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MAGAZINE

Fall 2009/Winter 2010

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Mark Morris Dance Group

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MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

CRAIG BIESECKER SAMUEL BLACK JOE BOWIE ELISA CLARK
 RITA DONAHUE DOMINGO ESTRADA, JR. LAUREN GRANT
 JOHN HEGINBOTHAM DAVID LEVENTHAL LAUREL LYNCH
 BRADON MCDONALD DALLAS MCMURRAY AMBER STAR MERKENS
 MAILE OKAMURA NOAH VINSON JENN WEDDEL
 JULIE WORDEN MICHELLE YARD

MMDG MUSIC ENSEMBLE

COLIN FOWLER MICHI WIANCKO

Artistic Director

MARK MORRIS

Executive Director

NANCY UMANOFF

MetLife Foundation is the Mark Morris Dance Group's Official Tour Sponsor.

Major support for the Mark Morris Dance Group is provided by Brooklyn Community Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, The Howard Gilman Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, and Jane Stine and R.L. Stine.

The Mark Morris Dance Group New Works Fund is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ellsworth Kelly Foundation, The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, The PARC Foundation, Meyer Sound/Helen and John Meyer, and Poss Family Foundation.

The Mark Morris Dance Group's performances are made possible with public funds from New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency; and National Endowment for the Arts Dance Program.

THE PROGRAM

Italian Concerto

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach – *Italian Concerto in F Major, BWV 991*

Lighting Design: Paul Palazzo

- I *Allegro*
- II *Andante*
- III *Presto*

COLIN FOWLER, *piano*

JOHN HEGINBOTHAM, DAVID LEVENTHAL, DALLAS MCMURRAY,
 AMBER STAR MERKENS, JULIE WORDEN

Original premiere: January 17, 2007 – James and Martha Duffy Performance Space, Mark Morris Dance Center, Brooklyn, NY

-pause-

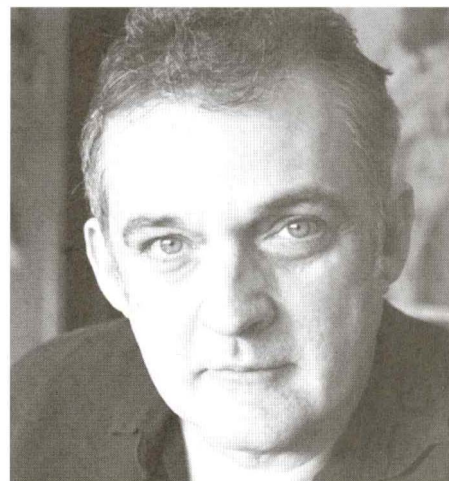


Photo by Amber Star Merken

MARK MORRIS

MARK MORRIS was born on August 29, 1956, in Seattle, Wash., where he studied as a young man with Verla Flowers and Perry Brunson. In the early years of his career, he performed with Lar Lubovitch, Hannah Kahn, Laura Dean, Eliot Feld, and the Koleda Balkan Dance Ensemble. He formed the Mark Morris Dance Group in 1980, and has since created more than 120 works for the company. From 1988-1991, he was Director of Dance at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, the national opera house of Belgium. Among the works created during his tenure were three evening-length dances: *The Hard Nut*, *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, and *Dido and Aeneas*. In 1990, he founded the White Oak Dance Project with Mikhail Baryshnikov. Morris is also much in demand as a ballet choreographer. He has created seven works for the San Francisco Ballet since 1994, and received commissions from American Ballet Theatre and the Boston Ballet, among others. His work is also in the repertoire of the Pacific Northwest Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, New Zealand Ballet, Houston Ballet, English National Ballet, and The Royal Ballet. Morris is noted for his musicality and has been described as "undeviating in his devotion to music." He has worked extensively in opera, directing and choreographing productions for The Metropolitan Opera; New York City Opera; English National Opera; and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Morris was named a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation in 1991. He has received nine honorary doctorates to date. In 2006, Morris received the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Mayor's Award for Arts & Culture and a WQXR Gramophone Special Recognition Award. He is the subject of a biography by Joan Acocella (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), and Marlowe & Company published a volume of photographs and critical essays entitled *Mark Morris' L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato: A Celebration*. Morris is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. In 2007, he received the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Lifetime Achievement Award.

