

SchoolTime 05/06

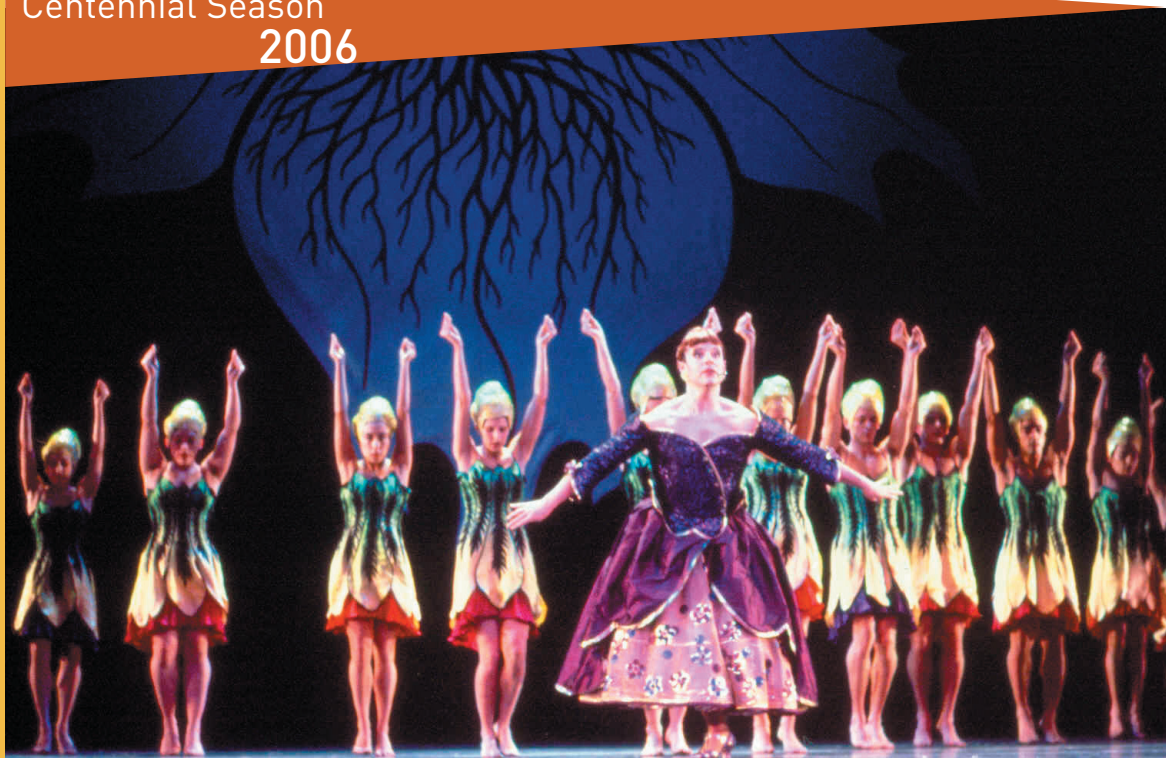


dance music theater

Performances

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

1906  
Centennial Season  
2006



# Study Guide

## Mark Morris Dance Group

### *The Hard Nut, Act II*

Wednesday, December 14, 2005, 11:00 am  
Zellerbach Hall

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What do you notice about this nutcracker in comparison with the nutcrackers on page 6.

# Welcome!



November 23, 2005

Dear Educator and Students,

Welcome to *SchoolTime*! On **Wednesday, December 14, 2005 at 11:00 a.m.**, you will attend the *SchoolTime* performance of *The Hard Nut*, Act II by the Mark Morris Dance Group.

*The Hard Nut*, choreographed by Mark Morris, is an innovative interpretation of the ever-popular *Nutcracker* Ballet. Morris, along with cartoon artist Charles Burns, have transported the setting of the adventure-filled Christmas Eve party from 19th-century Germany to 1960s suburban America. Morris combines popular, modern and classical dance choreography to tell the story of E.T. A. Hoffmann's "Nutcracker and Mouse King" fairy tale in a new, refreshing and most original way.

This study guide will help you prepare your students for their experience in the theater and give you a framework for how to integrate the performing arts into your curriculum. Targeted questions and exercises will help students understand the story of the ballet, as well as more about the artists and the artform.

Your students can actively participate at the performance by:

- OBSERVING how the dancers use their bodies to communicate the story.
- WATCHING for characteristics that distinguish modern dance, ballet and popular dances.
- THINKING ABOUT what the dancers must do to prepare for a performance.
- REFLECTING on what they have experienced at the theater after the performance.

We look forward to seeing you at the theater!

Sincerely,

Laura Abrams  
Director,  
Education & Community Programs

Rachel Davidman  
Education Programs Administrator

# 1 Theater Etiquette



**Be prepared and arrive early** Ideally you should arrive at the theater 30-45 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time and parking, and be in your seats at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.

