



## PRESS KIT

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## MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

Founded in New York City in 1980, the internationally-renowned **Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG)** has been called “the preeminent modern dance organization of our time” (Yo-Yo Ma), its members receiving “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 Dance Group, which has toured with its own musicians, the MMDG Music Ensemble, since 1996.

Through Access/MMDG programming, the Dance Group provides educational opportunities in dance and music to people of all ages and abilities while on tour around the world and at home at the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn, New York.

## MMDG MUSIC ENSEMBLE

The **MMDG Music Ensemble**, formed in 1996, is integral to the Dance Group. “*With the dancers come the musicians...and what a difference it makes*” (*Classical Voice of North Carolina*). The Ensemble’s repertoire ranges from 17th century works by John Wilson and Henry Purcell to more recent scores by Lou Harrison and Henry Cowell. The musicians also participate in Access/MMDG – the Dance Group’s educational and community programming at home and on tour.



Photo by: Erin Patrice O'Brien

## MISSION

The mission of the Mark Morris Dance Group is to develop, promote, and sustain dance, music, and opera productions by Mark Morris and to serve as a cultural resource to engage and enrich the community.



Photo by: Christopher Duggan

## VALUES

<p><b>Community</b></p> <p>We build meaningful and sustainable relationships by engaging our community through dynamic programming on the stage, at our Dance Center, and throughout the world. We listen, respond, and collaborate as active members of our diverse community and foster a sense of belonging. We welcome all.</p>	<p><b>Creativity (cultivate creativity)</b></p> <p>Inspired by Mark Morris' vision, we create an environment in which imagination and inventiveness can grow and flourish in the work that we do, partnerships we build, and the art we present. By welcoming individuals for whom they are, we drive innovation, encourage risk-taking, and find solutions collaboratively.</p>
<p><b>Access (advance access)</b></p> <p>Dedicated to equity, diversity, and inclusion, we strive to remove barriers that prevent historically excluded populations from working, learning, or dancing with us. We create equitable and inclusive music and dance experiences for all.</p>	<p><b>Excellence (pursue excellence)</b></p> <p>We strive to excel in all areas of our work, offering outstanding experiences through inspiring programming and continuous learning. We recognize that excellence is dynamic. Enriched by our successes as well as our mistakes, we work toward our goals with dedication, passion, and a spirit of fun.</p>



## FAST FACTS

- 1980: MMDG was founded.
- 1996: MMDG Music Ensemble was established.
- Mark Morris has created over 150 works for the Dance Group.
- The company has performed around the world including, but not limited to, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Israel, and China.
- 2001: The Mark Morris Dance Center opened.
- The Dance Center is home to 19 company members, 9 studios, over 55 weekly open adult dance classes, and numerous community outreach and Dance for PD® programs.
- The wide-range of Dance Center classes in various styles and at any level is a testament to one of Mark Morris' guiding principles, "Dance is for anybody."
- Mark Morris is known for his exceptional musicality. His devotion to music can be found in rehearsals, Dance Center classes, and performances through live musical accompaniment.



Photo by: Christopher Duggan

## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR - MARK MORRIS



**Mark Morris** has been praised as the “most successful and influential choreographer alive and indisputably the most musical” (*New York Times*). Since founding MMDG in 1980, Morris has created over 150 works for the company, many of which are widely considered masterpieces. Morris has established himself as someone who “easily ranks among the top five living American choreographers... and has already carved a major place for himself in the history of modern dance” (*The Denver Post*).

Renowned as an intensely musical choreographer, Morris is undeviating in his devotion to music. The only choreographer to be named artistic director of the Ojai Music Festival (2013), he has conducted performances for MMDG since 2006. Additionally, he has worked extensively in opera; directing and choreographing at the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera as well as Covent Garden and many others. Morris is also an acclaimed ballet choreographer. His works have been commissioned and performed by San Francisco Ballet, the Pacific Northwest Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre, to name a few.

He is named Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation, and has received eleven honorary doctorates to date. In recent years, he has received the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement (2007), the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society (2010), the Benjamin Franklin Laureate Prize for Creativity (2012), the Cal Performances Award of Distinction in the Performing Arts (2013), the Orchestra of St. Luke’s Gift of Music Award (2014), and the Doris Duke Artists Award (2016).

Located in Brooklyn, New York, Morris continues to create new works from the Mark Morris Dance Center. Founded in 2001, the Dance Center provides a home for the Mark Morris Dance Group, rehearsal space for the dance community, outreach programs for local children and seniors, and a vibrant school offering dance classes to students of all ages, with and without disabilities.

# Mark Morris Dance Group



Mica Bernas



Karlie Budge



Brandon Cournay



Domingo Estrada, Jr.



Lesley Garrison



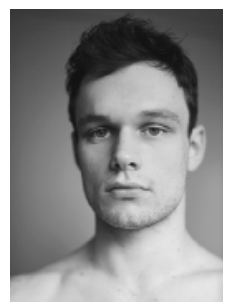
Sarah Haarmann



Aaron Loux



Taína Lyons\*



Matthew McLaughlin



Dallas McMurray



Brandon Randolph



Nicole Sabella



Christina Sahaida



Billy Smith



Noah Vinson



Malik Q. Williams

\*apprentice



## QUOTE SHEET

"The Mark Morris Dance Group has long been ahead of all other dance companies in the flow and detail of its dancers' response to music. And their qualities of focus, stillness, ease are ones that most actors would envy."  
– **Financial Times (U.K.)**

"No choreographer alive has a higher reputation for musicality than Mark Morris; and that reputation... has been well earned over more than 30 years of marvelously eclectic creativity." – **The New York Times**

"The skill of the great artist - whether a Michelangelo, a Mozart, a Mark Morris - is to fashion simplicity from complexity. The dances simply feel right, to the eye, intellect and nervous system." – **The Washington Post**

"Everything they do is human and marvelous." – **The Independent**

"Music...is not simply a starting point for Mr. Morris's choreography, and never simply an accompaniment. Rather, it is the principal means by which he achieves structural coherence and depth of feeling."  
– **The Wall Street Journal**

"[Morris] is one of those handful-in-a-century creative spirits – think Picasso or Balanchine – who manage to hold our attention while challenging all expectations." – **The Times-Picayune**

"This sense of purpose comes through in all the dancing. Not a movement is wasted, nor is anything thrown away. The energy and focus is all absorbed into the intention of each step rather than projected outward as a form of ego or "personality." It's one of the most striking characteristics of the Mark Morris Dance Group."  
– **DanceTabs**

"He's an innovator and a traditionalist, a satirist and a romantic, and one can never tell in advance what side of him will be presented in any given work or at any given moment in a work." – **The New Yorker**

"Seattle-born barefoot luminary is arguably the most musically minded, formally punctilious contemporary choreographer there has ever been." – **The Telegraph**

"It remains more true than ever that there is no other dance company so at one with its choreography and with its music. Dancers; musicians; actors - they are all three at the same time, and they make moment upon moment feel one image of truth after another." – **Financial Times (U.K.)**

"Mark Morris is a genius. His best dances...tug at us powerfully. He can align steps and music in a way that transports." – **HuffPost**

"[Morris'] choreography presents something profound and of great value: a fresh sense that human expression, in the human body, can soar beyond all limits." – **Robert Pinsky, Poet Laureate of the U.S.**