**A group of people on a stage

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP**

MICA BERNAS KARLIE BUDGE SARAH HILLMON

COURTNEY LOPES DALLAS McMURRAY ALEX MEETH\*

SLOAN PEARSON† BRANDON RANDOLPH CHRISTINA SAHAIDA BILLY SMITH

JOSLIN VEZEAU NOAH VINSON

\*Apprentice

†Guest Performer

**MMDG MUSIC ENSEMBLE**

RYAN MacEVOY McCULLOUGH GEORGY VALTCHEV

*Artistic Director*

MARK MORRIS

*Executive Director*

NANCY UMANOFF

Official Tour Sponsor

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**PROGRAM**

***Excursions***

Music: Samuel Barber – *Excursions for the Piano* (Op. 20, IV, III, II, I)

Costume Design: Katherine M. Patterson  
Lighting Design: Nicole Pearce

Ryan MacEvoy McCullough, *piano*  
  
Mica Bernas, Sarah Hillmon, Courtney Lopes, Dallas McMurray, Sloan Pearson, Noah Vinson

Premiere: June 26, 2008 – Seiji Ozawa Hall, Tanglewood Music Center, Lenox, Massachusetts

Commissioned in part by the Tanglewood Music Center of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.  
   
Music by arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc., publisher and copyright owner.

***Candleflowerdance***

Music: Igor Stravinsky – *Serenade in A*  
  
Costume Design: Katherine M. Patterson  
 Lighting Design: Nicole Pearce

Ryan MacEvoy McCullough, *piano*

Mica Bernas, Courtney Lopes, Alex Meeth, Brandon Randolph,

Christina Sahaida, Joslin Vezeau

For Susan Sontag

Premiere: September 22, 2005 – Cal Performances, Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, California

Commissioned in part by Cal Performances, Berkeley.  
   
Music by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., publisher and copyright owner.

***Polka***

Music: Lou Harrison – *Grand Duo for Violin & Piano, Mvt. 4*

Costume Design: Susan Ruddie

Lighting Design: Michael Chybowski

Georgy Valtchev, *violin*; Ryan MacEvoy McCullough, *piano*

Mica Bernas, Sarah Hillmon, Alex Meeth, Sloan Pearson, Brandon Randolph,

Christina Sahaida, Joslin Vezeau, Noah Vinson

Premiere: April 7, 1992 – Manhattan Grand Center Ballroom, New York, New York

– Intermission –

***Ten Suggestions***

Music: Alexander Tcherepnin – Bagatelles, opus 5

Lighting Design: James F. Ingalls

Ryan MacEvoy McCullough, *piano*

Dallas McMurray

Premiere: February 13, 1981 – Jersey City Museum, Jersey City, NJ

The revival of Ten Suggestions was made possible, in part, by a grant from The Tcherepnin Society.

***Going Away Party***

Music: Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys – *Playboy Theme; Yearning;*   
*My Shoes Keep Walking Back To You; Goin' Away Party; Baby, That Sure Would Go Good; Milk Cow Blues; Crippled Turkey; When You Leave Amarillo, Turn Out The Lights*

Costume Design: Christine Van Loon  
Lighting Design: Michael Chybowski

Sarah Hillmon, Courtney Lopes, Dallas McMurray, Alex Meeth,

Christina Sahaida, Billy Smith, Noah Vinson  
   
Premiere: April 14, 1990 – Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels, Belgium

A person with grey hair wearing a black shirt

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**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, 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 Adrianne 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*.

A person with a beard

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**COLIN FOWLER** (music director) began his musical study at the age of five in Kansas City, went on to study at the Interlochen Arts Academy, and 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 conductor and keyboardist of many Broadway shows, including *Jersey Boys*, *In the Heights*, *Wicked*, and the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular.* As a classical soloist and collaborative artist, he has performed and recorded with many world-renowned musicians and ensembles, including Deborah Voigt, Renée Fleming, The Knights, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has arranged and conducted for numerous TV and film productions, including *Yellowstone* and Greta Gerwig's *Little Women*. He began to collaborate with the Mark Morris Dance Group in 2005 and has performed over 60 pieces with the company on almost every keyboard instrument possible, including the harmonium and toy piano. He has conducted performances of *Mozart Dances*, *Acis and Galatea, The Hard Nut*, and *L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, and helped edit and create over 15 videodances with Mark Morris during the pandemic.Hailed by *The New York Times* as “invaluable” and “central to Morris’ music,” he was appointed Music Director in 2013.