**Be aware and remain quiet** The theater is a “live” space—you can hear the performers easily, but they can also hear you, and you can hear other audience members, too! Even the smallest sounds like rustling papers and whispering can be heard throughout the theater — so it’s best to stay quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance without distractions. The international sign for “Quiet Please” is to silently raise your index finger to your lips.

**Show appreciation by applauding** Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation. Performers return their appreciation for your attention by bowing to the audience at the end of the show. It is always appropriate to applaud at the end of a performance, and it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain comes down or the house lights come up.

**Participate by responding to the action onstage** Sometimes during a performance, you may respond by laughing, crying or sighing. By all means, feel free to do so! Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form. For instance, an audience attending a string quartet performance will sit very quietly, while the audience at a gospel concert may be inspired to participate by clapping and shouting.

**Concentrate to help the performers** Performers use concentration to focus their energy while on stage. If the audience is focused while watching the performance, the artists feel supported and are able to do their best work. They can feel that you are with them!

# 2 Setting the Stage

## Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about Mark Morris and what distinguishes him as an innovative choreographer.
- Students will be able to understand the concept of a “story within a story.”
- Students will become familiar with the story of *The Hard Nut*.

## Pre-Performance Activities

Choosing at least one of these pre-performance activities will give your students a framework for their field trip experience and will allow them to better understand what they will see on stage.

- Read E.T.A. Hoffman’s “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King”  
After reading the original story discuss the concept of a “story within a story.”
- View Act I of *The Hard Nut*  
(Available at Reel Video, Amazon.com, and the Berkeley Public Library)  
What do you think will happen in Act II?
- View the traditional *Nutcracker* ballet  
Have students write their own synopses of what they saw.

## Questions to Think about While at the Performance

Reviewing these questions with your students prior to the performance will help them prepare for *SchoolTime*. Students who are familiar with the vocabulary, concepts, and themes they will encounter on stage are much more likely to enjoy and understand the performance.



- How do dancers use their bodies and facial expressions to tell a story without using words?
- How do the costumes and sets help explain the story?
- How would you describe what you saw to a friend?

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary boxes are provided for each section. Students can use these words to start a “Hard Nut” dictionary. They can design a cover and keep a running list of word definitions related to *The Hard Nut*, the *Nutcracker* and the performing arts.

# 3 About the *SchoolTime* Performance

## Mark Morris Dance Group Presents *The Hard Nut*, Act II

Instead of taking place in 19th-century Germany, like the original *Nutcracker*, *The Hard Nut* begins in a 1960s suburban home in the United States. The costumes and the sets are representative of that time period. You and your students will see Act II; a brief synopsis of Act I is included to provide a context for what you will see in Act II. If you are able to view Act I on video prior to the performance, your students will be well prepared for what they will see in Act II.



### ACT I Synopsis

Act I begins at Mr. and Mrs. Stahlbaum's annual Christmas Eve party. Their three children, Fritz, Marie and Louise wait in the den. The party guests engage in various social dances. Drosselmeier, a friend of the family brings animated toys that he's made, including the Nutcracker, which Fritz immediately breaks. The children fight. The guests go home. The family goes to bed. The housekeeper cleans up.

Marie can't sleep and comes downstairs to see if the Nutcracker is resting comfortably. At midnight she is frightened by rats that have come in to fight with the toys. Everything in the room grows to giant size. G.I. Joes led by the Nutcracker battle rats led by their mutant Rat King. Marie kills the Rat King with her slipper. She falls unconscious. The Nutcracker is transformed into a young man. Marie is tucked in. A worried Drosselmeier makes his way through a snowstorm to Marie's bedside.



### Vocabulary

annual  
mutant  
suburban  
unconscious

Photographs from *The Hard Nut*, Act I, party scene.

## ACT II

Drosselmeir Tells Marie the Story of *The Hard Nut*  
The Curse  
Spanish Dance  
Chinese Dance  
Russian Dance  
French Dance  
Drosselmeir Finds the Hard Nut  
The Curse is Lifted  
Waltz of the Flowers  
The World Celebrates the Love of Marie and Drosselmeir  
Marie and Young Drosselmeir Dance Together  
The Gala  
The Lovers Unite  
Louise and Fritz are Sent to Bed

### Vocabulary

beautiful  
commanded  
curse  
hideously  
womanhood

## ACT II Synopsis

As Act II begins Marie is still recovering from the battle of the mice. Drosselmeier comes in to tell her one of his stories, "The Hard Nut." This story within a story goes like this:

Once upon a time, a King and Queen had a beautiful baby daughter named Pirlipat. The Queen's old enemy, the Rat Queen, threatened to ruin little Pirlipat. While the nurse was left to guard the baby the Rat Queen snuck into the baby's carriage and bit her, placing a curse on her that made her hideously ugly. The Royal family was horrified by the sight of their formerly beautiful daughter. The only way to remove the curse, the Rat Queen said, is to find the magic nut which a young man must crack with his teeth. The King commanded Drosselmeier to search for the nut. Drosselmeier traveled all over the world looking for it. He finally gave up, without success and returned home, and there he found the Hard Nut. The big day came when several young men tried to crack the nut and they all failed. Then Drosselmeier's handsome young nephew tried and succeeded, but in the process, he stepped on the Rat Queen and killed her. This placed the curse on him. Just as Pirlipat was becoming beautiful again, the nephew became a Nutcracker and Pirlipat wanted nothing to do with him.



