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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP'S ROMEO AND JULIET
SEPTEMBER 25–28 AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**THE PRODUCTION IS BASED ON PROKOFIEV'S ORIGINAL MUSIC AND
THE ORIGINAL STORY CONCEPT BY SOVIET DRAMATIST SERGEI RADLOV,
WITH NEW CHOREOGRAPHY BY MARK MORRIS**

STEFAN ASBURY CONDUCTS THE BERKELEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

KEY NOTES: Robert Cole and Prof. Richard Taruskin will discuss the production on
Friday, September 26, 5 – 6:30 p.m. at Zellerbach Hall Lobby Mezzanine

BERKELEY, August 18, 2008—Cal Performances 2008/09 Dance series opens with a new work by **Mark Morris: *Romeo & Juliet, On Motifs of Shakespeare***. This landmark, fully staged dance production is set to composer Sergei Prokofiev's original version of *Romeo and Juliet*, including previously unheard music and a radically different ending, and features the **Mark Morris Dance Group** (MMDG). The production relies on exclusive documents unearthed in Moscow by Princeton University musicologist **Simon Morrison** and represents the first time Prokofiev's ballet is performed according to the composer's instructions. "[The music] was edgier, spikier and more emotionally piercing than the later state-approved version," commented *The Washington Post*.

The production, featuring two alternating casts, "tweaks the scenario ingeniously" (*Village Voice*). Performing the title roles are MMDG dancers **Maile Okamura** and **Noah Vinson** (September 25 & 26); and **Rita Donahue** and **David Leventhal** (September 27 & 28). Production design is by **Allen Moyer** (scenic), **Martin Pakledinaz** (costume) and **James F. Ingalls** (lighting), all of whom are longtime collaborators of Mark Morris. The **Berkeley Symphony Orchestra** will perform under the direction of **Stefan Asbury**. The production is co-commissioned by Cal Performances.

A free *Key Notes* talk will be given by Cal Performances' Director **Robert Cole** and UC

Berkeley musicologist Professor **Richard Taruskin** Friday, September 26, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. at Zellerbach Hall Lobby Mezzanine; light refreshments will be served. *Key Notes* talks are presented by Cal Performances in association with the UC Berkeley Departments of Music and Theater, Dance and Performance Studies.

ROMEO & JULIET, ON MOTIFS OF SHAKESPEARE

It may be hard to believe, but *Romeo and Juliet*, arguably the most popular ballet of the 20th century, has never been performed as the composer intended. Prokofiev's original version, rediscovered by musicologist **Simon Morrison** at the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, contains the composer's detailed instructions with respect to the orchestration. It also includes six new dance numbers.

Prokofiev conceived *Romeo and Juliet* in 1935 in collaboration with innovative Soviet dramatist Sergei Radlov, who re-imagined the familiar tragedy “as a struggle for the right to love by young, strong, and progressive people battling against feudal traditions and feudal outlooks on marriage and family.” However, in a gesture that caused a scandal in Soviet ballet circles, Prokofiev and Radlov dropped the ballet's tragic ending. In the final scene, Juliet rouses from her potion-induced sleep just as Romeo begins to conclude that she has died. The two lovers express their feelings of relief and joy in a final dance. The music represents the two lovers willing away their world—the Verona square and palace—and entering another, greater one.

Until now, this final act has never been staged. Prokofiev presented his score to Soviet cultural officials, who responded by canceling the premiere productions in Leningrad and Moscow. Prokofiev at first defended his and Radlov's ending, arguing that “living people can dance, the dying cannot” and that “Shakespeare was himself said to be uncertain about the endings of his plays.” However, had he not rewritten the score, he would never have seen it staged.

The artistic climate in Stalin's Russia darkened: in dance, music, and drama, conservative neoclassicism supplanted innovation. Not only was Prokofiev forced to rewrite the ending of the ballet—replacing the entire fourth act with an epilogue—he was forced to insert large-scale solo

dances for the Ball and Balcony Scenes, the result being a break-up of the dramatic flow. A divertissement involving three exotic dances in Act III was scrapped for logistical reasons. The Kirov Theater dancers complained about the difficulty of the rhythms, and the original choreographer, Leonid Lavrovsky, insisted on thickening the orchestration. As the demands piled up, Prokofiev became increasingly frustrated, but each time, he acquiesced in an effort to see the work performed. The ballet received its Russian premiere in 1940. He pleaded to undo the changes that he had strongly resisted, no avail to.

MMDG, which normally numbers 18 members, has been enlarged to accommodate the many roles. The lovers' parents, the Montagues and Capulets, will be performed by former MMDG dancers Teri Weksler and Guillermo Resto, Megan Williams and Shawn Gannon respectively. In a gender twist, Morris cast Amber Darragh and Julie Worden as Mercutio and Tybalt.

Romeo & Juliet, On Motifs of Shakespeare was commissioned by the Fisher Center at Bard College plus an international consortium of co-commissioners including Cal Performances; Barbican Theatre, London; Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Millennium Park, Chicago; Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; and Virginia Arts Festival. The production had its world premiere at Bard SummerScape Festival (2008).

MARK MORRIS

“**[Mark Morris]** has made works that are among the peaks of American dance (and thus world dance) and that have taken dance expression where it has not been before, with visions of human contrast and harmony, comic and bleak at the same time” (*The New York Times*).