A person with short hair

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**ELISA CLARK** (rehearsal director) is an award-winning artist, educator, and administrator who trained at the Maryland Youth Ballet prior to receiving a B.F.A. from The Juilliard School under the direction of Benjamin Harkarvy, with guidance from Carolyn Adams. She first performed with Mark Morris Dance Group in 2005, remained a full-time company member through 2011, and frequently returned as a guest performer, company teacher, and stager through 2024, when she was appointed Rehearsal Director. In addition to MMDG, she has been a featured company member with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, and Monica Bill Barnes & Co, a guest artist for Buglisi Dance Theater, and has performed with Nederlands Dans Theater and the Metropolitan Opera in works by Jiri Kylian and Crystal Pite respectively, amongst others. Elisa was also a founding member and company manager for Robert Battle’s Battleworks Dance Company and has served as Battle’s artistic assistant for over two decades. As an educator and mentor, she has been on faculty at the School at Jacob’s Pillow, Princeton University, University of the Arts, American Dance Festival, Move NYC, Steps on Broadway, Marymount Manhattan College, and at Bard College in partnership with Gibney Company, to name a few, and has taught company class for MMDG, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Ballet Hispanico, Gibney Company, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. She is currently on the ballet faculty at the Ailey School, Gibney, and the Mark Morris Dance Center. Elisa is a répétiteur for both Battle and Morris’ works, and is also a Princess Grace Award Winner and a Certified Life Coach.

A person with long black hair

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**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, 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.

A person with brown hair smiling

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**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.

A person smiling at the camera

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**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 2023 and became a company member in 2024.

A close-up of a person smiling

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**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.

A person with glasses smiling

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**RYAN MacEVOY McCULLOUGH** (piano) was born in Boston, raised behind the Redwood Curtain of northern California, and has developed a diverse career as a soloist, vocal and instrumental collaborator, composer, recording artist, and pedagogue. McCullough’s growing discography features many world premiere recordings, including solo piano works of Milosz Magin (Acte Prealable), Andrew McPherson (*Secrets of Antikythera*, Innova), John Liberatore (*Line Drawings*, Albany), Nicholas Vines (*Hipster Zombies from Mars*, Navona), art song and solo piano music of John Harbison and James Primosch with Lucy Fitz Gibbon (*Descent/Return*, Albany), and art song by Sheila Silver (Albany, also with Fitz Gibbon). He has also appeared on PBS’s *Great Performances* (*Now Hear This*, “The Schubert Generation”) and is an alumnus of NPR’s *From the Top*. McCullough has appeared as a concerto soloist with major orchestras, including with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and has worked with such conductors as Gisele Ben-Dor, George Benjamin, Fabien Gabel, Leonid Grin, Anthony Parnther, Larry Rachleff, Mischa Santora, and Joshua Weilerstein. He lives in Kingston, New York, with his wife, soprano Lucy Fitz Gibbon. For additional information and curios, visit www.RyanMMcCullough.com.

A person in a blue shirt

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**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 Jiří Kylián, Alonzo King, Robert Moses, and Colin Connor. McMurray performed with MMDG as an apprentice in 2006 and became a company member in 2007.

A close-up of a young person

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**ALEX MEETH** grew up in Dousman, Wisconsin, and began his dance training with Eddy Bray at the age of thirteen. After graduating from the Kettle Moraine School for Arts and Performance, he was accepted on scholarship to the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, where he graduated with a B.F.A. in contemporary dance performance (emphasis in choreography) in 2022. While at the Boston Conservatory, he performed works by Mark Morris, Catherine Coury, José Limón, Daniel Pelzig, and Bradley Shelver. Since 2019, he has additionally danced with the Boston Early Music Festival under the direction of Kathleen Fay and Melinda Sullivan. Meeth joined MMDG as an apprentice in 2024.

A person smiling at the camera

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**SLOAN PEARSON** is a multifaceted artist based in New York City. Originally from Charlotte, she began studying at Charlotte Ballet under the direction of ballet luminaries Jean- Pierre Bonnefoux and Patricia McBride. She received her BFA with a modern dance emphasis from the Point Park University Conservatory of Performing Arts. While at Point Park, Sloan was offered an apprenticeship with the August Wilson Dance Ensemble. Sloan has danced with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Kybele Dance Theater, and Debbie Allen as a dancer in her dance ensemble - later to be featured in her Netflix Documentary. She was honored to dance with the Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company, where she was Paul Taylor’s last chosen dancer. During her four seasons she worked with Ron K. Brown, Larry Keigwen, and Peter Chu, before joining his company chuthis. Sloan has since worked with Tommie Waheed-Evans — Princess Grace Recipient both dancing and remounting his works, Holly Blakey for Puma New York Fashion Week, Yin Yue Dance Company, and the Metropolitan Opera in, “Carmen,” choreographed by Ann Ye and directed by Carrie Cracknell, and most recently with Mark Morris Dance Group in Gluck’s, “Orfeo ed Euridice.”

A person with short hair wearing a red shirt

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**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.

A person smiling at the camera

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**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.

A person with long hair in a white sweater

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

**A person playing a violin

AI-generated content may be incorrect.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.

A person smiling at the camera

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**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 2023 and became a company member in 2024.

**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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Sincerest thanks to all the dancers for their dedication, commitment, and incalculable contribution to the work.

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