Marie (Lauren Grant) dancing with the Nutcracker Prince (David Leventhal)  
Fun fact: In real life they are a couple.

Marie then decides to take matters into her own hands and stops the story, she offers her love to Drosselmeier's nephew. To celebrate Marie's budding womanhood, her mother leads the plant world in the *Waltz of the Flowers*. In the end, Marie and her new boyfriend dance together and everyone joins in. This is a love story between two people, but it is also about the love that exists in the world, and the love that sits right in front of all of us.

## Note to Teachers

### About the Story, *The Nutcracker* Interesting Facts about the Original Story “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King” by E.T.A. Hoffman

It is interesting to note the backdrop to this seasonal story of magic and fantasy. E.T.A. Hoffman, the author of “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King,” the story that the *Nutcracker* was never intended to be a children’s story. His words portrayed a grim view of humanity and relationships. What we know today as a fairy tale of a young girl’s magical dream actually began as a story filled with dark shadows.

Published in 1816, Hoffman’s tale was revised by Alexander Dumas who eliminated much of the bitterness and adapted the story for children. The new version was read with interest by Marius Petipa, the senior ballet master of the Russian Imperial Ballet, who then commissioned Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in 1891 to compose a score for a full-length *Nutcracker* production. The *Nutcracker* debuted on December 17, 1892 in Russia at Mariinsky Theatre, which is still the home to the Kirov Ballet.

## 4. The Significance of Nutcrackers

*By Debby Felix, used with permission*

Finding tools for opening or removing the shells of nuts challenged our earliest ancestors. Ancient excavations exposed nutshell fragments and it is believed that those nuts were broken using stones. Later, tools were made specifically for the task of cracking the hard shells of nuts.

The earliest nutcrackers were simple and functional, but eventually beautifully crafted brass and even carved nutcracker characters emerged as an art form in the 15th and 16th centuries. Many of the carved characters took on the form of birds, animals and humans. When a nut was placed in the “mouth” of these dolls, levers or screws on the back could be worked to push the lower jaw up against the upper jaw to crush the nut.

The nutcracker story came from the creation of European nutcrackers in Switzerland, France, Germany, and England during the 16th and 17th centuries.



In the German regions of Sonneberg and Erzgebirge, near the Bohemian border, the Ore mountains were rich with mineral deposits. Many villagers worked in mines, but carved wood during the winter until they could return to work. Life was tough for the miners, who worked long hours, endured hardships and poverty, and often saw the fruits of their labor in the mines taken by their superiors. They cleverly designed the carved nutcrackers as caricatures of powerful people like kings, policemen, and soldiers, which the townspeople enjoyed because these figures were placed at their service to perform the lowly task of cracking nuts. When mineral deposits expired, miners began to make the nutcracker dolls all year round. Eventually, these one-of-a-kind standing soldiers and kings became a symbol of the region and were sold all over Europe. A holiday table setting was not complete without a bowl of nuts and a handsome doll standing beside it!

### Nutcracker Trivia:

Nutcrackers were especially popular with Germans who coined the phrase, *“Gott gibt die Nüsse aber knaker müsst man sie selbst”* (“God gives the nuts but we have to crack them ourselves”). This story was intended to teach children that life was hard but rewarding. This little verse made it a favorite toy, possibly because it enabled children to reach one of life’s rewards more easily.

According to German folklore, nutcrackers were given as keepsakes to bring good luck to a family and protect the home. The legend says that they represent power and strength and serve like a trusty watch dog guarding the family from evil spirits and danger. A fierce protector, the nutcrackers bare their teeth to the evil spirits and serve as the traditional messenger of good luck and goodwill.

*What did the nut say to the nutcrackers?  
“You crack me up!”*



Different faces of Nutcrackers. If you were going to carve your own Nutcracker what would it look like?

# 5 About the Artists:

## *Mark Morris Dance Group*

### Mark Morris, choreographer

Morris was born on August 29, 1956 in Seattle, Washington. He formed the Mark Morris Dance Group in 1980, and has since created over 100 works for the company. From 1988–1991, he was Director of Dance at the *Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie* in Brussels, the national opera house of Belgium. Among the works created during his tenure were three evening-length dances: *The Hard Nut*; *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*; and *Dido and Aeneas*. In 1990, he founded the White Oak Dance Project with Mikhail Baryshnikov. Mr. Morris is also much in demand as a ballet choreographer. He has created four works for the San Francisco Ballet since 1994 and received commissions from such companies as American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, and the Paris Opera Ballet. He has worked extensively in opera, directing and choreographing productions for the New York City Opera, English National Opera, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Mr. Morris was named a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation in 1991, commonly known as a “genius” award.



