VIEWING GUIDE

DANCING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS
Dance Theatre of Harlem and Richard Alston Dance Company

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NEW DANCES TO COMMEMORATE A NEW NATION

2019 marked the four-hundredth anniversary of important events in Virginia that shaped a new nation and continue to define it. To help recognize this anniversary, Virginia Arts Festival commissioned two new works to explore the events of 1619.

Here’s what happened in Virginia in 1619:

• **First Representative Legislative Assembly in the New World**
  The first “General Assembly,” made up of men representing each of Virginia’s eleven major settlements, met for the first time at Jamestown from July 30 to August 4, 1619, planting the seed of democracy in what would eventually become the United States of America.

• **Arrival of the First Recorded Africans to English North America**
  The first enslaved Africans arrived at Point Comfort (now Fort Monroe in Hampton) in late August 1619. The “20 and odd” Africans were from West Central Africa and were traded in exchange for provisions.

• **Recruitment of English Women**
  In November 1619, 147 English women were recruited to join Jamestown’s male settlers, further establishing the Virginia colony as they arrived over the next two years.

• **First Official English Thanksgiving in North America**
  Upon their safe landing on December 4, 1619, at what would become the Berkeley Hundred plantation on the James River, a group of English settlers held a ceremony of Thanksgiving which was to be observed annually.

• **Entrepreneurial and Innovative Spirit of the Virginia Colony**
  A series of new laws passed in 1619 allowed Virginia’s colonists to experiment with various industries — like agriculture, milling lumber, and ironworking — helping to set the groundwork for America’s free enterprise system.

ABOUT “DANCING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS”

In 2019, together with Virginia-wide 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution™, Virginia Arts Festival commissioned two new ballets from internationally acclaimed companies Dance Theatre of Harlem and Richard Alston Dance Company. For months, WHRO film crews documented the process of bringing the new work to the stage, from the earliest rehearsals where the choreographers shaped the steps for each dancer, to the dress rehearsals with full orchestra in Chrysler Hall, to the triumphant world premiere performances. Complemented by interviews with the creative team, leaders and dancers, this documentary gives a rare behind-the-scenes look at the making of new works — equal parts inspiration, perspiration, frustration, and joy.

ABOUT RICHARD ALSTON DANCE COMPANY:

Company History

Since its founding in 1994, Richard Alston Dance Company has become one of the United Kingdom’s most avidly-followed contemporary dance companies, performing the work of its artistic director Richard Alston and associate choreographer Martin Lawrance.

Music plays a vital part in the company’s identity and since its inception Alston has used the work of a diverse range of composers including Brahms, Britten, Hoagy Carmichael, Chopin, Heiner Goebbels, Scott Joplin, Astor Piazzolla, Jean-Philippe Rameau, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, Scarlatti, Shostakovich, Shukar Collective, Stravinsky, and Schumann.

In 2011 Richard Alston Dance Company was nominated as Outstanding Company in the National Dance Awards, presented by the Critic’s Circle. Following its critically acclaimed performances for the Barbican Britten celebrations in autumn 2013, Richard Alston’s Phaedra was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production.

Richard Alston Dance Company’s high reputation on the British dance scene has been matched overseas. In May 2004 the company made its U.S. debut with a week-long season at New York’s leading theatre for dance, the Joyce Theater. The company returned to the U.S. multiple times, giving its third, critically acclaimed and sold-out New York season in January 2010. The company has had many other notable performances in the U.S., including New York City Center (as part of Fall For Dance Festival) in 2011, 2013, and 2016; Peak Performances at Montclair State University, New Jersey in 2012, 2014, and 2017; and the Virginia Arts Festival in 2014, 2016, 2017, and 2019.

Other overseas tours have included China, South East Asia, The Netherlands, Greece, and Russia.

Richard Alston Dance Company closed in March of 2020.
About Richard Alston
Richard Alston choreographed his first work in 1968, as one of the twelve students of the newly formed London Contemporary Dance School. On leaving in 1972, he formed the UK’s first independent dance group, Strider. In 1975 Alston went to New York to study at the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio. On his return two years later he worked throughout the U.K. and Europe as an independent choreographer and teacher.

In 1980 Alston became Resident Choreographer with Ballet Rambert and later was appointed Artistic Director, a position he held from 1986 to 1992. In his time there he created 25 dances for the company, and was also commissioned to create work for the Royal Danish Ballet and the Royal Ballet.

