**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP CONTINUES 40th ANNIVERSARY DIGITAL SEASON WITH**

**NEW ARCHIVAL VIDEO COLLECTION AND “L’ALLEGRO WEEK”**

* ***Dancing to Bach*, an archival collection of three Mark Morris works,now available in MMDG’s Dance On! Video Vault**
* **Online registration for “L’Allegro Week,” a weeklong celebration of Mark Morris’s *L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato,* opens Tuesday, April 6, 2021**

**BROOKLYN, NY** – The Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG) continues its 40th Anniversary Digital Season with the introduction of *Dancing to Bach* to its Dance On! Video Vaultand online registration for “L’Allegro Week” – a weeklong celebration of Morris’s *L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* – featuring online and in-person events, April 19-25, 2021.

**About *Dancing to Bach***

*Dancing to Bach* is the last Video Vault collection of the 40th Anniversary Digital Season. It is dedicated to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), one of the most celebrated Baroque-era composers and one of Morris’ favorites. Morris has choreographed seven works to music by Bach, three of which are featured in this collection. The first piece Morris created to Bach was *Marble Halls* (1985), set to *Concerto for Two Harpsichords in C minor*. The other two works Morris has selected are *Jesu, Meine Freude* (1993), performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Next Wave Festival in 1995, and *Italian Concerto* (2007), at SUNY Purchase in 2007.

**Marble Halls** (1985)

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach – Concerto for 2 Harpsichords in C minor, BWV 1060

Premiere: March 14, 1985 with Batsheva Dance Company in Tel Aviv, Israel

Of the six works that Morris choreographed in 1985, Marble Halls is one of three that were set to a baroque music score – along with *Handel Choruses* (set to Handel’s Messiah and Hercules choruses) and *One Charming Night* (set to four songs by Henry Purcell). This dance was originally choreographed for the Batsheva Dance Company based in Tel Aviv. Morris staged it on his own company and premiered it at their Spring 1985 engagement at On the Boards in Seattle. While the work is sometimes performed to the arrangement for oboe and violin, this Video Vault performance, from Dance Theater Workshop in December 1985, is danced to a recording with two harpsichords, Morris’ preferred version. The title “Marble Halls” is in reference to an aria from the mid-19th century opera “The Bohemian Girl,” called “I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls.”

**Jesu, Meine Freude** (1993)

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach – Jesu, meine Freude, BWV 227

Premiere: June 8, 1993 at Dance Umbrella Boston

As Morris discusses in his introduction to this piece on Video Vault, *Jesu, Meine Freude* was created while the company was in residence at Dance Umbrella in Boston – one of several residencies the company has had with Dance Umbrella in the 90s. The Dance Group had been working with Emmanuel Music, a Boston-based organization (founded by conductor Craig Smith in 1970) dedicated to performing the complete cycle of sacred cantatas by Bach, of which there are more than 200. The premiere of *Jesu, Meine Freude* at the Emerson Majestic Theatre featured singers and musicians from Emmanuel Music, conducted by Maestro Smith. This work was last performed in 2014 at the Dresden Music Festival, with Morris conducting the Dresdner Kammerchor.

**Italian Concerto** (2007)

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach – Italian Concerto in F Major, BWV 971 (1735) I. Allegro II. Andante III. Presto

Premiere: January 17, 2007 at the James and Martha Duffy Performance Space, Mark Morris Dance Center (Brooklyn, NY)

The dance and score, written for solo piano, comprises three movements – Allegro, Andante, and Presto – with two dancers performing the first and third movements, and a soloist dancing the second movement. Morris performed that solo for the premiere performance run of the work; the only program for which he performed the piece. Of the 38 times that *Italian Concerto* has been performed since 2007, 13 of those performances have taken place outside of the United States, including Cambodia (during the Dance Group’s tour and residency in Southeast Asia with DanceMotion USA), Bermuda, Switzerland, and Italy.

**WHAT**: **Dance On! Video Vault: Curated Collections from the Mark Morris Dance Group Archive,** monthlyon-demand archival collections of Mark Morris’ lesser-known works, presents *Dancing to Bach*

**WHEN**: through May 13, 2021

**WHERE**: <https://markmorrisdancegroup.org/dance-on-video-vault/>

**About *L’Allegro Week***

*L’Allegro* Week includes a screening of *L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* filmed at the Teatro Real in Madrid in July 2014. The piece is perhaps Morris’s most beloved work, set to Handel’s oratorio of the same name. It was Morris’s premiere work as Director of Dance at Belgium’s Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie. In addition to week-long, on-demand access to the film, the week will include 30-minute on-demand talks with conductor Jane Glover, set designer Adrianne Lobel, and former company dancers June Omura, Joe Bowie, Lauren Grant, and Tina Fehlandt ― who all danced in *L’Allegro*.

*L'Allegro Week* will also feature classes for all levels to learn excerpts from the work, including a “Repertory Workshop” for beginner and intermediate adult students on Tuesday April 20 from 6-7:30 PM EDT, a family-oriented “Dance with MMDG” class on Saturday, April 24 from 1-2 PM EDT, and a Dance for PD® “Explore the Repertory” class on Monday, April 19 at 11:00 AM EDT, for anyone with mobility concerns. Dance for PD (a program of MMDG) will also host a livestream of the *L’Allegro Movement Project* – a short documentary about the transformative power of dance and music for people with Parkinson’s – and the world premiere of *The Mountains Project*, which features more than 75 people living with Parkinson’s dancing together in a virtual adapted staging of a section of *L’Allegro* on Sunday, April 25 at 2 PM EDT.

All *L’Allegro Week* events are free with a suggested donation of $12 per activity. Advance registration is required and available at [www.mmdg.org.](https://markmorrisdancegroup.org/lallegro-week/)

**WHAT**: **L’Allegro Week**

**WHEN**: April 19-25, 2021

**WHERE**: <https://markmorrisdancegroup.org/lallegro-week/>

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**About Mark Morris**

Mark Morris has been hailed as “the most successful and influential choreographer alive, and indisputably the most musical” (*New York Times*). In addition to creating over 150 works for the Mark Morris Dance Group, he conducts orchestras, directs opera, and choreographs for ballet companies worldwide. Morris’ work is acclaimed for its ingenuity, musicality, wit, and humanity. Named a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation in 1991, he has received eleven honorary doctorates to date, and a multitude of awards, including the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, the Benjamin Franklin Laureate Prize for Creativity, the Cal Performances Award of Distinction in the Performing Arts, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s Gift of Music Award, and the 2016 Doris Duke Artist Award. Morris’ memoir, *Out Loud,* co-written with Wesley Stace, was published by Penguin Press in October 2019.

**About the Mark Morris Dance Group and the MMDG Music Ensemble**

Founded in New York City in 1980 by artistic director and choreographer Mark Morris, hailed by *The New York Times* as “the most successful and influential choreographer alive, and indisputably the most musical,” the Mark Morris Dance Group has been called “the preeminent modern dance organization of our time” (Yo-Yo Ma). Its members have received the “highest praise for their technical aplomb, their musicality, and their sheer human authenticity.” (*Bloomberg News*). Live music and community engagement are vital components of the Mark Morris Dance Group, which has toured with its own musicians, the MMDG Music Ensemble, since 1996. The Mark Morris Dance Center, opened in Brooklyn in 2001, is the home of the Dance Group and provides educational opportunities in dance and music to people of all ages and abilities.

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