Morris, Mark (1956-) Encyclopedia Article

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The most important new choreographer to emerge since the mid-1970s, Mark Morris has created a bold synthesis of ballet, folk and modern dance. Morris has built on his early training and experience as performer of folk dancing by incorporating both modern dance and ballet movements within a framework of folk-like ensemble dancing. In 1988 Morris and his company took up residence at Brussel's Royal Opera House. In three tumultuous and controversial years, while local critics and audiences rejected Morris's aesthetically and often sexually provocative work, he produced several of his most important dance pieces, including the evening-length *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato,* based on Handel's oratorio, and the *Hard Nut,* his parody of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker,* set in the suburban home of a dysfunctional family. Dance critic and Morris biographer, Joan Acocella, like many other critics, sees Morris as a true "classical" choreographer—and the leading successor to George Balanchine—because his dance pieces issue directly from the music.

Further Reading:

Acocella, Joan. *Mark Morris.* New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993.

Mark Morris Dance Group. *The Hard Nut* (videotape). Elektra Nonesuch Video Dance Collection, 1992.