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**MARK MORRIS
DANCE GROUP**

Wednesday, October 11, 2023
7:30 p.m.
Schaeffer Auditorium

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MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

MICA BERNAS KARLIE BUDGE BRANDON COURNAV
SARAH HILLMON* COURTNEY LOPES TAÍNA LYONS
GRIFFIN MASSEY* MATTHEW McLAUGHLIN DALLAS McMURRAY
BRANDON RANDOLPH NICOLE SABELLA CHRISTINA SAHAIDA
BILLY SMITH JOSLIN VEZEAU* NOAH VINSON

*apprentice

MMDG MUSIC ENSEMBLE

COLIN FOWLER GEORGY VALTCHEV

Artistic Director

MARK MORRIS

Executive Director

NANCY UMANOFF

**No photography or videography of any kind
allowed during the performance.**

Mark Morris Dance Group Program

Words

Music: Felix Mendelssohn – Songs Without Words

Costume Design: Maile Okamura

Lighting Design: Nick Kolin

Georgy Valtchev, violin; Colin Fowler, piano

Karlie Budge, Sarah Hillmon, Courtney Lopes, Taína Lyons, Griffin Massey,
Matthew McLaughlin, Dallas McMurray, Brandon Randolph, Christina Sahaida, Joslin Vezeau

Premiere: October 8, 2014 – New York City Center, Fall for Dance Festival, New York, New York

Commissioned by New York City Center for the 2014 Fall for Dance Festival

Castor and Pollux

Music: Harry Partch – *Castor and Pollux*

Costume Design: Amy Page

Original Lighting Design: William C. Yehle

Lighting Recreation: Nick Kolin

Karlie Budge, Courtney Lopes, Matthew McLaughlin, Dallas McMurray, Brandon Randolph,
Christina Sahaida, Billy Smith, Noah Vinson

Premiere: November 28, 1980 – Merce Cunningham Studio, New York, New York

-INTERMISSION-

Italian Concerto

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach – Italian Concerto in F Major, BWV 971

Lighting Design: Paul Palazzo

I. *Allegro*

II. *Andante*

III. *Presto*

Colin Fowler, *piano*

Courtney Lopes, Dallas McMurray, Brandon Randolph, Christina Sahaida, Billy Smith

Premiere: January 17, 2007 – James and Martha Duffy Performance Space, Mark Morris Dance Center,
Brooklyn, New York

Grand Duo

Music: Lou Harrison – *Grand Duo for Violin and Piano*

Costume Design: Susan Ruddie

Lighting Design: Michael Chybowski

Prelude

Stampede

A Round

Polka

Georgy Valtchev, *violin*; Colin Fowler, *piano*

Karlie Budge, Sarah Hillmon, Courtney Lopes, Taína Lyons, Griffin Massey,
Matthew McLaughlin, Dallas McMurray, Brandon Randolph, Nicole Sabella,
Christina Sahaida, Billy Smith, Joslin Vezeau, Noah Vinson

Premiere: February 16, 1993 – Fine Arts Center, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts

About Mark Morris Dance Group

MARK MORRIS was born on August 29, 1956, in Seattle, Washington, where he studied with Verla Flowers and Perry Brunson. In the early years of his career, he performed with the companies of Lar Lubovitch, Hannah Kahn, Laura Dean, Eliot Feld, and the Koleda Balkan Dance Ensemble. He formed the Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG) in 1980 and has since created over 150 works for the company. From 1988 to 1991, he was Director of Dance at Brussels' Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, the national opera house of Belgium. In 1990, he founded the White Oak Dance Project with Mikhail Baryshnikov. Much in demand as a ballet choreographer, Morris has created 22 ballets since 1986 and his work has been performed by companies worldwide, including San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet am Rhein, Dusseldorf, and the Royal New Zealand Ballet. Noted for his musicality, Morris has been described as "undeviating in his devotion to music" (*The New Yorker*). He began conducting performances for MMDG in 2006 and has since conducted at Tanglewood Music Center, Lincoln Center, and BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music). He served as Music Director for the 2013 Ojai Music Festival. He also works extensively in opera, directing and choreographing productions for the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, English National Opera, and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, among others. He was named a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation in 1991 and has received eleven honorary doctorates to date. He has taught at the University of Washington, Princeton University, and Tanglewood Music Center. A Doris Duke Artist, Morris is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society, and has served as an Advisory Board Member for the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. He has received 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 International Society for the Performing Arts' Distinguished Artist Award, 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. In 2015, Morris was inducted into the Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney Hall of Fame at the National Museum of Dance in Saratoga Springs, New York. Morris opened the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn, New York, in 2001 to provide a home for his company, subsidized rental space for local artists, community education programs for children and seniors, and a school offering dance classes to students of all ages and levels of experience with and without disabilities. Morris' memoir, *Out Loud*, co-written with Wesley Stace, was published in paperback by Penguin Press in October 2021.

