

University Musical Society-Ann Arbor

SPEAKING OF DANCE
UMS DANCE
2000-01 SEASON





IF I CAN'T DANCE,
I DON'T WANT
TO BE PART OF YOUR
REVOLUTION.

Emma Goldman

Featuring the choreography of

ALVIN AILEY
JOSÉ CARLOS ARANDIBA
ROBBY BARNETT
WALSON BOTELHO
RONALD K. BROWN
ALISON BECKER CHASE
AMÉLIA CONRADO
NACHO DUATO

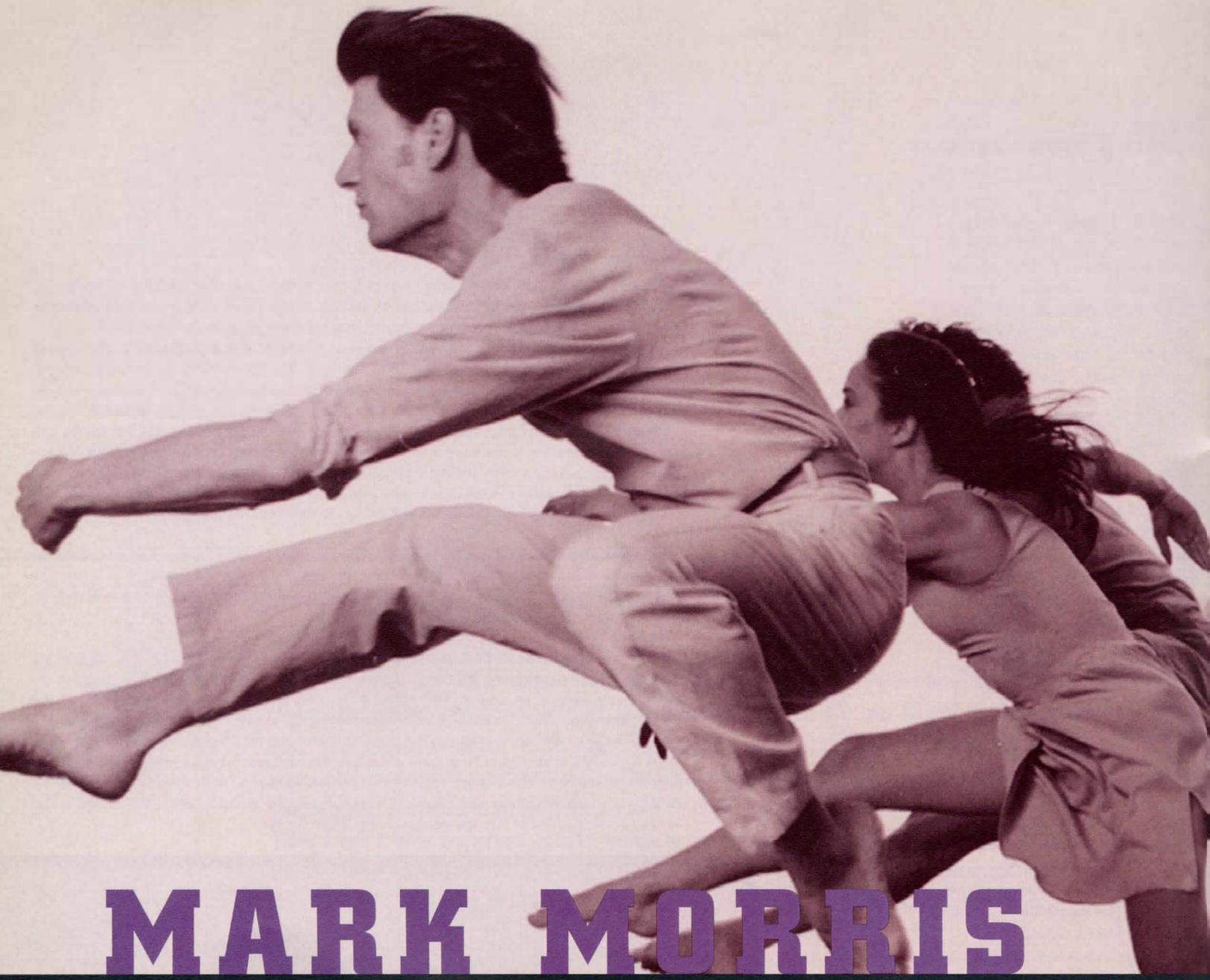
JUDITH JAMISON
ALONZO KING
JIRÍ KYLIÁN
CARMEN DA LAVELLADE
LIZ LERMAN
AKAJI MARO
BEBE MILLER
MARK MORRIS

OHAD NAHARIN
AUGUSTO OMOLZ
ANGELIN PRELJOCAJ
DWIGHT RHODEN
ROSÂNGELA SILVESTRE
MICHAEL TRACY
JONATHAN WOLKEN
AND OTHERS...



