

A Plum of a role for Morris?

By Christine Temin
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Mark Morris as the Sugar Plum Fairy? Could be. Casting won't be announced for a while, but it's certain that the hottest young choreographer in the world today will present his own version of the world's most popular ballet, "The Nutcracker," next January in Brussels.

And since it's no secret that Jeremy Alliger, head of Boston's Dance Umbrella, has been talking about Boston as a future base for the Morris company, audiences hereabouts may just have a chance to see what will surely be the most unusual "Nutcracker" anywhere.

Given that the flamboyant Morris played Dido, Queen of
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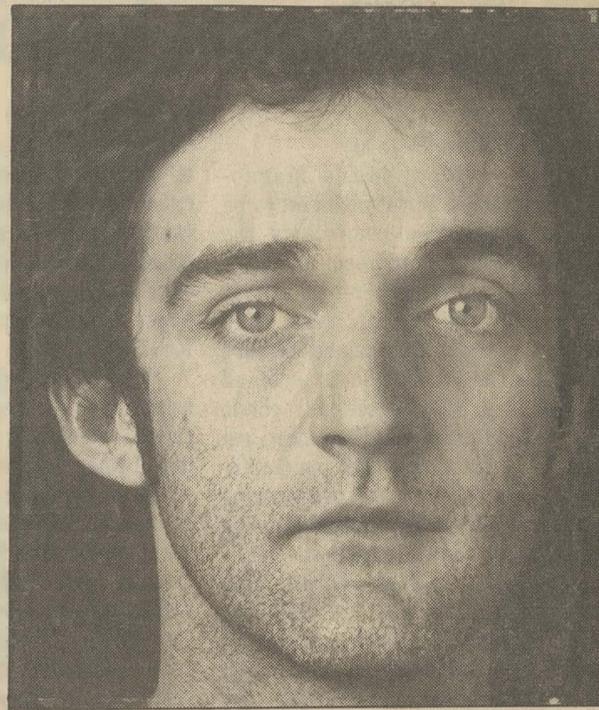
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Carthage, in his production of Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas," the Plum part is not out of the question for him. Timing for the quintessential Christmas ballet will be quintessentially Morris, hence unorthodox: His "Nutcracker" will debut at the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie in January.

Morris' manager, Barry Alterman, said yesterday that the only certainty about the production so far is that Morris will use the famous Tchaikovsky score and that the designer will be Charles Burns, best known for his comic strip "Big Baby." Alterman said Mikhail Baryshnikov, who has performed in a couple of Morris pieces, may dance in "Nutcracker," which brings up the possibility of a Baryshnikov-Morris pas de deux.

Alterman was in town to discuss the Morris troupe's Boston engagement, sponsored by Dance Umbrella, at the Emerson Majestic Theater June 13-17. The Morris company has been headquartered in Brussels for two years now, but when the company's contract runs out at the end of next season, Morris and his dancers plan to move back to the United States.



AP FILE PHOTO

Mark Morris' "Nutcracker" will debut in January.