

Bartlesville

# EXAMINER-ENTERPRISE

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*Excerpted from an article profiling Mark Morris Dance Group while on tour in Tulsa, OK. The company offered community classes for all ages and levels as a supplemental experience to their premiere performance at Tulsa Performing Arts Center. The full article published as "Dance themes underscore communication in film, concerts," is available online.*

## Dance for PD & Educational Outreach

Tulsa master classes held by members of the MMDG included a unique class, Dance for PD, in dance movement designed for those afflicted with Parkinson's disease, which limits mobility and can trap individuals in their own body.

Led by MMDG members John Heginbotham and Samuel Black, the group of diverse ages started with seated foot and arm exercises, eventually proceeding to floor exercises that took many, some in wheelchairs, across The Dance Pointe studio floor, with a new sense of freedom and joy.

Heginbotham is a founding teacher of Dance for PD, a program initiated by MMDG and the Brooklyn Parkinson Group. He explains that the MMDG company classes always begin with ballet movement, and later demonstrates some moves from "The Hard Nut," the Mark Morris contemporary version of The Nutcracker, "which I first saw during the Ovation TV's 2010 "Battle of the Nutcrackers," a competition that includes selected major dance companies in diverse original productions of the famed holiday classic.

"The Hard Nut" was chosen as the viewer's choice favorite three years in a row and was the last of 12 works Morris choreographed in Brussels, also seen on the PBS Great Performances "Dance in America" series.

Aware that the powerful reach of music coupled with dance movement can "unlock" the physical limitations of PD, at least momentarily, the Mark Morris Dance Center located in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, N.Y., has taken leadership in providing such classes for PD patients, with great success. Some 30 to 50 persons currently attend weekly classes there.

Jim Keating, executive director of the Parkinson Foundation of Oklahoma, was instrumental in assisting MMDG with the Tulsa Dance for PD classes connections.



Dance instructor John Heginbotham, from the Mark Morris Dance Group, leads a group of Parkinson's patients and their supporters at The Dance Pointe. CORY YOUNG / Tulsa World