

PS 8 Enrichment Program: Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG)



The Mark Morris Dance Group, a modern dance company founded in 1980, is

proud to call Fort Greene, Brooklyn its home. MMDG has had a relationship with PS8 for the last four years on its dance, music and literacy project. Again this year, they will be working with first graders to interpret and explore parts of Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, culminating in a live performance by members of the company at their studio in Fort Greene.

MMDG conducts in-school residences to introduce Brooklyn school children to Mark Morris's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*. The book *Mark Morris' L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato: A Celebration* (Marlowe & Company, 2001) shows how Mr. Morris created his dance by "collaborating" with three long-dead artists: the composer G.F. Handel, the poet John Milton, and the artist William Blake. This creative effort, spanning 350 years, is a perfect starting point for learning about the interaction of words, music, and dance.

Working with live musicians, teachers guide students through the poems, the music, and the choreography. Students learn to dance sections of the piece, culminating in a performance, and also learn to create original dances. Students visit the Mark Morris Dance Center for a private performance and conversation with the Dance Group.

MMDG collaborates with faculty from each host school to shape the residency, which emphasizes "curriculum connections" with English, the arts, music, social studies, and math.

MMDG provides faculty with a study guide, books, and videos, and confers with them throughout the process.

About 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 U.S. and in Europe, and in 1986 it made its first national television program for the PBS series *Dance in America*. Mark Morris himself, the founder of the company, is one of the leading choreographers of his day and known for his great musicality and commitment to live music in performances of his works – three of his best-known being *The Hard Nut*; *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*; and *Dido and Aeneas*. In fall 2001, MMDG opened the Mark Morris Dance Center in Fort Greene, Brooklyn - the company's first permanent headquarters in the U.S., housing rehearsal space for the dance community, outreach programs for local children, as well as a school offering dance classes to students of all ages. By doing outreach to the Brooklyn schools, MMDG fulfills its mission to serve as a cultural resource to engage and enrich the community.

<http://markmorrisdancegroup.org>