### Mark Morris Dance Group

Mark Morris Dance Group was formed in 1980 and gave its first concert that year in New York City. The company began touring to cities both in the United States and in Europe, and in 1986 it made its first national television program for the PBS series *Dance in America*. After being in Belgium for three years, the company returned to the United States in 1991 as one of the world’s leading dance companies, performing across the United States and at major international festivals. It has maintained and strengthened its ties to several cities around the world, most notably here in Berkeley, where Cal Performances presents the company in every year. This is the 8th time Cal Performances has presented *The Hard Nut* since 1996.

In fall 2001, the Dance Group opened the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn, New York, the company’s first permanent headquarters in the United States. It houses rehearsal space for the dance community and outreach programs for local children, as well as a school that offers dance classes to students of all ages.

#### **Vocabulary**

choreographer  
commission  
company  
founded  
genius  
tenure  
works

## Back Stage with Robert Cole, Director of Cal Performances

### How long have you known Mark Morris?

We met in 1985. In 1987 Mark first performed at Cal Performances. The first year that I conducted the orchestra for *The Hard Nut* was 1996.

### How would you describe Mark?

Mark is a genius, he is a grown up but also has a child-like view of fun. He works hard, but wants to have fun and incorporates that into his work. His rehearsals are intense, but they are also full of laughs.

### What did you think the first time you saw *The Hard Nut*?

I first saw *The Hard Nut* in Brooklyn, New York in the early 1990s. I thought it was great and thought it would be a fantastic show to have at Cal Performances. It is a big production, however, and a complicated work to do. It was originally performed in a very large opera house in Brussels, Belgium. I asked Mark if he would bring it to Berkeley and, after some convincing that it would work in our theater, he agreed.



### What is it like to conduct *The Hard Nut*? \*

It wasn't my intention to bring the show here and conduct it. The conductor who was going to perform in 1996 cancelled a month before the performance, so Mark asked if I would conduct the orchestra. I was busy being the producer and setting up the rehearsal schedule and trying to save money where ever I could. The average number of rehearsals was three; one with just the orchestra, one with the dancers and the orchestra and one dress rehearsal. I had conducted the *Nutcracker* many times, as most conductors have. The music for *The Hard Nut*, however, is very different from your average *Nutcracker*; it has complicated cues, it is a much faster tempo, and in fact is the entire original score that Tchaikovsky wrote without any modifications. So I agreed to conduct, and in the end had to adhere to my own rehearsal schedule of three rehearsals, even though I could have used an extra one.

### What are some interesting things you have learned about Mark in all the years you have worked with him?

Mark loves music; he is always listening to music, in part for inspiration for new works but also because it is one of his passions. He prefers going to concerts over seeing dance performances. Not only did he study ballet and modern dance, but he also spent time studying flamenco and folk dancing. Mark is the fastest choreographer I have seen, his ability to produce works is amazing. He is committed to the arts, has dedicated his life to creative pursuits and believes people of all ages, young and old, should have the opportunity to have a creative experience.

\* Robert Cole conducts *The Hard Nut* at evening and weekend performances. Due to his schedule and duties as the Director of Cal Performances, The *SchoolTime* performance will be performed to a taped score.

## Meet Some of the Dancers



**Craig Biesecker, (Drosselmeier)** is from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. He received a B.S. in Music Education from West Chester University of PA. While teaching music in Philadelphia, he studied ballet with John White, Margarita de Saa, and Bryan Koulman, and worked with choreographers Tim and Lina Early. In New York City, he has worked with Pascal Rioult, Carolyn Dorfman, New York Theater Ballet, Mark Dendy and Gerald Casel. Craig joined the Mark Morris Dance Group in 2003.



**Lauren Grant, (Marie)** was raised in Highland Park, Illinois, and has danced with the Mark Morris Dance Group since 1996. She has appeared in 32 of Mark Morris's dances. Lauren has played the role of Marie in *The Hard Nut* since 1998, the same year she became a company member. At age 3, she began studying ballet and character dance. She attended New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, graduating with a B.F.A. She teaches master classes in ballet and modern technique, as well as Mark Morris repertory, at schools and universities around the world, at MMDG's school in Brooklyn, and for the company.



**John Heginbotham, (Mrs. Stahlbaum/Queen)** is from Anchorage, Alaska, and graduated from The Juilliard School in 1993. He has performed with artists including Susan Marshall and Company, John Jasperse, Ben Munisteri, and as a guest artist with Pilobolus Dance Theater. John's choreography is featured in the performances and Emerge music video of recording artists Fischerspooner. He joined the Mark Morris Dance Group in 1998.