The **MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP** was formed in 1980 and gave its first performance that year in New York City. The company's touring schedule steadily expanded to include cities in the United States and around the world, and in 1986 it made its first national television program for the PBS series *Dance in America*. In 1988, MMDG was invited to become the national dance company of Belgium and spent three years in residence at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. The Dance Group returned to the United States in 1991 as one of the world's leading dance companies. Based in Brooklyn, New York, MMDG maintains strong ties to presenters in several cities around the world, most notably to its West Coast home, Cal Performances in Berkeley, California, and its Midwest home, the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In New York, the company has performed at New York City Center's Fall for Dance Festival, regularly performs at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' Mostly Mozart and White Light Festivals, and collaborates yearly with BAM on performances and master classes. From the company's many London seasons, it has received two Laurence Olivier Awards and a Critics' Circle Dance Award for Best Foreign Dance Company. Reflecting Morris' commitment to live music, the Dance Group has featured live musicians in every performance since the formation of the MMDG Music Ensemble in 1996. MMDG regularly collaborates with renowned musicians, including cellist Yo-Yo Ma, pianist Emanuel Ax, mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, and jazz pianist Ethan Iverson, as well as leading orchestras and opera companies, including the Metropolitan Opera,

About Mark Morris Dance Group

English National Opera, and the London Symphony Orchestra. MMDG frequently works with distinguished artists and designers, including painters Robert Bordo and the late Howard Hodgkin, set designers Adrienne Lobel and Allen Moyer, costume designers Isaac Mizrahi and the late Martin Pakledinaz, and many others. MMDG's film and television projects include *Dido and Aeneas*, *The Hard Nut*, *Falling Down Stairs*, two documentaries for the U.K.'s *South Bank Show*, and PBS' *Live from Lincoln Center*. In 2015, Morris' signature work *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* had its national television premiere on PBS' *Great Performances*. While on tour the Dance Group partners with local cultural institutions and community organizations to present arts and humanities-based activities for people of all ages and abilities.

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 repertory ranges from 17th and 18th century works by John Wilson and Henry Purcell to more recent scores by Ethan Iverson, Lou Harrison, and Henry Cowell. The musicians also participate in the Dance Group's educational and community programming at home and on tour. The Music Ensemble is led by Colin Fowler, who began to collaborate with MMDG in 2005 during the creation of *Mozart Dances*.

COLIN FOWLER (music director, piano) began his musical study at the age of five in Kansas City and went on to study at the prestigious Interlochen Arts Academy. He continued his education at The Juilliard School, where he received his Bachelor of Music in 2003 and his Master of Music in 2005. While at Juilliard, he studied piano with Abbey Simon, organ with Gerre Hancock and Paul Jacobs, harpsichord with Lionel Party, and conducting with James dePriest and Judith Clurman. A versatile musician and conductor, Fowler works in many areas of the music scene in New York City. He is a veteran of numerous Broadway shows, most recently performing in the Tony Award winning musical *Jersey Boys*. A seasoned church musician, Fowler has led services at numerous houses of worship, including Trinity Wall Street, St. Thomas Church, Marble Collegiate Church, and Park Avenue Synagogue. As a classical soloist and collaborative artist, he has performed and recorded with many world-renowned musicians and ensembles, including Deborah Voigt and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He began to collaborate with the Mark Morris Dance Group in 2005 and has since then performed over 40 pieces with the company on almost every keyboard instrument possible, including the harmonium and toy piano, and has conducted performances of *Mozart Dances*, *Acis and Galatea*, *The Hard Nut* and *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*. Praised by *The New York Times* as "invaluable" and "central to Morris' music," he was appointed Music Director in 2013.

SAM BLACK (company director) is originally from Berkeley, California, and received his B.F.A. in dance from SUNY Purchase. He first appeared with MMDG in 2005 and danced with the company until 2019, when he became the Rehearsal Director. He was promoted to Company Director in 2021.

MICA BERNAS, originally from Manila, Philippines, received her training at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Dance School. She later joined Ballet Philippines as a member of the corps de ballet and rose up the ranks to Soloist. While at Ballet Philippines, she also studied at De La Salle University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in organizational communication in 2006. Upon graduating, she moved to New York and joined Carolyn Dorfman Dance. She was a guest artist with the Limón Dance Company and worked with Karole Armitage, Gallim Dance, Marta Renzi, and Connecticut Ballet. As an educator, she has taught all levels of dance, including after school programs, pre-professional, and master classes. She has taught at the Limón Institute and formerly ran the dance program at BIMA at Brandeis University. She joined MMDG as a company member in 2017.