WHEN
YOU DO
DANCE,
I WISH
YOU
A WAVE
O' THE
SEA, THAT
YOU
MIGHT
EVER
DO
NOTHING
BUT
THAT.

The Winter's Tale
William Shakespeare



MARK MORRIS

DANCE



MARK MORRIS *artistic director*

Friday, April 20, 8 pm
Saturday, April 21, 8 pm

POWER CENTER, ANN ARBOR

Live music is music. A recording is a simulacrum, an aide memoire, maybe a guide or learning tool. But music is in the flesh and in the moment, and it joins together those who hear it in a way that's both ancient and inexplicable. Individuals listening together and feeling less alone. All art aspires to the condition of music.

MARK MORRIS *artistic director*





GROUP

WITH THE DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS

TWO DISTINCT PERFORMANCES OF CLASSIC
MARK MORRIS REPERTOIRE.

VISIT MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP AT WWW.MMDS.ORG

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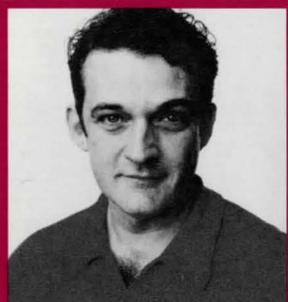
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FACT AND MYSTERY ARE THE TWIN ASPECTS OF LIVE PERFORMANCE THAT HAVE FASCINATED AND CONSUMED ME SINCE I WAS LITTLE, STANDING AMAZED ON THE STREET AS THE BASS DRUM OF A PARADE PASSED BY. The startling physical fact of the whomp of the drum hitting me in my stomach, in my head, was a surprise, a revelation. It was loud. But more than just loud, it was present, next to me. And it felt like I was being told something important, something essential, which I didn't quite understand.

It was the same thing that mezzo-soprano Janet Baker was telling me as she sang one night many years later at Carnegie Hall. Standing in recital, singing song after song in ravishing voice, in languages I didn't understand, I knew her only essential message could be translated as, "I love you, I love you, I love you." The fact and the mystery of live performance.



MARK MORRIS **DANCE GROUP**

MARK MORRIS *artistic director*

As a child I would go on Sundays to compline, the last evening service before bed, at St. Mark's Episcopal in Seattle, the "music church." This was the first time I heard counter tenors, the first time I heard plainchant, the first time I sat in the dark alone listening to music. Sitting in the dark alone—with others. That was the crucial thing: with others; crowded, jammed up beside one another, and yet utterly private. Alone with my own thoughts and feelings, and the music we all shared in the air.

And I recognized an inherent contradiction in that live performance; others felt alone, too. There was a commonality in feeling alone; Bach felt alone. But we were all alone together. And I became more myself, and I felt less alone...[We] are human animals who need that specific danger inherent in the fact and the mystery of live performance; the danger of truth.

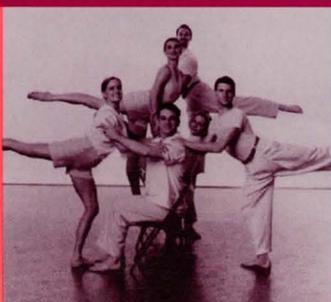
MARK MORRIS *artistic director*

(excerpted from a speech delivered to the Midwest Arts Conference, September 17, 1998, Cleveland, OH)

**ABOUT
MARK MORRIS
DANCE GROUP**

Since founding the Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG) in 1980, Mark Morris has attracted world attention. His dances explore an extraordinary range of subjects and even more distinctively, he is noted for his dedication that dance be performed to live music. Early in his career he was singled out by many influential critics as the choreographer of his generation. He has created over 90 works for MMDG, as well as choreographing dances for many ballet companies, including the San Francisco Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre. From 1988-1991 he was director of dance at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels and MMDG became the national dance company of Belgium. During his tenure there, he founded the White Oak Dance Project with Mikhail Baryshnikov and created 12 pieces, including three of his most famous evening-length works: *The Hard Nut* (his comic book-inspired version of *The*

whole and does not stand out as an abrupt quotation—for example in one section of his now classic work *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* (1989), we see derivations of Scottish and Balkan folk dances, classical ballet, vernacular movement and Morris' own unique merging of these forms into a seamless whole. His background includes training in many forms of ethnic and concert dance, including flamenco and Balkan folk dance.