In 1994, Alston became Artistic Director of The Place and the Richard Alston Dance Company started in the autumn of that year. Over the past 24 years Alston has made over 45 dances for the Company.

Alston was made an Honorary Doctor of the Arts by the University of Kent (2015), an Honorary Doctor of the Arts by Kingston University (2016) and an Honorary Fellow of Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (2017). Alston was made Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France (1995) and received the CBE in the New Year Honours list (2001). Alston received the De Valois Award for Outstanding Achievement from the Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards (2008). He was presented with the Award for Excellence in International Dance by the International Theatre Institute (2012). Alston was knighted in the 2019 New Year Honours list.

Arrived
Choreography: Richard Alston
Music: Claudio Monteverdi
Dancers: Richard Alston Dance Company with students from The Governor’s School for the Arts

I am honoured to be asked by Virginia Arts Festival and American Evolution™ to create a dance marking four hundred years since twenty Africans arrived on the shores of Virginia. I have tried to make a dance that celebrates the resilience of spirit and the rich diversity of the American people. The music I’ve chosen was indeed written in 1619, marvelous vocal writing by the Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi, whose music was so openly expressive of human feeling that it inevitably led to the birth of dramatic opera. I have loved working with this music and, just as importantly, I have loved working with the young students of The Governor’s School for the Arts, integrating their wonderful talent with that of my own Company.

— Sir Richard Alston
Celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year, Dance Theatre of Harlem is a leading dance institution of unparalleled global acclaim, encompassing a performing ensemble, a leading arts education center, and Dancing Through Barriers, a national and international education and community outreach program. Each component of Dance Theatre of Harlem is solidly committed to enriching the lives of young people and adults around the world through the arts.

Founded in 1969 by dancer Arthur Mitchell and dance teacher Karel Shook, Dance Theatre of Harlem was considered “one of ballet’s most exciting undertakings,” according to The New York Times. Shortly after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mitchell was inspired to start a school that would offer children — especially those in Harlem, the community in which he was born — the opportunity to learn about dance and the allied arts.

Now in its fifth decade, Dance Theatre of Harlem has grown into a multicultural dance institution with an extraordinary legacy of providing opportunities for creative expression and artistic excellence that continues to set standards in the performing arts. Through performances, community engagement, and arts education, Dance Theatre of Harlem brings innovative and bold new forms of artistic expression to audiences around the world, and delivers its important message of empowerment through the arts for all.

ABOUT DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM:
Dance Theatre of Harlem’s mission is

- To maintain a world-class school that trains young people in classical ballet and the allied arts,
- To provide arts education, community outreach programs, and positive role models for all, and
- To present a ballet company of African American and other racially diverse artists who perform the most demanding repertory at the highest level of quality.

Learn more at: www.dancetheatreofharlem.org.
History of Dance Theatre of Harlem
For centuries, ballet was a white, aristocratic art form. Ballet dancers of color were a rarity. Dance Theatre of Harlem changed all that.

From its official debut in January 1971 at New York’s Guggenheim Museum — three small ballets performed by twenty dancers — to its zenith three decades later as an internationally acclaimed touring company of forty dancers with more than a hundred works in its repertory, Dance Theatre of Harlem demolished color barriers in the ballet world.

The company and its school were launched by former New York City Ballet dancer Arthur Mitchell and ballet teacher Karel Shook. The pair started the school in a church basement in the inner-city neighborhood of Harlem. At the time, Harlem was a rough place to live, with widespread poverty, joblessness, and crime.

Dance in Harlem — once a hotbed of African American creative culture, including jazz music — might be understandable. But ballet? Mitchell thought, why not? “Many people ask, ‘Is ballet relevant?’” he said. “But any sequence of steps put together in time with music becomes a ballet.”

At first, ballet was a hard sell in Harlem. “People would be walking by, and they’d see this man inside screaming and yelling and these kids dancing around. I said, ‘Come on in and try,’ and I remember the fellows said, ‘I’m not going to wear those things,’ meaning leotards. I said, ‘Well, put on [jeans] or put on a bathing suit.’ And that’s how I recruited dancers.”

While Mitchell was looking for promising dancers to train for his new ballet company, more important to him was jump-starting self-esteem and social change within the community where he was born and raised.