Morris first and foremost is known as a choreographer, but he is also a director, philanthropist and a powerful creative force in dance, music, education and culture. He grew up in Seattle, Washington, studied with Verla Flowers and Perry Brunson, and danced for an eclectic group of companies prior to forming Mark Morris Dance Group in 1980. In 1988,

Morris became Director of Dance for the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels where he and his company remained for three years while Morris completed 12 works including three acclaimed evening-length pieces: *The Hard Nut*; *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*; and *Dido and Aeneas*.

In addition to choreographing more than 120 works for the Mark Morris Dance Group, Morris has created six ballets for the San Francisco Ballet since 1994 as well as works for American Ballet Theatre and the Boston Ballet, among others. He 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 (and close friend) Isaac Mizrahi, tabla player Zakir Hussain, and sculptor Stephen Hende. Morris 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 a choreographer has directed at the Met.

Morris was honored with the 2007 Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award at Duke University in Durham and he has also received the *Dance* magazine award in 1991 and the Capezio Award in 1997. In 1991, he was named a fellow of the MacArthur Foundation; he has received eight honorary doctorates including from the Boston Conservatory of Music, The Juilliard School, Long Island University, Pratt Institute, Bowdoin College and George Mason University. Morris is the subject of a biography by Joan Acocella (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and, in 2001, Marlowe and Company published *Mark Morris' L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, a volume of photographs and essays.

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

The **Mark Morris Dance Group** was formed in 1980 and gave its first concert that year in New York City. The company's touring schedule steadily expanded to include 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*. In 1988, MMDG was invited to become the national dance company of Belgium, and spent three years in residence at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. The company returned to the United States in 1991 as one of the world's leading dance companies, performing across the U.S. and at major international festivals.

Based in Brooklyn, NY, the company has maintained and strengthened its ties to several cities around the world, most notably its west coast home Cal Performances in Berkeley and its Midwest home the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in Urbana, IL. MMDG also appears regularly in New York City; Boston, MA; Fairfax, VA; Seattle, WA; and at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, MA. MMDG made its debut at the Mostly Mozart Festival in 2002 and at the Tanglewood Music Festival in 2003 and has since been invited to both festivals annually. The company's London seasons have garnered two Laurence Olivier Awards.

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), among others.

The Mark Morris Dance Group first came to Cal Performances in 1987, and since 1994 has returned every year. Its visits to Zellerbach Hall often include world premieres: *Candleflowerdance* (2005); *Rock of Ages* (2004); *All Fours, Something Lies Beyond the Scene* and *Kolam* (2003); *Falling Down Stairs* and *Rhymes with Silver* (1997); and *World Power* (1995). In 2001, MMDG delivered an encore presentation of Rameau's comic opera-ballet *Platée* as well as a preview performance of *V* (called "one of the few great works that modern dance has produced in a decade" by *The New York Times*). 2000 featured the American premiere of *Four Saints in Three Acts*. Morris's production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* had its West Coast premiere in 1995. Most recently, Cal Performances presented the American premiere of *King Arthur* (2006) and the West Coast premiere of *Mozart Dances* (2007).

The company has garnered many awards and accolades, including the Hamada Prize (the Edinburgh Festival's highest honor, 1995) and the Lawrence Olivier Award (1997 and 2001). MMDG is the first dance company to appear at the Mostly Mozart Festival and the Tanglewood Music Festival.

STEFAN ASBURY

Stefan Ashbury recently assumed the position of Artist in Association with Tapiola Sinfonietta with whom he will conduct four projects. From 2001- 2005, he held the post of the first Music Director of Remix Ensemble Casa da Musica Porto. Highlights of recent seasons include his debut with Dresden Philharmonic in a program which includes Bartok's *Wooden Prince*, and conducting Grisey's *Les Espaces Acoustiques* with Bayerischer Rundfunk as part of the Munich Biennale. Asbury will also return to the Venice Biennale to perform three concerts with Klangforum Wien, the Wien Modern with Radio Symphony Orchestra Wien and will conduct a production of Wolfgang Rihm's opera *Jakob Lenz* for the Wiener Festwochen. He will also conduct NDR Hannover, WDR Cologne and a Bartok/Ligeti concert with the Flemish Radio Orchestra.

Asbury has forged strong relationships with many composers, including Steve Reich, Wolfgang Rihm, Rebecca Saunders, Unsuk Chin and Mark Anthony Turnage. In June 2007 he conducted the London Sinfonietta world premiere of Turnage's *About Water* to celebrate the re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall in London.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for *Romeo & Juliet, On Motifs of Shakespeare* on **Thursday-Saturday, September 25–27 at 8:00 p.m.**, and **Sunday, September 28 at 3:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$42.00, \$62.00, \$94.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash

only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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Classical 102.1 KDFC is our 2008/09 season media sponsor.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:
CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Thursday–Saturday, September 25–27 at 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, September 28 at 3:00 p.m.**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave, Berkeley**

Special Event

Romeo & Juliet, On Motifs of Shakespeare

Sergei Prokofiev, composer

Mark Morris, director/choreographer

Stefan Asbury, conductor

Mark Morris Dance Group

Berkeley Symphony Orchestra

Program: The West Coast premiere of Mark Morris's *Romeo & Juliet, On Motifs of Shakespeare*, is set to composer Sergei Prokofiev's original version of the score and features the Mark Morris Dance Group.

Tickets: \$42.00, \$62.00 and \$94.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door.

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Friday, Sept. 26 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

KEY NOTES

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave, Berkeley**

Romeo & Juliet, On Motifs of Shakespeare Key Notes talk will be given by Cal Performances' Director **Robert Cole** and Prof. **Richard Taruskin**; light refreshments will be served. These events are free but tickets must be purchased to see the production.