Nutcracker); *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*; and *Dido and Aeneas*. His company has appeared three times under UMS auspices: in 1993, in the spring of 1996 with his baroque dance opera *Dido and Aeneas*, and again in the fall of 1996 in an evening of mixed repertoire. The Mark Morris Dance Group will return to Ann Arbor in 2001 after a 20th anniversary celebration at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, allowing access to some seldom performed works.

Each Morris piece has a distinct spirit, intimately linked to the music. There is no sense of recycling the familiar—his innovation is continual. However, one can also see the debts to tradition in his work, movements from the history of dance and from a wide variety of ethnic manifestations. What he borrows always becomes fully integrated into the piece as a

Mark Morris begins the creation of his dances with the music. He finds music that speaks to him (everything from Baroque to contemporary classical to popular song) and then he studies the score. He claims that he does "almost no choreographic homework...only musical homework." From the form of the music, Morris creates the form of his choreography, with his creation process taking place in the studio with his dancers. "I generally create way too much stuff and then I edit," he says. It is through the rehearsal process that his

pieces are shaped; his rehearsals are not just places where movement combinations that he has previously devised are confirmed. He is continually changing and creating and using his dancers like a palate of paints. His dancers, in addition to having the required "musical consciousness," also have to be flexible enough to adapt to ongoing innovation and quick to execute whatever they are called on to do.

Morris is emphatically true to his own vision. In both his commitment to his own creative process and vision and in his dedication to form and music, Mark Morris can be seen as a direct descendent of Balanchine. And like Balanchine, Morris' works tend to focus on "pure dance."

THE PROGRAM

Audience members will have a chance to revisit an early Morris work, as well as experience some of his newest choreography, on the Ann Arbor programs. *Gloria* was choreographed in 1981 and is set to the music of Antonio Vivaldi. Morris is particularly well known for his setting of dances to Baroque works, and he calls *Gloria*, "an early dance of hope, a religious dance." Critic Joan Acocella said in 1992 that "this piece is to the Mark Morris Dance Group what Alvin Ailey's 1960 *Revelations* is to the Ailey Company—the audience's favorite work, the troupe's signature work." Much of *Gloria* is performed on the floor—as Morris noted, this was early in his career when he was still paying tribute to the established vocabulary of modern dance: "Modern dance is floor love," he said. "We love gravity." The work includes his trademark lyricism and stands today as the prelude to further Baroque music he has choreographed to: the much lauded *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* (which he choreographed in 1989 to music by Handel), and the new work *Dixit Dominus* set to Handel's eponymous score, which premiered in the spring of 2000.

Silhouettes (1999) is a piece for two dancers set to Richard Cumming's *Five Pieces for Piano*. The two dancers are costumed in one pair of pajamas—one wears the top and briefs, the other wears the bottom and goes bare-chested. This split carries through into the choreography where the two dancers often mirror each

other or echo each other's movements. The dancers progress through the five piano pieces, and the musical motifs are met with similar movement motifs: the dancers' rapid footwork makes visual the rapid finger work of the pianist, their arms make planes that rise and fall as quickly as the arpeggios in the music.

Dancing Honeymoon (1998) is a celebration of the joy of popular music. The soprano, violin, piano and percussion progress through a series of 20th century songs written before WWII from "Someone to Watch Over Me" to "Do Do Do What You Done Done Done Before." This is a sunny, kaleidoscopic work, that negotiates the delicate balance of modernity and period charm.

Attending a Mark Morris Dance Group performance is as much a feast for the ears as for the eyes. The live music and dance together bring out sides of each genre that remain hidden when viewed alone. The richness of the interplay remains in the mind of the audience long after the performance has ended.