**David Leventhal, (Nutcracker/ Young Drosselmeir)** raised in Newton, Mass., has danced with the Mark Morris Dance Group since 1997. He has appeared in 30 of Mark Morris's dances. He studied at Boston Ballet School and has danced with José Mateo's Ballet Theatre and the companies of Marcus Schulkind, Richard Colton/Amy Spencer, Zvi Gotheiner, Neta Pulvermacher, and Ben Munisteri. He graduated with honors in English Literature from Brown University in 1995. He teaches master classes in technique and repertory at schools and colleges around the country, and teaches regularly at MMDG's school in Brooklyn including a class for people with Parkinson's Disease.



**Kraig Patterson, (Housekeeper/Nurse)** was born in Trenton, New Jersey. He was inspired to pursue a career in dance after performing in high school musicals. He continued his formal dance training with scholarships from The Princeton Ballet, The Ailey School, The Graham School and The Cunningham Studio. He received his B.F.A. from The Juilliard School in 1986, joined the Mark Morris Dance Group in 1987 and danced with the company until 1999. Mr. Patterson, also known as bopi, has also performed with Mark Haim, The Danny Lewis Repertory Ensemble, Ohad Naharin, Neta Pulvermacher, and The White Oak Dance Project. In 1996, Mikhail Baryshnikov invited Kraig to choreograph a new piece for The White Oak Dance Project. Kraig started his own dance company in 1996, bopi's black sheep / dances by kraig patterson, which is currently in residence at Borough Manhattan Community College's Tribeca Theater.



Marie (far right) on the couch as she listens to the story-within-a-story of the *Hard Nut*.

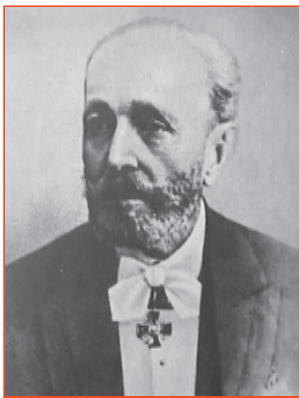
## Creators of the Original *Nutcracker* Ballet



### **E.T.A Hoffman, Author**

Ernest Theodor (Wilhelm) Amadeus Hoffmann was born in 1776 in Königsberg, Germany. He changed his third name, Wilhelm, to Amadeus in 1813 in honor of the great composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Originally educated as a lawyer, he is one of the main figures of German Romanticism as a writer, composer and artist. His works are eclectic and his characters show an amazing world of fantasy that interacts with everyday life. His literary work features supernatural characters who reveal people's hidden secrets. His stories inspired many composers including Piotr Ilyitch Tchaïkovsky, who composed the music for *The Nutcracker*. Hoffman died in Berlin in 1822.



### **Marius Petipa, Choreographer**

Marius Petipa, a famous Russian choreographer, asked the composer Piotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky to write the music for a ballet based on E.T.A. Hoffman's story, "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King." Later Petipa became ill, and the choreography was completed by his assistant, Lev Ivanov. The ballet was first performed in St. Petersburg on December 17, 1892.

The Nutcracker choreography changed many details of Hoffman's original story. In the ballet, a little girl is given a nutcracker as a gift, and her nasty brother breaks it. She is put to bed, where she dreams that the nutcracker comes to life as a handsome prince and whisks her away to a land of candy and fairies.

Ironically, given its current popularity, *The Nutcracker* was not well received, and was not performed outside of Russia until 1934.



## Piotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky, Composer

One of the most popular composers in history, P.I. Tchaikovsky was born in Russia as the son of a mine inspector. He began to compose music at the age of 14, but it was not until he was 22 that he enrolled in the St. Petersburg Conservatory to study composition. Among his early successes was the score for *Swan Lake*, which became one of the most famous ballets of all time.

In his score for the *Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky experimented with unusual musical effects, including the use of the celesta, a keyboard instrument which sounds like tiny bells ringing, in “The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy.”

In addition to *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky’s major works include his *Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies*, the fantasy *Romeo and Juliet*, the ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*, the opera *The Queen of Spades*, and two enormously popular concertos, the *Piano Concerto in B Flat Minor* and the *Violin Concerto in D*. He also composed the “1812 Overture, which you might have heard played during a fireworks display — sometimes cannons are fired during the booming finale!



“The Dance of the Snowflakes” from a traditional production of *The Nutcracker* ballet.

©Paul Kolnik

# 6 About the Art Form:

## *Modern Dance & Ballet*

Dance is defined as: “To move rhythmically usually to music, using prescribed or improvised steps and gestures.” There are many styles of dance and ways to move the body. The dance form performed by the Mark Morris Dance Group is called modern dance.