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

Going Away Party

Music: Bob Willis 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

CRAIG BIESECKER, DOMINGO ESTRADA JR., LAUREN GRANT,
JOHN HEGINBOTHAM, BRADON McDONALD, MAILE OKAMURA, JULIE WORDEN

Original premiere: April 14, 1990 – Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels, Belgium

INTERMISSION

Excursions

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

Costume Design: Katherine M. Patterson

Lighting Design: Nicole Pearce

COLIN FOWLER, *piano*

CRAIG BIESECKER, ELISA CLARK, DAVID LEVENTHAL,
LAUREL LYNCH, DALLAS McMURRAY, MICHELLE YARD

Music by arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc., publisher and copyright owner

Original premiere: June 26, 2008 – Seiji Ozawa Hall, Tanglewood Music Center, Lenox, MA

-pause-

Grand Duo

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

Costume Design: Susan Ruddie

Lighting Design: Michael Chybowski

Prelude

Stampede

A Round

Polka

MICHI WIANCKO, *violin*; COLIN FOWLER, *piano*

CRAIG BIESECKER, SAMUEL BLACK, ELISA CLARK, RITA DONAHUE,
LAUREN GRANT, JOHN HEGINBOTHAM, DAVID LEVENTHAL,
BRADON McDONALD, DALLAS McMURRAY, AMBER STAR MERKENS,
MAILE OKAMURA, NOAH VINSON, JULIE WORDEN, MICHELLE YARD

Original premiere: February 16, 1993 – Fine Arts Center, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

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ABOUT THE COMPANY

The MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP was formed in 1980 and gave its first concert that year in New York City. The company's touring schedule steadily expanded to include cities in the United States and in Europe, 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 company returned to the United States in 1991 as one of the world's leading dance companies, performing across the country and at major international festivals. Based in Brooklyn, NY, the company has maintained and strengthened its ties to several cities around the world, most notably its West Coast

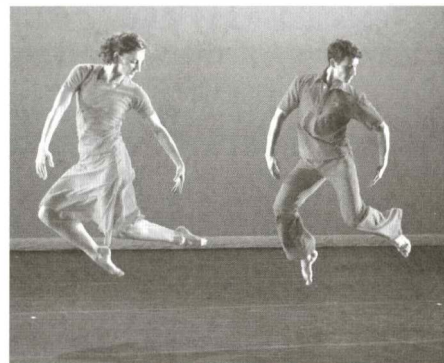


Photo by Stephanie Berger

home, Cal Performances in Berkeley, Calif., and its Midwest home, the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in Urbana, Ill. MMDG also appears regularly in New York City; Boston, Mass.; Fairfax, Va.; Seattle, Wash.; and at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, Mass. MMDG made its debut at the Mostly Mozart Festival in 2002 and at the Tanglewood Music Festival in 2003, and has since been invited to both festivals annually. The company's London seasons have garnered two Laurence Olivier Awards. MMDG is noted for its commitment to live music, a feature of every performance on its full international touring schedule since 1996. MMDG has collaborated with leading orchestras, opera companies, and musicians including cellist Yo-Yo Ma in the Emmy Award-winning film *Falling Down Stairs* (1997); Indian composer Zakir Hussain, Mr. Ma, and jazz pianist Ethan Iverson in *Kolam* (2002); The Bad Plus in *Violet Cavern* (2004); pianists Emanuel Ax, Garrick Ohlsson, and Yoko Nozaki for *Mozart Dances* (2006); and with the English National Opera in *Four Saints in Three Acts* (2000) and *King Arthur* (2006); among others. MMDG's film and television projects also include *Dido and Aeneas*, *The Hard Nut*, and two documentaries for the UK's "South Bank Show." In the fall of 2001, MMDG opened the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn, NY, housing rehearsal space for the dance community, outreach programs for local children, as well as a school offering dance classes to students of all ages. For more information, visit www.mmdg.org.

