

For Immediate Release:
August 21, 2015

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**Mark Morris Dance Group makes its debut appearance at
the Williams Center for the Arts at Lafayette College
with *Words*, *A Wooden Tree*, and *Grand Duo*
at 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 16**

Free Dance for Parkinson's Disease (Dance for PD[®]) community class with members of the Mark Morris Dance Group, open to the public on Tuesday, September 15, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m.

Mark Morris Dance Group's residency is part of Choreographers on Campus, a three-year Lafayette College initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

EASTON, PA, August 21, 2015 --The Williams Center for the Arts' 2015/16 dance season commences with the Williams Center debut of **Mark Morris Dance Group** (MMDG), "the most transportingly natural performers in the world" (*The New York Times*) on **Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 8:00 p.m.** A prolific artist with an infinite capacity to capture the range of human emotion, **Mark Morris's** insightful musicality is fully articulated in a program that features *Words* (2014) set to Felix Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words"; *A Wooden Tree* (2012) featuring the poetry and music of Ivor Cutler; and *Grand Duo* (1993) set to Lou Harrison's arresting "Grand Duo for Violin and Piano," accompanied by live musical performance. During the company's Easton visit, members of MMDG will conduct a free **Dance for Parkinson's Disease** (Dance for PD[®]) community class at the Lafayette College Studio Theater, 248 North 3rd Street, Easton, **Tuesday, September 15, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m.**

Of *Words*, commissioned by New York City Center for the 2014 Fall for Dance Festival, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote: "Another of Mr. Morris's beguiling affairs, intriguingly expressing poetry beyond words." *A Wooden Tree*, set to recordings of poetry and music by the williamscenter.lafayette.edu

Scottish writer and songwriter Ivor Cutler, brings to life Cutler's playful, irreverent and endearing observations of human behavior. *The Guardian* (London) called *A Wooden Tree* "[An] idiosyncratic masterpiece...[Morris'] choreography finds its own magical way of replicating Cutler's style; an almost childlike dance vocabulary into which Morris embroiders gestures that veer between literal mime and a whimsical commentary of their own." ***Grand Duo*** is one of Morris's most lauded works set to music of late West Coast composer Lou Harrison during the 16 years that the composer and choreographer collaborated together. This signature Mark Morris piece, featuring 15 dancers, pianist and violinist, has been acclaimed one of the masterpieces of the late 20th Century. *Words* and *Grand Duo* will be performed with live musical accompaniment by MMDG music director and pianist **Colin Fowler** and violinist **Georgy Valtchev**.

Mark Morris has been hailed "the most prodigiously gifted choreographer of the post-Balanchine era" (*Time Magazine*). He has created over 130 works for his own company, and also conducts, directs opera, and choreographs for international ballet companies, including American Ballet Theatre and San Francisco Ballet. Morris is a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation and has received the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, and the Benjamin Franklin Laureate Prize for Creativity. Morris choreographed John Adams's *Nixon in China* for the Houston Grand Opera in 1987 and has collaborated with artists as varied as fellow dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi, tabla player Zakir Hussain, and sculptor Stephen Hende. He made his opera directing debut in the Metropolitan Opera's production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* in 2007, marking the first time in 50 years that a choreographer has directed at the Met.

The **Mark Morris Dance Group** formed in 1980 and gave its first concert that year in New York City. The company's touring schedule grew progressively to include cities both in the United States and in Europe, and 1986 marked its first national television performance for the PBS series *Dance in America*. In 1988, MMDG was invited to become the national dance company of Belgium, where it spent three years in residence at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, and where some of Morris's most important large-scale work was created, including

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L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato and *The Hard Nut*. The company returned to the United States in 1991 as one of the world's leading dance companies.

MMDG is noted for its commitment to live music, a feature of every performance on its full international touring schedule since 1996. MMDG collaborates with leading orchestras, opera companies and musicians such as cellist Yo-Yo Ma in the Emmy Award-winning film *Falling Down Stairs* (1997); Indian composer Zakir Hussain, Ma and jazz pianist Ethan Iverson in *Kolam* (2002); The Bad Plus in *Violet Cavern* (2004); pianists Emanuel Ax and Yoko Nozaki for *Mozart Dances* (2006); and with the English National Opera in *Four Saints in Three Acts* (2000) and *King Arthur* (2006).

While in residency as part of the **Choreographers on Campus** initiative at Lafayette College, MMDG will teach advanced modern classes at DeSales University in Center Valley; a beginner modern class at Lafayette College; and two Dance for Parkinson's Disease (Dance for PD[®]) community classes on [Tuesday, September 15, 2015](#), one at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. **The Dance for PD community class at Lafayette College is free and open to the public and will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 15 from 6:30-7:45 p.m. in the Lafayette College Studio Theater, 248 North 3rd Street in Easton.** Reservations should be made by contacting Kelly Prentice at 610-330-5203 or prentick@lafayette.edu. Accessible parking can be found in Lafayette College's Snyder Street parking lot.

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The Mark Morris Dance Group performance and residency are funded in part by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and its Choreographers on Campus initiative.

The Williams Center for the Arts 2015/16 dance season is presented with support from the Dexter and Dorothy Baker Foundation.

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Calendar editors, please note:

CHOREOGRAPHERS ON CAMPUS PRESENTS

Dance for PD® Community Class by Mark Morris Dance Group

Tuesday, September 15, 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Lafayette College Studio Theater
248 N. Third St.
Easton, PA 18042

This Dance for PD® community class led by Mark Morris dancers is designed for people with Parkinson's Disease, caregivers, dance teachers, and other community members. Expect a demo and movement class, with a Q&A at the end. In Dance for PD® classes, participants are empowered to explore movement and music in ways that are refreshing, enjoyable, stimulating and creative. This event is sponsored by Choreographers on Campus at Lafayette College, an initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The event is free and open to the public. To register, contact Kelly Prentice at 610-330-5203 or prentick@lafayette.edu. Accessible parking in the Lafayette Snyder Street parking lot.

WILLIAMS CENTER FOR THE ARTS PRESENTS

<http://williamscenter.lafayette.edu/>

Wednesday, September 16 at 8:00 p.m.

Williams Center for the Arts
317 Hamilton Street at High St.
Easton, PA 18042

Dance

Mark Morris Dance Group

Colin Fowler, piano

Georgy Valtchev, violin

Program:

Words (2014), music by Felix Mendelssohn, "Songs without Words"

A Wooden Tree (2012), words and music by Ivor Cutler

Grand Duo (1993) music by Lou Harrison, "Grand Duo for Violin and Piano."

All choreography by Mark Morris

Tickets: \$25.00, available through the Williams Center for the Arts ticket office, open 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. weekdays, and 1-hour prior to performance; by phone at (610) 330-5009; and online at williamscenter.lafayette.edu

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