

CONTACT:  
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714  
ckellogg@calperformances.org  
Joe Yang 510.642.9121  
jyang@calperformances.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 14, 2012

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**  
**MARK MORRIS'S ACCLAIMED *THE HARD NUT***  
**DECEMBER 14–23 AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**George Cleve conducts the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra with  
Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir**

**BERKELEY, November 14, 2012**—“...something approaching a miracle...”  
(*Washington Post*) comes to Cal Performances' **Zellerbach Hall, Friday–Sunday, December 14–16 and Thursday–Sunday, December 20–23**, as **Mark Morris's *The Hard Nut*** returns to the Bay Area after a three year hiatus for the holidays. It is a festive reimagining of **Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky's** beloved *Nutcracker* ballet—with its tale of childhood hopes and fears, fairytale menace and life-renewing love that Morris sets in the 1970s. It features dancing Barbie dolls, go-go boots, G.I. Joe soldiers, leaping snowflakes, inspired gender-bending casting, 93 costume changes, over 60 set pieces and props including 20 lbs. of confetti for the “Waltz of the Snowflakes” scene, all set to Tchaikovsky's glorious score. For the first time in Berkeley, Morris will take on the role of Dr. Stahlbaum/King. Sets and costumes for *The Hard Nut* are based on concepts of comic-book artist and illustrator **Charles Burns** and were designed by longtime MMDG collaborators **Adrienne Lobel** (sets), **Martin Pakledinaz** (costumes) and **James F. Ingalls** (lighting). Maestro **George Cleve** will conduct the **Berkeley Symphony Orchestra** in Tchaikovsky's complete score and the **Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir**, under the direction of **Robert Geary**, once again lend their voices. “Going back to *The Hard Nut* is like revisiting a dear old friend. You laugh at the foibles, rejoice at the triumphs and find delight in the familiar. You anticipate responses, but they still evoke laughter and even, occasionally, plunge you into a moment of reflection” (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

*The Hard Nut* premiered in Belgium in 1991; it was Morris's farewell gift to his European hosts before stepping down as Director of Dance at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, the national opera house of Belgium. The production was greeted with unanimous critical

-MORE-

acclaim and uproarious applause. Cal Performances presented the West Coast premiere of *The Hard Nut* in December 1996 and has re-mounted the production often to rave reviews.

## ARTISTS

Several dancers return to familiar *Hard Nut* roles, including **Lauren Grant** (Marie), **June Omura** (Fritz), **John Heginbotham** (Mrs. Stahlbaum/Queen) and **Kraig Patterson** (Housekeeper/Nurse). Dancers **Aaron Loux**, **Billy Smith** and **Jenn Weddel** will perform the roles of Nutcracker/Young Drosselmeier, Drosselmeier, and Louise/Princess Pirlipat respectively. **Shawn Gannon**, who danced with the company from 1995–2004, returns as one of the Party Guests in Act I and the Dentist in Act II. The rest of the Mark Morris Dance Group join the principals as Party Guests, Rat Soldiers, G.I. Joes, Snow, Suitors, Spaniards, Arabians, Chinese, Russians, Frenchmen and Flowers.

The work of comic book artist and illustrator **Charles Burns** is the basis for the production's distinctive look. **Adrienne Lobel** (sets), **James F. Ingalls** (lighting) and **Martin Pakledinaz** (costumes) are each longtime design cohorts of Morris'. Lobel and Ingalls have collaborated with Morris on a number of works, including Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* and Purcell's *King Arthur*. Pakledinaz most recently designed the costumes for Morris's *Festival Dance* in 2011.

**George Cleve**, who will guest conduct the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, is the cofounder of the Midsummer Mozart Festival and has conducted orchestra nationally and abroad for over 20 years. **Robert Geary** is the artistic conductor of the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir and together they have toured through the United States and performed in numerous music festivals such as the Oregon Bach Festival and Newport Music Festival.

Mark Morris was born on August 29, 1956, in Seattle, Washington. In the early years of his career, he performed with Lar Lubovitch, Hannah Kahn, Laura Dean, Eliot Feld and the Koleda Balkan Dance Ensemble. He formed the Mark Morris Dance Group in 1980, and has since created more than 130 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.

Morris is also much in demand as a ballet choreographer. He has created eight works for the San Francisco Ballet since 1994 and received commissions from American Ballet Theatre and the Boston Ballet, among others both nationally and internationally. Morris is noted for his musicality and has been described as “undeviating in his devotion to music” (*The New Yorker*).

Most recently Morris has been awarded the Benjamin Franklin Creativity Laureate Award (2012) and Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award (2010). He is the subject of a biography by Joan Acocella (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and Marlowe & Company published a volume of photographs and critical essays entitled *Mark Morris' L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato: A Celebration*. He also has received 11 honorary doctorates including a recently from the Cornish School of Arts in 2011.

The **Mark Morris Dance Group** was formed in 1980 and gave its first performance that year in New York City. Based in Brooklyn, New York, the company has maintained and strengthened its ties to several cities around the world, most notably its West Coast home Cal Performances. The group first came to Cal Performances in 1987, and has returned every year since 1994. Visits to Zellerbach Hall include world premieres and West Coast premieres such as *Socrates* (2010), *Romeo & Juliet*, *On Motifs of Shakespeare* (2008), *Mozart Dances* (2007), *King Arthur* (2006) *Candleflowerdance* (2005), *Rock of Ages* (2004), *All Fours* (2003), *Something Lies Beyond the Scene* (2003) and *Kolam* (2003). More information about Mark Morris and MMDG can be found at <http://markmorrisdancegroup.org>.

### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for ***The Hard Nut* Friday–Sunday, December 14–16 and Thursday–Sunday, December 20–23** in **Zellerbach Hall** range from **\$30.00– \$110.00**, subject to change. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley

students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5.00 discount (Special Events excluded). For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior, and community rush tickets. For more information about discounts, go to <http://calperformances.org/buy/discounts.php> or call (510) 642-9988.

# # #

Cal Performances thanks Wells Fargo and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their major support of the Season.

# # #

**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Friday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m.**  
**Saturday, December 15 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.**  
**Sunday, December 16 at 3:00 p.m.**  
**Thursday & Friday, December 20 & 21 at 7:30 p.m.**  
**Saturday, December 22 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.**  
**Sunday, December 23 at 3:00 p.m.**

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

*Holiday*

*The Hard Nut*

**Mark Morris**, director/choreographer

**Mark Morris Dance Group**

**Berkeley Symphony Orchestra**

**George Cleve**, conductor

**Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir**

**Robert Geary**, artistic director

**Program:** *The Hard Nut*, directed and choreographed by Mark Morris featuring the Mark Morris Dance Group and members of the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra conducted by George Cleve, with The Children of the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choirs, comes to Cal Performances.

**Tickets:** Range from **\$30.00–\$110.00**, subject to change, with half-price discounts for children 16 and under on Friday, December 14 and Thursday & Friday, December 20 & 21, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door.

-----  
– Cal Performances –