### What is Modern Dance?

Modern dance developed in the 20th century primarily in the United States and Germany. Modern dance, along with modern art was a rebellious response to the traditional rigidity of classical ballet. The earliest modern dance innovators pushed the boundaries and limitations previously set by traditional schools of dance. American modern dance pioneers were Isadora Duncan, Loise Fuller, and Ruth St. Denis. In Germany, Rudolf von Laben and Mary Wigman worked at the new art form. Individually, they each sought to inspire audiences to a new awareness of how the body can move and express emotion and feelings. Modern dance is known for its independence, inventions and non-traditional attitude. Each modern dance company has its own style and unique movement according to the artistic director’s creative visions.

Mark Morris creates original dances much as the original pioneers of modern dance once did. His company, the Mark Morris Dance Group, is an ensemble company that only performs dances created by its founder. Other modern dance companies perform dances by various choreographers. Dance companies that perform dances by other choreographers other than their own are called repertory companies.

### What is Ballet?

The *Nutcracker* is usually performed by classical ballet companies. Classical ballet is a form of dance that originated in the royal courts of France in the 1500s. The first known ballet, the *Balet comique de la Royne* was performed in Paris in 1581. Ballet is characterized by graceful yet precise articulation of the body. Dancers hold their bodies in an upright position and the legs are turned out from the hips. In general the body is lifted, the arms and legs extend out away from the body and many of the turns and movements are done high on the balls of the feet or even on pointe. Ballet uses five basic positions of the feet, and the terminology you would hear in a ballet class would all be in French. Here are a few ballet terms you would hear in a ballet class:



Two dancers in “Dance of the Snowflakes” from *The Hard Nut*. Dancer on the right performs a beautiful jeté.

## ***Jeté***

**[zhuh-TAY]**

Throwing step. A jump from one foot to the other in which the working leg is brushed into the air and appears to have been thrown. There is a wide variety of *jetés* and they may be performed in all directions.

## ***Chaînés***

**[sheh-NAY]**

Chains, links. This is an abbreviation of the term *tours chaînés déboulés*, which means a series of rapid turns on the points or *demi-pointes* done in a straight line or in a circle.

### **Vocabulary**

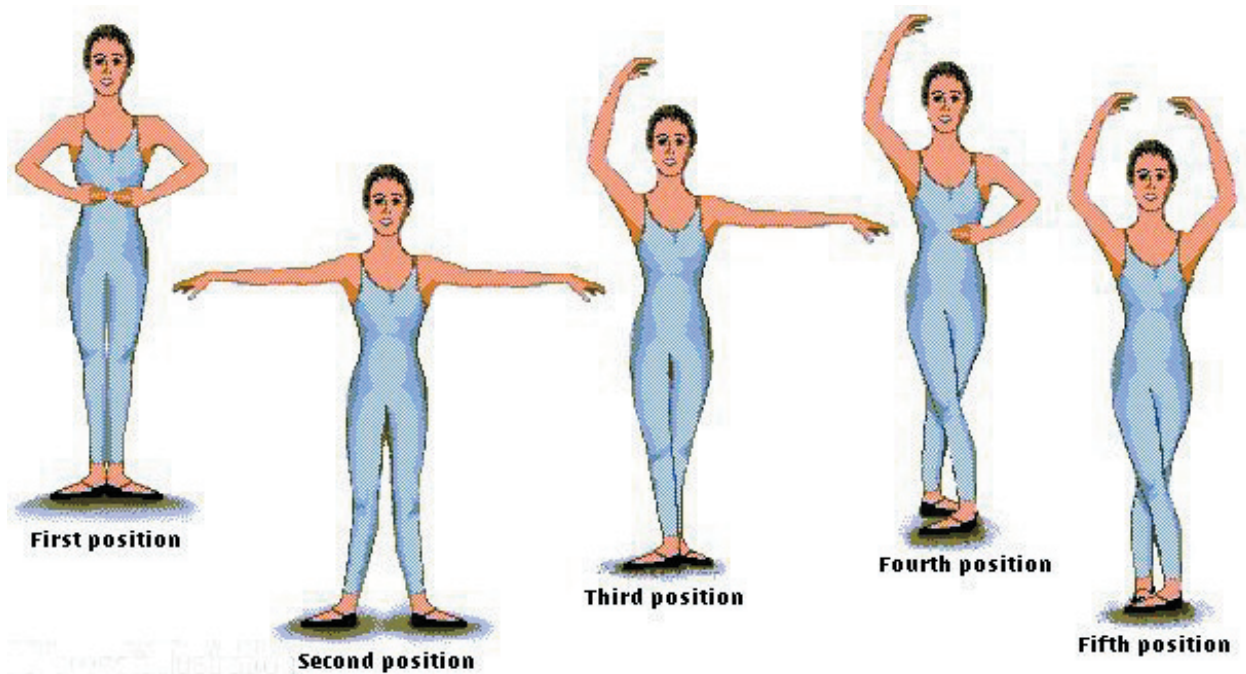
attitude  
classical  
ensemble  
modern  
pioneers  
repertory  
traditional

## ***Plié***

**[plee-AY]**

Bent, bending. A bending of the knee or knees. This is an exercise to help make the joints and muscles soft and pliable and the tendons flexible and elastic, and to develop a sense of balance. There are two principal *plies*: *grand plié* or full bending of the knees (the knees should be bent until the thighs are horizontal) and *demi-plié*, or half-bending of the knees. *Pliés* are done at the bar and in the center of all five of the basic positions.

