



LONDON WEEKEND TELEVISION LIMITED  
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# THE SOUTH BANK SHOW: MARK MORRIS - THE HIDDEN SOUL OF HARMONY

TX: Sunday 25 March 1990 at 10.40 pm on the ITV network

'I don't like most dance concerts I see - because I think they're very boring...because they seem to be always the same thing maybe with different costumes...and maybe some different bad music. As an audience person, I want to see something different happen all the time...'

(MARK MORRIS)

Mark Morris is a 33-year-old American who has been acclaimed as the major choreographer of his generation. He and his company enjoyed a cult following in the States before he was appointed as choreographer in residence at the Royal Opera House in Brussels.

There, he and his dancers have been received with some extraordinary hostility by the Belgian Press. While his work enjoys accolades from the British and American Press, the Belgian critics have been distinctly hostile.

The Belgian reaction is partly tied up with their loyalty to Maurice Bejart, Morris's celebrated predecessor at the Royal Opera House, who left after disagreements with the Board of Directors.

This South Bank Show, The Hidden Soul Of Harmony, follows Morris at work in Brussels, where his dancers are united by a sense that they are working with the key choreographer of the moment. He is creating a new work in rehearsal - the music is Schoenberg's Five Orchestral Pieces, which Morris has given a menacing Hitchcock setting.

One of the dancers in this piece is MIKHAIL BARYSHNIKOV, who came to dance with Morris's company immediately after his much-publicised departure from the American Ballet Theatre.

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Mark Morris himself is a compelling personality. A star dancer as well as a choreographer, he is famously flamboyant. The programme includes extensive interviews with Morris, as well as footage of him at work in rehearsal and in class with his company. There are also interviews with his dancers - including Baryshnikov - who try to pin down what exactly is so extraordinary about Morris and his work.

The major performance sequences of the programme are taken from one of Morris's outstanding works to date, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso Ed Il Moderato. This work combines pastoral odes by Milton with music by Handel, and also draws from William Blake's illustrations for the Milton poems.

'Morris is noted for his musicality, for his ability to create dances which are a direct expression of the music - and it is Baroque music in particular which seems to fire him,' says South Bank Show director Nigel Wattis. 'L'Allegro combines all that is best about his work. He creates a complete world with his dancers, and succeeds in "visualising" both Handel's music and Milton's verse through the dance movements. The result has been praised as the major dance work of our time.'

The South Bank Show is edited and presented by MELVYN BRAGG

For further information contact Simon Channon, Chief Press Officer, LWT on 01-261 3468.

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