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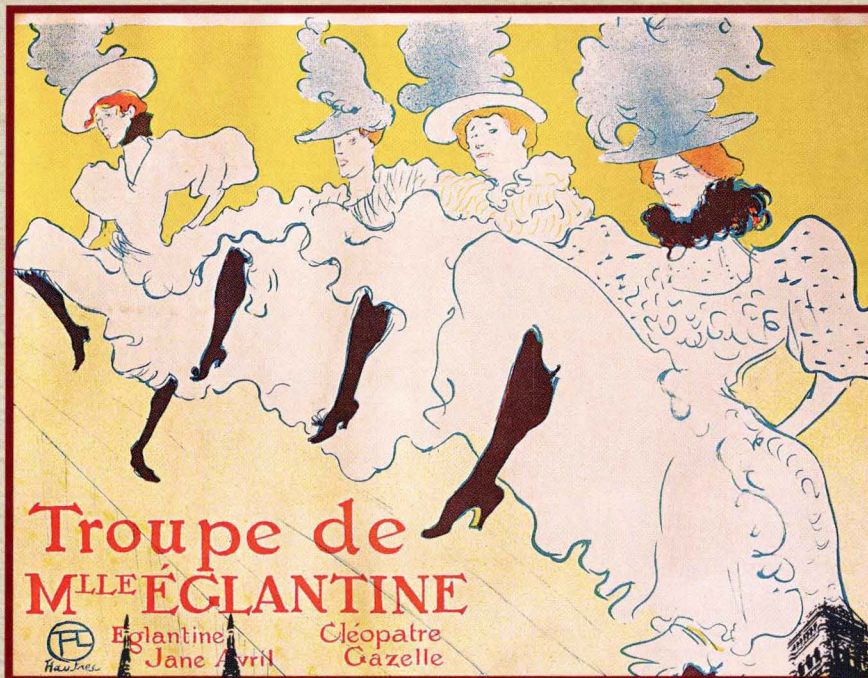
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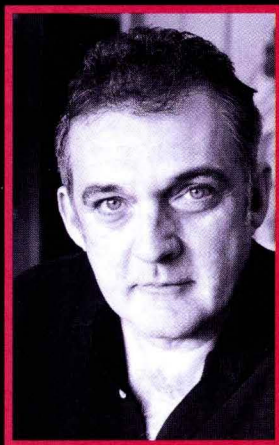
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Vol. 3
Issue 2



MARK MORRIS

DANCE GROUP



The Mark Morris Dance Group never fails to surprise and delight. Throughout its 32-year history, the internationally renowned dance group continues to enthrall audiences and critics. We'll have the chance to experience them firsthand when MMDG comes to the Mary W. Sommervold Hall for two shows, January 24 and 25.

MMDG's artistic director, Mark Morris, has been hailed as "the most prodigiously gifted choreographer of the post-Balanchine era" (*Time* magazine).

Since founding the Dance Group in 1980, Morris has created close to 150 works for the company. He has been described as "an innovator and a conservative, a satirist and a romantic" (*New Yorker*) 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*).

The Dance Group tours domestically and internationally, and is distinguished as the only modern dance company with a commitment to live music at every performance, founding

the MMDG Music Ensemble in 1996. MMDG also regularly collaborates with world-class musicians across genres, including cellist Yo-Yo Ma, who named the company the "preeminent modern dance organization of our time," mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, jazz trio The Bad Plus, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, The Metropolitan Opera, and the English National Opera, among many others.

MMDG performances bring together fans of music and dance alike. Morris' insatiable appetite for music, and wide-ranging taste, has caused his approach to choreography to be called music visualization. A typical evening of dance with MMDG takes the audience on a musical journey as well as a choreographic one, where stunning visuals are accompanied by the musical prowess of the MMDG Music Ensemble.

For their Sioux Falls debut, MMDG will perform a program of four works that showcase Morris' extensive variety of musical and dance styles, from the microtonal composition of Lou Harrison to the American swing of Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys to classic waltz. It's a wonderful introduction to MMDG, sampling Mark Morris' eclectic personality, musical tastes, and choreographic style.

Morris shows us a different side to music we think we already know, teaching us to see it, feel it and hear it as we never have before. *Canonic ¾ Studies*, set to an assortment of waltzes arranged by Harriet Cavalli for solo piano, has

been described as a "nonstop barrage of inventive and often unorthodox ways for nine dancers to emphasize the waltz beat" (*Los Angeles Times*), turning expectations for waltz movements on their head and demonstrating "how a waltz can smack you in the face, causing you to keel over." (*Boston Globe*).

Also on the evening's program is American square dance romp, *Going Away Party*, set to a collection of songs written between 1935 and 1973 by the King of Western Swing, Bob Willis. One of the few works set to recorded music, *Going Away Party* has been described as a "tour de force from beginning to end," (*The Times-Picayune*) that "celebrates the warmth of a country dance party." (*Toronto Globe*).

Silhouettes has been described as "an imaginative response to its score" (*New York Times*), Richard Cumming's *Five Pieces for Piano* (1993). The two dancers play off each other,

sometimes in imitation and sometimes in counterpoint. The evening's performance crescendos to the tribal celebration of *Grand Duo*, considered one of the company's signature pieces. Described as "one of the most viscerally charged passages in the annals of modern dance" (*Boston Globe*), *Grand Duo*, set to Lou Harrison's *Grand Duo for Violin and Piano*, will convince even the staunchest doubter that dance can be "intoxically thrilling." (*Seattle Times*).

Perhaps what ultimately makes the Mark Morris Dance Group so appealing is their exhilarating reality. The dancers gesture and posture in ways that feel like the ways we move. Rather than otherworldly creatures set apart from the audience, these dancers somehow manage to be tangible yet aspirational. Bloomberg News extols "highest praise for their technical aplomb, their musicality, and their sheer human authenticity." We see and hear the feet measuring out complex rhythms with simple walking and running patterns.



The dancers give in to gravity and then challenge it. In partnering sections, Morris allows different pairs to perform the same material with variations that come from their individuality.

Just as fervent as its commitment to live music is the company's dedication to the communities in which it resides and performs. Outreach is interwoven into every aspect of the Company's life, both at its Brooklyn home as well as on tour through its Access/MMDG programming. The company collaborates with presenters around the world to provide personalized engagement opportunities within their communities. Events run the gamut from dance and fitness classes for all ages and levels, music education, artist talks and panels, university master classes, in-school residencies with school-age children, and Dance for PD®, which offers teacher training and classes for people with Parkinson's disease.

In Brooklyn, the Mark Morris Dance Center offers affordable dance classes, workshops, and master classes for adults of all skill levels, as well as subsidized rehearsal space for the dance community. The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center additionally provides low-cost dance classes to over 1200 children and teens ages 3 to 17, all accompanied by live music.

Mark Morris Dance Group will perform in the Mary W. Sommervold Hall of the Washington Pavilion January 24 and 25 at 7:30 P.M. Please contact info@washingtonpavilion.org to learn more about outreach opportunities available with this show.

This presentation is supported by the Arts Midwest Touring Fund, a program of Arts Midwest that is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, and the South Dakota Arts Council that is supported by funds from the State of South Dakota, through the Department of Tourism and State Development.



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