

# CITYSCENE

A guide to art and entertainment

## All the right moves

If there were pop idols in dance, just as there are in the music business, television or film, then Mark Morris would currently be a household name in North America. But dance, being a somewhat weighty and cumbersome art form, tends to attract a smaller, albeit loyal, audience. Within the dance community at least, Mark Morris is a pop celebrity in his native United States. Touted as America's hottest young choreographer, the 33-year-old dynamo from Seattle, Washington, is bringing his thirteen-member modern troupe to Ottawa. It's the first time in Canada for the Mark Morris Dance Group, and Ottawa is the sole performing venue.

Morris' company, formed in 1980, consists of dancers older and more experienced than those



Mark Morris brings his star potential, and his modern dance group, to the NAC

of most other troupes. His choreography includes a mixture of ethnic, modern, ballet, jazz, flamenco and classical Indian. But don't let the eclectic blend

throw you off; Morris' pieces have been described as dangerously explosive. He works his dancers hard in material that is terrifyingly realistic.

There's an element of mystery, unpredictability and irony in many of Morris' works, and the choreographer is also an excellent performer himself. His on-stage persona is slightly outrageous and incongruous, but that's exactly the message he wants to convey. In most of Morris' work, female dancers are the physical equals of men, even in matters of brute force. It's a reflection of his fascination with gender identification.

Mark Morris has worked with some of America's best choreographers: Eliot Feld, Lar Lubovitch and Twyla Tharp. And, apart from creating works for his own troupe, he has been commissioned to do works for many major dance companies in the United States. While the weather cools down as Ottawans head into winter, Mark Morris promises to heat up the stage, for a few hours at least, at the NAC Opera, 8:30 p.m., November 24.

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