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KARLIE BUDGE grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee, training and performing with the Tennessee Children's Dance Ensemble. She attended Case Western Reserve University on a full scholarship from the department of dance, graduating magna cum laude with a B.A. in dance and a B.S. in statistics in 2016. Budge has performed with Graham 2, Merce Cunningham Trust, and in her own solo and duet choreography. Budge joined MMDG as an apprentice in September 2018 and became a company member in November 2019.

BRANDON COURNAY is a Brooklyn-based dancer, producer, choreographer, and educator. Originally from Walled Lake, Michigan, he received his B.F.A. in dance from The Juilliard School. His eclectic performance career has taken him around the globe as a dancer with the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, The Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Morphoses, KEIGWIN + COMPANY, and more. He has been the Associate Choreographer and répétiteur on numerous creative projects in theatre, tv/film, opera, and dance. Offstage, Cournay is the Founder and Executive Artistic Director of Dance Device Lab, a company offering innovative educational experiences for dance studios nationwide and General Manager + Co-Producer of Dance Heginbotham. He joined MMDG as a company member in 2018. @brandon_cournay / brandoncournay.com

SARAH HILLMON was born and raised in Rochester, New York. There she trained with Garth Fagan and Timothy M. Draper and was a member of the Rochester City Ballet. She graduated with a B.F.A. in dance from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where she had the privilege of performing works by talented artists including Sidra Bell, Lucinda Childs, Gus Solomons Jr., and Charles Weidman. After college, she became a member of Lucinda Childs Dance Company, where she toured the world performing classic works. While in New York City, she has also had the honor to perform with artists such as Solange Knowles as well as a number of dance companies including Robert Mark Dance, Suzanne Beahrs Dance, BodyStories: Teresa Fellion Dance, DanceBoissiere, and the Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company. She joined MMDG as an apprentice in September 2023.

COURTNEY LOPES is originally from Bermuda and attended the University of North Carolina School of the Arts for her high school education. She graduated magna cum laude with a B.F.A. in dance from SUNY Purchase in 2012 and studied in Taiwan at the Taipei National University of the Arts. As a student, she performed works by Paul Taylor, Jessica Lang, Lar Lubovitch, and Huang Yi of Cloud Gate Dance Theater. In addition to performing with Dance Heginbotham for over nine years, she has worked as a freelance artist with Megan Williams, Sameena Mitta, Kathryn Alter, Sue Bernhard, and Robert Mark Burke. As an educator and répétiteur, she has worked with the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, Ballet Tech, 92Y Harkness Dance Center, Dance for PD®, and the José Limón Institute. She first performed with MMDG in 2018 and became a company member in 2023.

TAÍNA LYONS is a San Pedro, California, native who began her dance training at the San Pedro Ballet School at the age of four. Her professional dance training started at the Debbie Allen Dance Academy, eventually being mentored by Debbie Allen herself. She graduated from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts with a B.F.A. in dance and a minor in Spanish in 2020. There she performed in guest works by Ronald K. Brown, Wayne McGregor, and Lar Lubovitch. In the spring of 2019, she also had the pleasure of studying abroad at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Czech Republic. Since graduating, she has had the honor of being a founding member of the Limón Dance Company's Limón2 (L2) company, an apprentice with Ronald K. Brown's Evidence, as well as performing and touring with Kyle Marshall Choreography. She joined MMDG as a company member in 2022.

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GRIFFIN MASSEY was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After training in Oklahoma and Texas, he moved to New York City where he earned his B.F.A. in dance in 2023 from The Juilliard School under Alicia Graf Mack, Dean and Director of the Dance Division, and Mario Alberto Zambrano, Associate Director. While at Juilliard, he had the opportunity to perform works by Sonya Tayeh, Donald McKayle, Ohad Naharin, Aszure Barton, Spencer Theberge, Jermaine Spivey, and Hofesh Shechter. He has also studied at Springboard Danse Montréal under the direction of Alexandra Wells. He joined MMDG as an apprentice in August 2023.

MATTHEW McLAUGHLIN discovered movement at age one and danced hula in Hawaii until age four. As a child with parents in the military, he moved and traveled frequently and explored many different sports and art forms. He graduated from SUNY Purchase with a B.F.A. in dance. During this time, he performed works by Aszure Barton, Kevin Wynn, Kyle Abraham, George Balanchine, and Doug Varone. In 2018, he had the opportunity to perform in the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company's 50th anniversary celebration. He joined MMDG as an apprentice in 2019 and became a company member in 2021. McLaughlin would like to thank his family for their love and inspiration.