### **Five basic ballet positions:**



Try these five positions with your students. Once you review them a few times with the class you can choose different leaders to lead the class through the five basic positions.

# 7 Activities and Exercises

## Language Arts and Writing

### Create Your Own Fairy Tale

**Objective:** Students will re-create a fairy tale of their choice and re-write it, in the same way that Morris adapted *The Nutcracker* to his version *The Hard Nut*.

**Materials:** Several fairy tales for students to choose from, or a trip to the library.

**Time:** Several class periods.

**Procedure:** Students will work in groups of three. They will select a fairy tale that together they will re-write. Encourage students to use their imaginations to fully enter the world of magic and fantasy, as Morris did with *The Hard Nut*. Each person in the group is responsible for a section of the story. When each group is finished and have had some time to polish the story to a final draft, each group will share their story out loud with the rest of the class.

**Optional extension:** If you want to expand this activity, students can pick a scene of their story that they will express through dance or mime to present to the class.

### Post-Performance Activity: Be a Critic

Reviews are an important part of the professional performing arts world. Reviews are written by critics to describe the show and let the general public know what he/she thought of the performance. This activity allows students to “put on the critics hat” and express their own point of view about the performance.

**Objective:** To learn about the art of writing a review of a performance.


**Time:** Class period.

**Materials:** Copies of “‘Hard’ may be nutty, but it’s sweet,” a sample review from *The Contra Costa Times* (see page 18)

**Procedure:**

1. Read the sample review as a class, in pairs or individually. Identify words or phrases that seem to be particular to the writing style of the review. Discuss the critic’s response to the performance and any bias that may have been included in writing the review.

2. Have students write a review of the *SchoolTime* performance they attended at Cal Performances. Make sure to include the date, time and place of the performance. Remember that a review includes the whole experience, including elements of the performance space, for example; the climate in the theater, condition of the theater, did the performance start on time? These elements are all part of the audience experience and will help others decide whether or not they want to see the performance.

- 
3. Have students work in pairs for peer editing then share their reviews with the class.
  4. As a culmination of this activity we invite you to nominate a few of the reviews to be: 1) submitted to Cal Performances; 2) included in your class newsletter; or 3) submitted to your school newspaper.

## Secondary School Activity

### Interview: A day in the life of a dancer

**Objective:** Students will resource their local community to find a professional dancer to interview.

**Materials:** Resource list of local dance companies and studios, paper, pencils, and or tape recorder

**Time:** Determined by teacher.

**Procedure:** Students select a dance form that is of interest to them: ballet, jazz, modern, hip-hop, African, etc., and select a company from which to request an interview. Students then make their list of 10 questions they will ask during their interview. What do they want to know about that dance form, about the necessary preparation to become a professional dancer, or questions about the personal narrative of the person they are interviewing. Students record and summarize their responses, then share what they have discovered in small groups. Select a few volunteers to share with the whole class.

### Secondary School Activity: Essay Compare and Contrast

**Objective:** Students will view *The Nutcracker* and *The Hard Nut*, which both interpret the same story by ETA Hoffman, and write an essay that compares and contrasts the two productions.

**Materials:** Videos: *The Hard Nut* and *Nutcracker*

**Time:** This can be done over the course of a week. Time is needed to view excerpts of each of the performances and time for writing the essay.

**Procedure:** Students take notes while viewing excerpts from the classical ballet *Nutcracker* and the modern dance *The Hard Nut*. Conduct a class discussion on some of the differences and similarities. What kind of creative liberties did Mark Morris take in adapting the *Nutcracker* story? Students then write an essay that compares and contrasts the two versions of the *Nutcracker*.

## Performing Arts

### Choreographers in the Classroom

**Objective:** Students will create their own choreography to tell a story without words.

**Materials:** Selection of stories

**Time:** Several class periods

**Procedure:** Students select a story to express through dance. Students can incorporate movements they have seen in the performance (if this is done as a post-performance activity) or they can call upon their own experience of movement and dance. Students should decide what music would be best to help tell their story. In choosing their music have them think about the following qualities: mood, tempo, volume, soft, calm, energetic.

