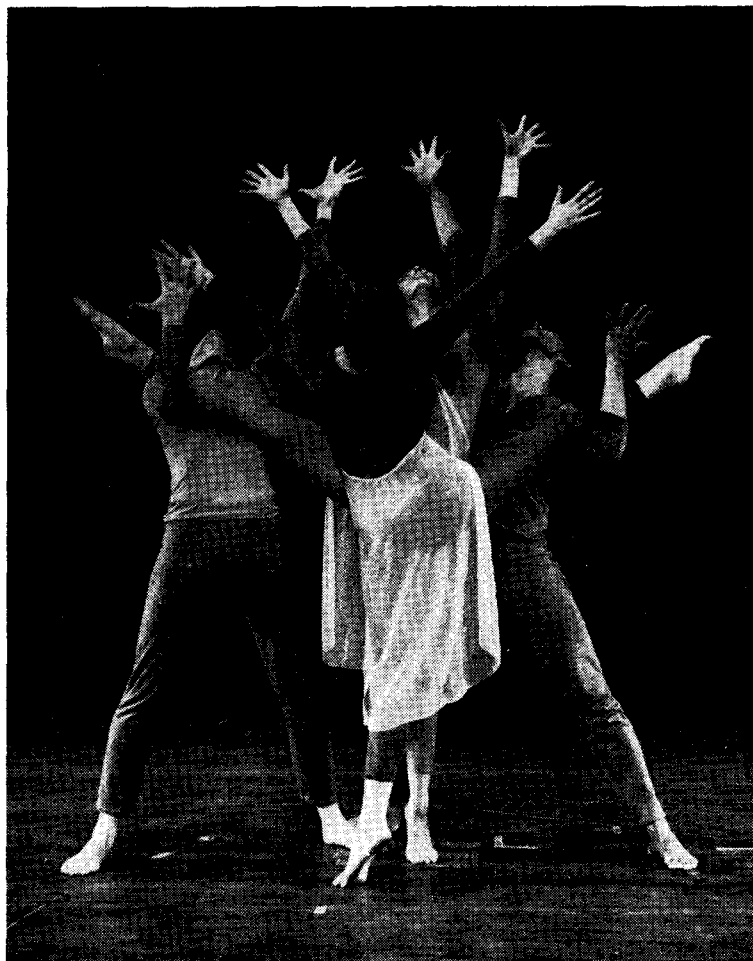
IN MARCH of 1853, just three years after Congress approved statehood for California, a traveling Hungarian violinist, Miska Hauser, wrote to his brother in Vienna: "The city (San Francisco) is full of concertizing artists and all of the larger halls have long since been engaged, so I was forced to take a small theater for my first concert."

In 1865, Los Angeles had no daily newspaper, no railroad to other centers of civilization, no Protestant church, no theater or concert hall. In fact, until the Santa Fe Railroad laid its tracks to Los Angeles in 1885, the city was still a small, sleepy town clustered around the Plaza Church. With the railroad came Emma Albert's English Opera Company, bringing a repertoire including *Mignon* and *Lucia*, and within ten years Los Angeles had four concert halls, an oratorio society, and an organ factory! Between 1880 and 1891, seven colleges and universities came into being in Southern California. USC awarded its first bachelor of music degree in 1885. The state normal school (later UCLA) had its first music instructor by 1883, while Occidental College, Pomona, La Verne, Whittier, and Throop University (now Caltech) all gave some emphasis to music. Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and the Arts opened its doors in 1884.

In the years since World War II, cultural institutions throughout the United States have burgeoned in size and influence. Nowhere has the growth been so dramatic as in California, even though the desire to inaugurate symphony orchestras and opera companies has often outdistanced a firm financial footing. Only San Francisco and Los Angeles have "major" symphony orchestras—if by the latter is meant the capacity to offer thirty-four to forty-five weeks of symphony concerts per year. San Francisco's longer musical tradition assured its orchestra a more consistent audience and a finer habitat (the War Memorial Opera House, which it shares with the *(Continued on page 102)*

Raymond Kendall is dean of the University of Southern California's School of Music and is as well known for critical writings for several Los Angeles newspapers.

THE ORANGE GROVE GAVOTTE



—Helen Miljakovich.

By WALTER TERRY

“JUST a minute while I put on the war paint and then I’ll dance for you. Get your camera ready. You know, I never could resist cameras.” For almost all of her ninety years, the First Lady of American Dance, Ruth St. Denis, has not resisted cameras, be they held by a master photographer or by a starry-eyed teen-age fan, nor has she ever resisted the call of the public.

Today, in her Hollywood studio, “Miss Ruth,” as she is known to generations of dancers around the world, is busy planning a heavy schedule for the next decade of her life. Dancing, choreographing,

and making films of her fabulous career are but a part of her many projects. But, although she is not given to nostalgia, she will occasionally refer to a major moment in the past. Holding out her expressive hands, she said, “Denishawn was born as a little pamphlet this size.”

Denishawn was born in California—in Los Angeles. The year was 1915, and the money which students paid for the privilege of studying with the world-famous Ruth St. Denis and her new partner and husband, Ted Shawn, was deposited in a cigar box. Denishawn grew from such modest beginnings into a dance school which produced some of the greatest dance figures of our age—Martha Gra-

ham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman among them—and which supplied Denishawn teachers for dance schools from Los Angeles to Boston.

Denishawn was also a company which, until the early 1930s, was the nation’s foremost dance troupe. The creed for both school and company was stated by Shawn in 1915: “The art of the dance is too big to be encompassed by any one system, school, or style. On the contrary, the dance includes every way that men of all races in every period of the world’s history have moved rhythmically to express themselves.”

The creed became outmoded; Graham, Humphrey, Weidman, and a whole