

For Immediate Release: April 9, 2025

[Cal Performances press room](#)



Images of Mark Morris Dance Group are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#). A video of Mark Morris Dance Group performing excerpts from *Pepperland* can be viewed on [YouTube](#).

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP
PEPPERLAND
MAY 9–11
AT ZELLERBACH HALL

Berkeley, April 9, 2025— Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes back the **Mark Morris Dance Group** and Music Ensemble for performances of *Pepperland*, Friday–Sunday, May 9–11 at Zellerbach Hall. Choreographed by **Mark Morris** with original music and arrangements by **Ethan Iverson**, and co-commissioned by Cal Performances, *Pepperland* celebrates the 50th anniversary of the release of the Beatles’ seminal recording, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*. *Pepperland* premiered in Liverpool in May 2017, and was enthusiastically received at the time of its Bay Area premiere during Cal Performances’ 2018–19 season. The production has been widely praised for balancing technical rigor and precision with humor, wit, and exuberance.

Of his inspiration for creating *Pepperland*, Morris said of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, “This great album set a radical new direction for popular music and thought. I was just a child. 50 years later, with contemporary eyes and ears, we are presenting a comment and a rethinking of this profound cultural artifact with all of the imagination, surprise, humor, and bizarrrity intact.”

The music for *Pepperland*, was created by composer, pianist, and longtime Morris collaborator Ethan Iverson, who returns to Berkeley with the company performing on piano and leading a chamber ensemble of **Clinton Curtis**, *vocals*; **Sam Newsome**, *soprano saxophone*; **Jacob Garchik**, *trombone*; **Chris McCarthy**, *keyboard*; **Rob Schwimmer**, *theremin*; and **Vinnie Sperrazza**, *percussion*. The score intermingles arrangements of songs from the Beatles' album with original music. Selections include re-imagined versions of the songs "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," "With a Little Help From My Friends," "A Day in the Life," "When I'm Sixty-Four," "Within You Without You," and "Penny Lane" (a song recorded during the *Sgt. Pepper* studio sessions but not included on the album). To augment these, Iverson composed six original pieces that showcase Morris' connection to classical music/dance forms: Allegro, Scherzo, Adagio, and the blues.

Pepperland features vibrant costumes by another Morris collaborator, Elizabeth Kurtzman, who was inspired by London's famed Carnaby Street to create garments that playfully evoke 1960s mod fashion, psychedelia, and the Beatles' unmistakable sense of style.

On Sunday, May 11 at 3pm, Cal Performances offers a live audio description of the performance and a haptic access tour for blind and visually impaired audience members. Live audio description is spoken by a professional audio describer through a wireless headset system and designed to provide clear and engaging descriptions of the meaningful visual details of a performance. Haptic access tours allow patrons to experience—through touch and movement—the space, performers, costumes, and objects in addition to key movement elements in the performance. Headsets and space on the tour may be reserved by contacting the Cal Performances Ticket Office at (510) 642-9988 or tickets@calperformances.org or by making a reservation when tickets are purchased. Additional information about services available for patrons with disabilities can be found at calperformances.org/accessibility.

More about the artists who created *Pepperland* and further background information about the work can be found on its dedicated website, pepperland.dance.

Mark Morris

Mark Morris has been hailed as "the most prodigiously gifted choreographer of the post-Balanchine era" (*Time*). In addition to creating more than 150 works for his dance group, which he founded in 1980, Morris conducts orchestras, directs opera, and choreographs for ballet companies around the

world. Morris is a MacArthur Foundation Fellow, and has received 11 honorary doctorates to date. His other notable accomplishments include winning 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. The *New York Times* describes Morris as “the most successful and influential choreographer alive, and indisputably the most musical,” and live music is integral to any Mark Morris Dance Group performance. The group has toured with its musicians, the MMDG Music Ensemble, since 1996.

Cal Performances Partnership

The Mark Morris Dance Group first performed in Berkeley in 1987, and began making annual visits in 1994, officially dubbing Cal Performances its “West Coast home away from home” in 2002. Last season with the performance *Via Dolorosa*, the Mark Morris Dance Group brought its 14th world premiere to Berkeley. Cal Performances has commissioned or co-commissioned 11 new works from Morris over the course of an artistic relationship spanning more than 35 years.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Friday, May 9, 8pm

Saturday, May 10, 8pm

Sunday, May 11, 3pm

**Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street,
UC Berkeley campus**

Dance

Mark Morris Dance Group

Pepperland (Cal Performances Co-commission)

Mark Morris, *choreography*

Ethan Iverson, *composer*

Program:

Mark Morris Dance Group presents its romp through the Beatles’ groundbreaking concept album, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Vibrantly colored costumes, ensemble numbers, and the often poignant production features a score of Beatles arrangements plus originals by longtime Morris musical collaborator Ethan Iverson who, on piano, leads an ensemble of voice, theremin, soprano sax, trombone, keyboard, and percussion.

For blind and visually impaired audience members, a live audio description and haptic access tour are available for the Sunday, May 11 performance. Headsets and space on the tour may be reserved at no charge by contacting the Cal Performances Ticket Office at (510) 642-9988 or tickets@calperformances.org or making a reservation when tickets are purchased.

Tickets: \$42–\$148 (prices subject to change). Tickets for all performances are available at calperformances.org, by phone at (510) 642-9988, or in person at the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, Tuesday–Friday, 12–5:30pm and Saturday–Sunday, 1–5pm. There is a \$15 per order service charge on ticket purchases made by phone or online that are not part of a subscription package. There is no fee for tickets purchased in person at the Zellerbach Hall Ticket Office unless they are part of a subscription. There is a \$20 service charge on all subscription orders.

UC Berkeley students can access exclusive discounts, including half-price tickets in all sections of the theater. Information about UC Berkeley student tickets and discounts is available at calperformances.org/ucb-students; information about other discounts can be found at calperformances.org/discounts.

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