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MEDIA RELEASE
THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2015

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE PRESENTS

DANCE FOR PARKINSON'S & SCHOOL WORKSHOPS WITH NEW YORK'S MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

People with Parkinson's Disease and NSW school students will be offered a once in a lifetime opportunity to dance at the Sydney Opera House this June thanks to a series of dance workshops hosted in conjunction with New York's internationally acclaimed **Mark Morris Dance Group**.

Coinciding with their highly-anticipated Sydney season – featuring the Australian premiere of four of Morris' most celebrated works, the Mark Morris Dance Group will bring their innovative global program **Dance for PD** (Parkinson's Disease) to the Sydney Opera House for the first time. A free community class on Sunday 7 June will offer people with Parkinson's and their carers the opportunity to participate in a dance class led by dancers from the Mark Morris Dance Group alongside American-born, Australian based dancer and Rotary World Peace Fellow **Erica Rose Jeffrey**. The free class will integrate movement from modern dance, ballet, tap, folk and social dancing – allowing people with Parkinson's the opportunity to explore the range of physical and creative possibilities that are open to them.

A two-day introductory teachers' training workshop will also be held on 6-7 June, to assist in growing a network of qualified teachers who can lead dance classes across Sydney into the future.

Since its inception as a small monthly class at the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn in 2001, *Dance for PD* has conquered the world – positively impacting the lives of thousands of people with Parkinson's via classes and workshops offered in more than 100 communities across nine countries.

Dance for Parkinson's Australia Program Coordinator Erica Rose Jeffrey said that *Dance for PD* is an opportunity for Sydney's Parkinson's community to experience the benefits of dance at Australia's most iconic landmark.

"Dance for Parkinson's (PD) encourages participants to approach movement like dancers, not patients, and to dance for dancing's sake! Through dance classes, participants are empowered with a sense of physical, artistic and creative achievement within a supportive community. It is an incredible opportunity to experience this at the Sydney Opera House with artists from the legendary Mark Morris Dance Group," she said.

School students from across NSW will also have the chance to dance with members of the Mark Morris Dance Group thanks to a partnership between Sydney Opera House and The Arts Unit, NSW Department of Education and Communities. Company dancers will facilitate two education workshops, including a dance class for students with physical and intellectual disabilities, and a master class with NSW's most talented dance school students.

Sydney Opera House Accessibility Manager Jenny Spinak said that the Sydney Opera House is delighted to work in partnership with The Arts Unit, NSW Department of Education and Communities to deliver such an important program.

"This is the first time that NSW school students with disabilities will have the opportunity to experience a workshop with an internationally acclaimed dance company. The Opera House belongs



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to everyone and this important partnership will help ensure that our world-class performances and activities are open to as many people as possible," she said.

The highly anticipated Sydney season of Mark Morris Dance Group opens 3 June at Sydney Opera House and will feature the Australian premiere of four original works.

For media information contact:

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DANCE FOR PD & TEACHERS' WORKSHOP DETAILS

Further information and links to register for the *Dance for PD* and teachers' workshop can be found on the Sydney Opera House website at www.sydneyoperahouse.com

SEASON DETAILS

WHAT: Mark Morris Dance Group

WHEN: 3 – 6 June

WHERE: Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House

TICKETS: From \$39 at www.sydneyoperahouse.com or 02 9250 7777

Presenting Partner:

