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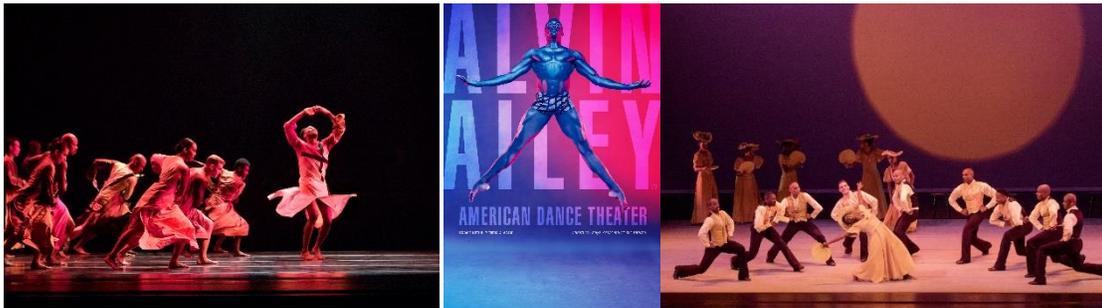
ROBERT W. CROSS
PERRY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Brings New Works To Virginia Arts Festival March 2 – 4, 2018

Three performances at Chrysler Hall; Tickets are on sale now

Ailey's 32 Extraordinary Dancers Will Inspire Audiences in Exciting Premieres, New Productions, and Alvin Ailey's Must-See American Masterpiece, *Revelations*

Tour Features New Production by Talley Beatty in Celebration of His Upcoming Centennial



AAADT in Robert Battle's *Mass*. Photo by Paul Kolnik AAADT's Michael Jackson, Jr. Photo by Andrew Eccles; AAADT in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*. Photo by Paul Kolnik

(Norfolk, VA) **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** will showcase their spectacular artistry, talent, diversity, and range for three performances **March 2 – 4** at Chrysler Hall in Norfolk, Virginia, presented by the Virginia Arts Festival.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.vafest.org, by phone at 757-282-2822 or by visiting the Virginia Arts Festival box office located at 440 Bank Street in Norfolk between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Artistic Director Robert Battle leads Ailey's 32 extraordinary dancers as they continue the Company's legacy of using the African-American cultural experience and the American modern dance tradition to uplift, unite, and enlighten. The company's expansive repertory includes returning favorites, new productions, and world premieres by some of the freshest choreographic voices in modern dance.

Of course, the Virginia Arts Festival engagement would be incomplete without **Alvin Ailey's** American masterpiece [*Revelations*](#). Since its creation in 1960, *Revelations* has been seen by more audiences around the world than any other modern work, inspiring generations through its powerful storytelling and soul-stirring spirituals. Springing from Ailey's childhood memories of growing up in the south and attending services at Mount Olive Baptist Church in Texas, *Revelations* pays homage to the rich cultural heritage of the African-American and explores the emotional spectrum of the human condition. *Revelations* has been performed as part of Opening Ceremonies of the 1968 Olympics, for six sitting presidents at various events, at the inaugurations of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, and at The White House Dance Series: A Tribute to Judith Jamison, presented by then First Lady Michelle Obama. Acknowledging its lasting significance after five decades, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution recognizing the artistic and cultural contributions of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the 50th Anniversary of

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the first performance of *Revelations*. Hailed by *The New York Times* as "modern dance's unquestionable greatest hit," this American masterpiece was choreographed when Alvin Ailey was only 29 years old and is as relevant now as ever.

Virginia Arts Festival's presentation of Alvin Ailey® American Dance Theater is part of its three-year partnership with **American Evolution™**, an initiative of the Commonwealth of Virginia commemorating the 400th anniversary of key historical events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Through a series of signature events and education programs of national and international significance, the American Evolution™ initiative is inspiring local, national, and international engagement in the themes of democracy, diversity, and opportunity and building awareness of Virginia's role in the creation of the United States and Virginia's leadership in education, tourism, and economic development over the past 400 years. The Virginia Arts Festival partnership with American Evolution™ began in 2017 and continues through 2019.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Chrysler Hall, Norfolk

Friday, March 2 at 8:00 pm - *Stack-Up, Episodes, Ella, Revelations*

Saturday, March 3 at 8:00 pm - *Night Creature, Cry, Untitled America, Revelations*

Sunday, March 4 at 3:00 pm - *Stack-Up, Episodes, Ella, Revelations*

Stack-Up (1982/ New Production 2017)

Choreography by Talley Beatty

Music: Earth, Wind & Fire, Grover Washington, Jr., Fearless Four, Alphonze Mouzon

Set to the background of a throbbing 1970s beat (Earth, Wind and Fire, Grover Washington Jr., Fearless Four, and Alphonze Mouzon) and a graffiti landscape, patrons in a crowded disco dance with attitude, sass, and fierce despair in this classic work by Talley Beatty. Inspired by Los Angeles' urban landscape and the lives of its disparate inhabitants, *Stack-Up* depicts the emotional "traffic" in a community that is stacked on top of each other. Tough, brutal yet poignant, the stage sizzles with street life, break dancing, and physical pyrotechnics as an aloof drug pusher and two displaced lovers are destined for collision. The work returns to the stage for Beatty's 2018 centennial.