ABOUT THE MUSIC ENSEMBLE

THE MMDG MUSIC ENSEMBLE, formed in 1996, performs with the Dance Group at home and on tour and has become integral to the company's creative life. The core group, supplemented by musicians from a large roster of regular guests, has helped the Dance Group achieve an unprecedented streak of nearly 800 performances with live music. The Ensemble's repertory ranges from 17th-century works by John Wilson and Henry Purcell to more recent scores by Lou Harrison and Henry Cowell. The Ensemble also presents concerts at the Mark Morris Dance Center and other venues, and participates in the Mark Morris Dance, Music,

and Literacy Project in the New York City public school system.

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

CRAIG BIESECKER, from Waynesboro, Pa., received a B.S. in Music Education from West Chester University of Pennsylvania. While teaching music in Philadelphia, he studied ballet with John White, Margarita de Saa, and Bryan Koulman, and worked with choreographers Tim and Lina Early. In New York City he has worked with Pascal Rioult, Carolyn Dorfman, New York Theater Ballet, Mark Dendy, and Gerald Casel. Craig joined MMDG in 2003.

SAMUEL BLACK is originally from Berkeley, Calif., where he began studying tap at the age of nine with Katie Maltsberger. He received his B.F.A. in Dance from SUNY Purchase, and also studied at the Rotterdamse Dansacademie in Holland. He has performed in New York with David Parker, Takehiro Ueyama, and Nelly van Bommel. Sam first appeared with MMDG in 2005, and became a company member in 2007.

JOE BOWIE was born in Lansing, Mich., and began dancing while attending Brown University where he graduated with honors in English and American Literature. In New York he has performed in the works of Robert Wilson and Ulysses Dove, and also danced with the Paul Taylor Dance Company for two years before going to Belgium to work with Mark Morris in 1989.

ELISA CLARK received her early training from the Maryland Youth Ballet and her B.F.A. from The Juilliard School, under the direction of Benjamin Harkavy. She danced with the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, the Nederlands Dans Theater, and Battleworks Dance Company, before joining MMDG in 2006. Ms. Clark has also worked with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater as assistant to Robert Battle. She has been on faculty at the American Dance Festival and teaches for MMDG. She is a 2008-2009 Princess Grace Modern Dance Honorarium Award Winner.

RITA DONAHUE was born and raised in Fairfax, Va., and attended George Mason University where she graduated with honors in Dance and English in 2002. She danced with Bopi's black sheep/dances by Kraig Patterson and joined MMDG in 2003.

DOMINGO ESTRADA, JR., a native of Victoria, Texas, has recently acquired a B.F.A. in Ballet and Modern Dance at Texas Christian University. Currently, he also works with choreographers Leslie Scott, BODYart Dance; Mary Seidman, Mary Seidman & Dancers; and Christian von Howard, Von Howard Project. He made his debut with the Mark

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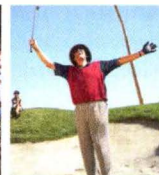


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Morris Dance Group during *The Hard Nut* at Cal Performances, Berkeley, in 2007. Domingo would like to thank God, his family, and all who support his passion!

COLIN FOWLER (piano) hails from Kansas City, Kansas, and began studying piano at the age of five. After attending Interlochen Arts Academy, he received his bachelors and masters degrees at The Juilliard School, where he studied organ with Gerre Hancock and piano with Abbey Simon. He has played and directed music across the country at venues including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and The Library of Congress. Colin has also performed with the American Brass Quintet, Deborah Voight, James Galway, and at many of the churches and synagogues in New York. Broadway credits include the recent revival of *42nd Street* and the current production of The Tony Award winning musical, *Jersey Boys*. Colin is the Chair of the Theory and Ear Training department at Nyack College, where he is a full-time professor and conductor of the Nyack College Chorale. He has played with the MMDG Music Ensemble since 2006.

LAUREN GRANT, born and raised in Highland Park, Ill., has danced with the Mark Morris Dance Group since 1996. Appearing in more than 40 of Mark Morris' works, she performs leading roles in *The Hard Nut* and *Mozart Dances*. Ms. Grant has been featured in *Time Out New York*, *Dance Magazine*, the book *Meet the Dancers*, and is the subject of a photograph by Annie Leibovitz. She graduated with a B.F.A. from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Ms. Grant is on faculty at MMDG's school and also teaches dance internationally. She is married to fellow dancer David Leventhal.

JOHN HEGINBOTHAM is from Anchorage, Alaska. He is a graduate of The Juilliard School (BFA 1993) and has danced in the companies of Susan Marshall, Pilobolus Dance Theatre (guest artist), John Jasperse, and Ben Munisteri. His choreography is featured in the work of recording artists Fischerspooner, and in *Champ: A Space Opera* (New York International Fringe Festival). As a teacher, John works regularly with members of the Brooklyn Parkinson Group. He joined the Mark Morris Dance Group in 1998.

DAVID LEVENTHAL has danced with MMDG since 1997. He performs principal roles in *The Hard Nut*, *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, and *Romeo & Juliet, on Motifs of Shakespeare*. He is a faculty member of the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn, and teaches technique and repertory at schools and universities. He is one of the founding teachers of MMDG's Dance for Parkinson's program, and leads classes around the world for people with

Parkinson's disease. Raised in Newton, Mass., he received his early training from Boston Ballet School and graduated from Brown University with honors in English Literature. He is married to fellow dancer Lauren Grant.

LAUREL LYNCH began her dance training in Petaluma, Calif. After a few too many *Nutcrackers* she moved to New York to attend The Juilliard School where she performed works by Robert Battle, Margie Gillis, José Limón, and Ohad Naharin. Since graduation in May 2003, Laurel has danced for Dušan Týnck Dance Theatre, Sue Bernhard Danceworks, Pat Catterson, Stephan Koplowitz, and T.E.A. (Transpersonal Education and Art). She performed at the Festival Oltre Passo in Lecce, Italy, and appeared as a guest artist with Petaluma City Ballet. Laurel performed with MMDG as an apprentice in 2006 and became a company member in 2007.

BRADON McDONALD received his B.F.A. from The Juilliard School in 1997. He danced with the Limón Dance Company for three years and was the recipient of the 1998 Princess Grace Award. He has choreographed and presented his own works internationally, served as choreographer for seven Juilliard Opera Company productions under director Frank Corsaro, and was the choreographic assistant to Donald McKayle at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Bradon joined MMDG in 2000.

DALLAS McMURRAY, from El Cerrito, Calif., 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. Dallas performed with the Limón Dance Company in addition to works by Jiri Kylian, Alonzo King, Robert Moses, and Colin Connor. Dallas performed with MMDG as an apprentice in 2006 and became a company member in 2007.

AMBER STAR MERKENS is originally from Newport, Ore., where she began her dance training with Nancy Mittleman. She received her B.F.A. from The Juilliard School in 1999 and then danced with the Limón Dance Company for two years. She is a recipient of the 2001 Princess Grace Award and has presented her own choreography in New York and abroad. Amber joined MMDG in 2001.

MAILE OKAMURA is originally from San Diego, Calif. She was a member of Boston Ballet II from 1992-93 and Ballet Arizona from 1993-96. She has danced with choreographers Neta Pulvermacher, Zvi Gotheiner, and Gerald Casel, among others. Maile began working with MMDG in 1998 and became a company member in 2001.

NOAH VINSON received his B.A. in dance from Columbia College Chicago, where he worked with Shirley Mordine, Jan Erkert, and Brian Jeffrey. In New York, he has danced with Teri and Oliver Steele and the Kevin Wynn Collection. He began working with MMDG in 2002 and became a company member in 2004.

JENN WEDDEL received her early training from Boulder Ballet Company near where she grew up in Longmont, Colo. She holds a B.F.A. from Southern Methodist University and also studied at Boston Conservatory, Colorado University, and the Laban Center, London. Since moving to New York in 2001, Ms. Weddel has created and performed with RedWall Dance Theatre, Sue Bernhard Danceworks, Vencil Dance Trio, Rocha Dance Theatre, TEA Dance Company, and with various choreographers including Alan Danielson and Ella Ben-Aharon. Ms. Weddel performed with MMDG as an apprentice in 2006 and became a company member in 2007.