## Visual Arts

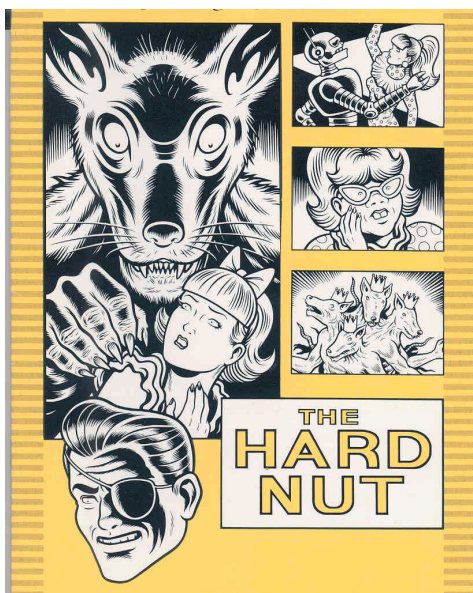
### Designing a Set

Mark Morris choose to change the setting in *The Hard Nut* to a 1960s suburban American household. What would the set look like in your version of *The Hard Nut*?

**Objective:** Students will choose their favorite scene from *The Hard Nut* and redesign one of the sets to correlate with their vision of the setting.

**Materials:** paper, pencils, colored pencils, markers

**Procedure:** Hold a class discussion about the significance of the sets in a performance. What information do the sets give the audience? What is provided visually? What do the viewers eyes need to fill in? Discuss the set design in *The Hard Nut*. Was it effective? What did you like about the sets? Have students select a scene from the performance and design the set for that scene. Have them consider time period, mood, and message of that scene.



The “look” of *The Hard Nut* is based on the art of cartoonist Charles Burns (born 1955), who created this original poster for the production.

# CONTRA COSTA TIMES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2003



MARIE (LAUREN GRANT) falls in love with the Nutcracker Prince (David Leventhal) in Mark Morris' "The Hard Nut," a spoof on the holiday favorite "The Nutcracker."

## 'Hard' may be nutty, but it's sweet

By Anita Amirrezvani  
SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

Chances are you've never seen a "Nutcracker" quite like this one. Mark Morris' zany retelling of the traditional Christmas story is set in a 1960s suburban home, where a yule log burns on a big TV, the maid has attitude, the party guests do the bump and Mom is a guy in drag.

But it would be mistake to view "The Hard Nut" as pure spoof. The show, which repeats Thursday through Sunday at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall, toys with conventions while celebrating time-honored "Nutcracker" themes: the generous spirit of Christmas and a young girl's first experience of falling in love.

As Marie, Lauren Grant radiates innocence and hope compared to her siblings. Brother Fritz is a rambunctious little character who can't help but mess up the party (you'd swear June Omura was a boy). Older sister Louise (Julie Worden) exudes teenage hormones with a streak of meanness.

Friend and family inventor Drosselmeier (Rob Besserer) introduces the mysterious power of love by bringing Marie the wooden nutcracker. His duet with his nephew, the boy Nutcracker (David Leventhal), is a highlight of "The Hard Nut." It says, "This is how to be a loving man." When the Nutcracker dances later with his beloved Marie, it's touching to see how well he has learned his lesson about love.

Better yet, "The Hard Nut" is often uproariously funny. The



THE MICE LOOK threatening in "The Hard Nut," which plays at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall, Thursday-Sunday.

### DANCE REVIEW

■ **WHO:** Mark Morris Dance Group

■ **WHAT:** "The Hard Nut"

■ **WHERE:** Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley

■ **WHEN:** 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Saturday; 3 p.m. Sunday

■ **HOW MUCH:** \$32-\$56

■ **CONTACT:** 510-642-9988; [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu)

ahem, regeneration.

Live music adds zest to the show. The Tchaikovsky score is performed by members of the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Robert Cole. The set by cartoonist Charles Burns is a white-and-black fantasy that looks just right against Martin Pakledinaz's splashy green and red costumes.

Don't miss "The Hard Nut" if you enjoy seeing convention turned on its head, but still have a soft heart.

Snow Scene is cast with female dancers as well as beefy males dressed in tutus with Sno-Cone swirls on their heads. It got roars of appreciation last Friday night, as did the Waltz of the Flowers, a dance about springtime and the joys of,

# 8 Connections to California State Standards



## California State Content Standards Dance Grades K-12

For the particulars to your grade level please visit  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/damain.asp>

### 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

*Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to dance*

Students perceive and respond, using the elements of dance. They demonstrate movement skills, process sensory information, and describe movement, using the vocabulary of dance.

### 2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

*Creating, performing and participating in dance*

Students apply choreographic principles, processes, and skills to create and communicate meaning through the improvisation, composition, and performance of dance.

### 3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

*Understanding the historical contributions and cultural dimensions of dance*

Students analyze the function and development of dance in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to dance and dancers.

#### **4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING**

*Responding to, analyzing, and making judgments about works of dance*

Students critically assess and derive meaning from works of dance, performance of dancers, and original works according to the elements of dance and aesthetic qualities.

#### **5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS**

*Connecting and applying what is learned in dance to learning in other art forms and subject areas and to careers*

Students apply what they learn in dance to learning across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and management of time and resources that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to dance.



This Cal Performances *SchoolTime* Study Guide was  
written, edited and designed by Rachel Davidman,  
Laura Abrams, Hollis Ashby and Nicole Anthony  
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