Denishawn Encyclopedia Article

Denishawn

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In 1915, dancers Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn founded a pioneering company and training school in Los Angeles that became known as Denishawn. The training they provided for their students—who also served as company members—was highly disciplined and extremely diverse in its cultural and stylistic range. Denishawn toured worldwide and was the first dance company to tour extensively in America, bringing the concept of serious dance and an appreciation of unknown cultures to American audiences. Denishawn students Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman went on to become legendary dancer-choreographers. Musical director Louis Horst led the way in the composition of music for dance, while Pauline Lawrence became a legendary accompanist, costume designer, and dance administrator. These students instructed and inspired succeeding generations, and in this way, the "family tree" of Denishawn influenced virtually every American dancer and choreographer in the twentieth century.

Further Reading:

The Drama of Denishawn Dance. Middletown, Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 1979.

Sherman, Jane. *Denishawn, The Enduring Influence.* Boston, Massachusetts, Twayne Publishers, 1983.