MICHI WIANCKO (violin) made her New York solo recital debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in 2002. Featured as an "Artist to Watch" on the cover of *SYMPHONY Magazine* (January 2007), she has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic. She has also toured with Musicians from Marlboro and the Los Angeles Piano Quartet. In March 2007, she performed the world premiere of a concerto written for her by Margaret Brouwer with Cleveland's CityMusic Orchestra. She has also appeared at the Kennedy Center, Sydney Opera House, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery, Library of Congress, New York Town Hall, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and many others. Michi is the singer and songwriter for a project called Kono Michi, comprised of voice, string quintet, and percussion. Her self-produced debut album of original music called *9 Death Haiku* was recently released on the UK independent label, Shark Batter Records. A native of Southern California, Michi studied with Donald Weilerstein at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and completed her master's degree at The Juilliard School, working with Robert Mann. She has been performing with the MMDG Music Ensemble since 2002.

JULIE WORDEN graduated from the North Carolina School of the Arts and joined MMDG in 1994.

MICHELLE YARD was born in Brooklyn, NY, and began her professional dance training at the New York City High School of the

MARK MORRIS



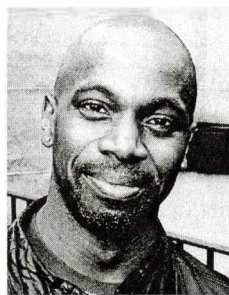
DANCE GROUP



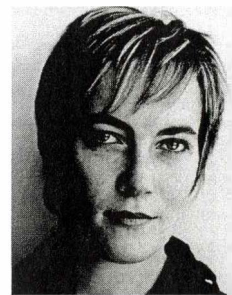
Craig Biesecker



Samuel Black



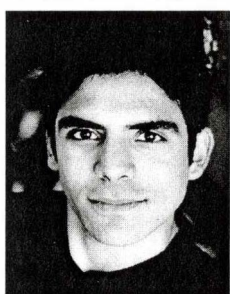
Joe Bowie



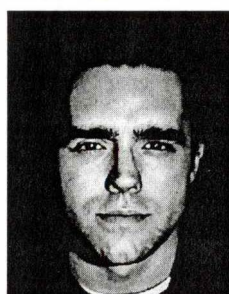
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Rita Donahue



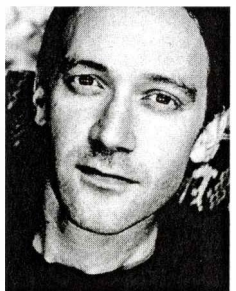
Domingo Estrada, Jr.



Colin Fowler



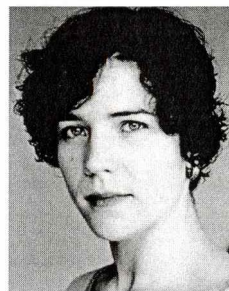
Lauren Grant



John Heginbotham



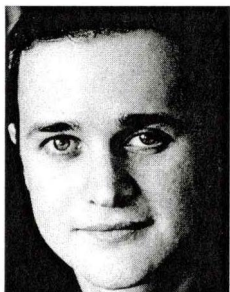
David Leventhal



Laurel Lynch



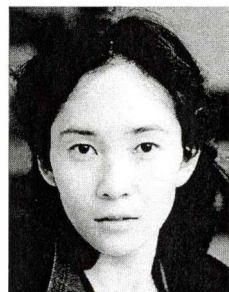
Bradon McDonald



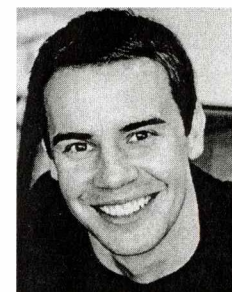
Dallas McMurray



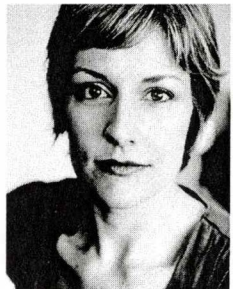
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