Episodes (1987 / Ailey Company Premiere 1989)

Choreography by Ulysses Dove

Music: Robert Ruggieri

Ulysses Dove created his explosive masterpiece, *Episodes*, for the classical London Festival Ballet in 1987. The company danced the piece in bare feet. The following year, Dove re-choreographed the dance on pointe for Patrick Dupond's Ballet Francais de Nancy. In 1989, Alvin Ailey took *Episodes* into the repertory of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, allowing audiences a glimpse of what dance would look like in the next century. Like his mentor Ailey, who was always exploring the battle of the sexes in his choreography, Dove sharply exposed the eternal dilemma of men and women—can we live with each other or can we live without each other?

"...all the trademarks of a Dove piece: speed, explosive jumps, and whiplash spins. Dancers shoot across the stage like waves hitting rocks."

The New York Times

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Ella (2008 / Ailey Company Premiere 2016)

Choreography by Robert Battle

Music: Ella Fitzgerald

Originally created as a solo, this high-energy comical dance was reinvented as a duet by the Ailey company for its December 2016 opening night gala benefit, "An Evening of Ailey and Jazz" – in anticipation of the legendary singer Ella Fitzgerald's centennial in April 2017. Using a live concert recording of Fitzgerald performing the song "Airmail Special," *Ella* matches the iconic singer's virtuosic scatting with lightning-fast, articulated movement in an irresistible tour-de-force that leaves audiences (and the dancers) breathless.

Revelations (1960)

Choreography by Alvin Ailey

Music: Traditional Spirituals

More than just a popular dance work, *Revelations* has become a cultural treasure, beloved by generations of fans. An American classic acclaimed as a must-see for all, Alvin Ailey's signature masterpiece is a tribute to his heritage and genius. Using African-American spirituals, the work fervently explores the places of deepest grief and holiest joy in the soul. Seeing *Revelations* for the first time or the hundredth can be a transcendent experience, with audiences cheering, singing along and dancing in their seats from the opening notes of the plaintive "I Been 'Buked" to the rousing "Wade in the Water" and the triumphant finale, "Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham."

Night Creature (1974 / Ailey Company Premiere 1975)

Choreography by Alvin Ailey

Music Duke Ellington

In *Night Creature*, Alvin Ailey's classically influenced choreography juxtaposes with Duke Ellington's jazz idiom. One of Mr. Ailey's most popular works, the dance captivates with Ailey's sensual nighttime rituals, propelling the movement into a fast-paced climatic catharsis using slow jazz walks, boogie-woogie, and ballet arabesques to create prowling patterns and communal configurations. "This remains one of Ailey's best curtain-raisers, and the company throws themselves into its elf-like spirit with only rhythmic measure containing their dance abandon." - *New York Post*

Cry (1971/ New Production 2015)

Choreography by Alvin Ailey Music: Alice Coltrane, Laura Nyro, and Chuck Griffin

In 1971, Alvin Ailey choreographed the ballet, *Cry*, as a birthday present for his mother; it went on to become an enduring work of American art. This 16-minute solo, which was first danced by the legendary Judith Jamison, is dedicated to "all black women everywhere – especially our mothers." The solo is made up of three parts – the first set to Alice Coltrane's "Something about John Coltrane," the second to Laura Nyro's "Been on a Train" and the last has the Voices of East Harlem singing "Right On, Be Free." The female soloist represents all black women, depicting their African origins, the trials and tribulations they have endured and their joyful triumph over those hardships.

Untitled America (2016)

Choreography by Kyle Abraham

Music: Laura Mvula, Raime, Carsten Nicolai, Kris Bowers, and Traditional

In the complete production of this haunting three-part suite *Untitled America*, MacArthur "Genius" Kyle Abraham, shines a light on the impact of the prison system on African-American families. Developed over three seasons, the work features interviews by those impacted by incarceration. Laura Mvula's touching "Father, Father," the traditional spiritual "No More My Lord," contemporary music by Raime, and other musical compositions underscore Abraham's distinct movement style and signature avant-garde aesthetic. Fusing many facets of dance vocabulary, Abraham's movement style is decidedly

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original and contains a wealth of physical detail that resonates with the Ailey dancers' trademark versatility.

Media are also invited and encouraged to attend the following Virginia Arts Festival WorldClass® Education programs:

Friday, March 2, Chrysler Hall - student matinee performance

Saturday, March 3, Robin Hixon Theater - student masterclasses

About Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recognized by U.S. Congressional resolution as a vital American “Cultural Ambassador to the World,” grew from a now-fabled March 1958 performance in New York that changed forever the perception of American dance. Founded by Alvin Ailey, recent posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation’s highest civilian honor, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle, whom Judith Jamison chose to succeed her on July 1, 2011. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 25 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents – as well as millions more through television broadcasts, film screenings, and online platforms - promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition.

The Ailey organization also includes Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), one of the most extensive dance training programs in the world; Ailey Arts in Education & Community Programs, which brings dance into the classrooms, communities and lives of people of all ages; and The Ailey Extension (2005), a program offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of Ailey’s permanent home—the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the dance capital of the world —named The Joan Weill Center for Dance, at 55th Street at 9th Avenue in New York City. For more information, visit www.alvinailey.org.

About the Virginia Arts Festival

Since 1997, the **Virginia Arts Festival** has transformed the cultural scene in southeastern Virginia, presenting great performers from around the world to local audiences and making this historic, recreation-rich region a cultural destination for visitors from across the United States and around the world. The Festival has presented numerous U.S. and regional premieres, and regularly commissions new works of music, dance, and theater from some of today's most influential composers, choreographers, and playwrights. The Festival's arts education programs reach tens of thousands of area schoolchildren each year through student matinees, in-school performances, artists' residencies, master classes and demonstrations. ###