DALLAS McMURRAY, from El Cerrito, California, began dancing at age four, studying jazz, tap, and acrobatics with Katie Maltsberger and ballet with Yukiko Sakakura. He received a B.F.A. in dance from the California Institute of the Arts. McMurray performed with the Limón Dance Company in addition to works by Jiri Kylián, Alonzo King, Robert Moses, and Colin Connor. McMurray performed with MMDG as an apprentice in 2006 and became a company member in 2007.

BRANDON RANDOLPH began his training with the School of Carolina Ballet Theater in Greenville, South Carolina, under the direction of Hernan Justo. At age 14, he was accepted into the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, where he studied with Stanislav Issaev and Bobby Barnett. Randolph received his B.F.A. in dance from Purchase College in 2012. There he had the opportunity to perform with Dance Heginbotham as well as repertory by Stephen Petronio, Lar Lubovitch, Paul Taylor, and George Balanchine. Randolph began working with MMDG in 2013 and became a company member in 2014.

NICOLE SABELLA is originally from Clearwater, Florida, where she studied at the Academy of Ballet Arts and the Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School under Suzanne B. Pomerantzeff. In 2009, she graduated from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, earning her B.F.A. in modern dance performance and the "Outstanding Performance in Modern Dance" Award. She was a performer with Zane Booker's Smoke, Lilies, and Jade Arts Initiative. Sabella first performed with MMDG in 2013 and became a company member in 2015.

CHRISTINA SAHAIDA grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and began her early dance training at the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School. In 2012, she graduated with honors from Butler University, receiving a B.F.A. in dance performance. She has worked with Ballet Quad Cities, Texture Contemporary Ballet, and most recently the Big Muddy Dance Company in St. Louis, Missouri. Sahaida joined MMDG as an apprentice in 2017 and became a company member in 2019.

BILLY SMITH grew up in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and attended George Mason University under a full academic and dance talent scholarship. He graduated magna cum laude in 2007 and received achievement awards in performance, choreography, and academic endeavors. While at George Mason, he performed the works of Mark Morris, Paul Taylor, Lar Lubovitch, Doug Varone, Daniel Ezralow, Larry Keigwin, Susan Marshall, and Susan Shields. Smith's own piece, *3-Way Stop*, was selected to open the 2006 American College Dance Festival Gala at Ohio State University, and his original choreography for a production of *Bye Bye Birdie*

About Mark Morris Dance Group

garnered much critical praise. An actor as well, Smith's regional theater credits include Tulsa in *Gypsy*, Mistofflees in *CATS*, and Dream Curly in *Oklahoma!* Smith danced with Parsons Dance from 2007-2010. He joined MMDG as a company member in 2010.

GEORGY VALTCHEV (violin) has performed on some of the world's most prestigious stages as a soloist, with orchestras, in recitals, and as a chamber musician. In the United States, he has appeared at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, New York's Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center in Washington DC, the 92nd Street Y, and Chicago's Cultural Institute. In Europe, he has appeared at venues such as Wigmore Hall and the Barbican Centre in London; La Cité de la Musique in Paris; Amsterdam's Royal Carré Theatre; and Bulgaria Hall in Sofia. He has toured Asia, Australia, and Israel with performances in Beijing Cultural Arts Center, Guangzhou Opera House, Sydney Opera House, Tel Aviv Opera House, Taipei Cultural Center Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Suntory Hall in Tokyo. A dedicated collaborative musician, Valtchev enjoys frequent performances with distinguished international artists and ensembles in the United States and Europe. As a principal member of the MMDG Music Ensemble, he frequently travels around the world. Valtchev has been honored to lead several major symphony orchestras as guest concertmaster, most notably the London Philharmonic and the Royal Symphony Orchestra of Madrid. He is a founder and artistic director of the Unbeaten Path chamber music festival in Kovachevitsa, Bulgaria, and a founding member of the chamber music series Bulgarian Concert Evenings in New York.

JOSLIN VEZEAU is from St. Louis, Missouri, where she trained at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA). She graduated magna cum laude from the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. program in dance performance in 2018 and while there was awarded the Denise Jefferson Memorial Scholarship. During her senior year in college, she joined Peridance Contemporary Dance Company in New York and danced with that company for six seasons. When not dancing, she is a personal trainer and loves rock climbing, volunteering at Brooklyn farmers markets, and taking care of dogs. She joined MMDG as an apprentice in August 2023.

NOAH VINSON is originally from Springfield, Illinois, and received his B.A. in dance from Columbia College Chicago. He was named a *Dance Magazine* "Dancer on the Rise" in 2009 and assisted Mark Morris in the creation of *The Letter V* for Houston Ballet. He began dancing with MMDG in 2002 and became a company member in 2004.

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Tickets:
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(Tuesday - Thursday 11:00 am - 3:00 pm)

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Lakecia Benjamin

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