“The whole point when I started Dance Theatre was to make it accessible to people who were culturally deprived because they could not financially afford it,” Mitchell recalled. “If someone came to me with five kids, all five kids could study, not just the ‘talented’ one.... From that they develop a sense of ‘I am and I can do.’”
Soon hundreds of students flocked to the school, which moved to larger facilities and expanded its offerings to include classes in modern, ethnic, jazz, and tap dance; acting; music appreciation and theory; choreography; percussion; even sewing, tailoring, and costume and set design. From its earliest years, Dance Theatre of Harlem regularly opened its doors to the community, offering free or nearly free lecture-demonstrations, as well as outreach programs to senior citizens and children with special needs.

Mitchell’s commitment to arts education expanded with the 1992 launch of the Dancing Through Barriers initiative, which to this day brings Dance Theatre of Harlem programming to schools across the country and around the world.

As Dance Theatre of Harlem’s academy grew, so did the company’s reputation for creative excellence and innovation. DTH dazzled audiences far and wide with its bold, dynamic performances incorporating brilliant costumes and elaborate sets. In 1988 Dance Theatre of Harlem became the first American ballet company to tour and perform in Russia. Another historic tour followed in 1992, this time to South Africa, which struggled with its own system of racial segregation, called apartheid. In 2000 the company performed in the People’s Republic of China.

Despite its enduring popularity, Dance Theatre of Harlem’s company was forced into an extended hiatus in 2004 due to financial difficulties. Still, the school continued to offer classes, and its performance arm, the DTH Ensemble, continued to thrill audiences. In 2009 Arthur Mitchell invited former DTH principal ballerina Virginia Johnson to become artistic director, and the performing company was revived in 2013. Sadly, Arthur Mitchell passed away in September 2018; in 2019, the company dedicated its fiftieth anniversary season to its beloved founder.

From its church-basement beginnings bringing ballet to anyone who wanted to give it a try to its status today as a major artistic force, Dance Theatre of Harlem remains committed to creating and sharing world-class ballet for all. As Mitchell once said, “The arts ignite the mind, they give you the possibility to dream and to hope.”

Norfolk native Lorraine Graves was a member of Dance Theatre of Harlem from 1978 to 1996, a principal dancer for most of those years. With DTH, she performed for kings, presidents, princesses, and other notables. She graduated from Lake Taylor High School. Though she lives in Hampton Roads, she’s still connected to DTH as a teacher. She’s also deeply involved in the Hampton Roads arts community as an instructor, coach, and arts advocate.

**SOURCES:** Mitchell quotes from “Dance Theatre of Harlem, Real People, George Schlatter,” https://youtu.be/SIWXk1M8qtk.
DANCING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

BATTING DISCRIMINATION WITH BALLET: DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Dance Theatre of Harlem shares deep roots with the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. It was the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, in fact, that gave birth to the world’s first black classical ballet company.

“With [Dr. King’s] assassination...I felt it was very important that I come back to my community and do what I do well, which is teach dance,” said company cofounder Arthur Mitchell. After studying on full scholarship at the School of American Ballet, in 1955 Mitchell had been invited to join the acclaimed New York City Ballet, becoming the first male African American member of a major ballet company. Mitchell would dance for New York City Ballet for fifteen years, rising to the rank of premier danseur, or the company’s lead male dancer.

But King’s assassination had a profound impact on Mitchell, awakening in him a need to give back to the African American community of Harlem in New York City, where Mitchell was born and raised. “I felt the discipline, the focus, and the technique young people would learn through the arts would transcend to their everyday life, and I’d be helping to make better human beings,” he said.

Just as the civil rights movement sought to end segregation and discrimination, Mitchell had to fight against prejudice and stereotypes to become a dancer with New York City Ballet and to launch a black ballet company and school.

“There was a perception that black people could not do classical ballet, that the body was not fit for it,” he remembered. “When I got to New York City Ballet, [people] could say, ‘Oh, you’re the exception.’ No, I had the opportunity,” thanks to New York City Ballet director Lincoln Kirstein and choreographer George Balanchine, who believed in Mitchell’s abilities; the color of his skin was irrelevant.

Still, the stereotype lingered that ballet couldn’t be performed by black dancers. “Rather than argue,” Mitchell explained, “the best thing to do was provide the opportunity—make a company and school so that people could see that given the opportunity, anyone can excel.”

When Mitchell launched Dance Theatre of Harlem with his mentor and ballet teacher Karel Shook, “it was two dancers and thirty children,” he recalled. Over the years, as the company became internationally renowned for its artistic excellence, the school’s enrollment swelled to over a thousand dancers, sixty percent of whom lived in Harlem. The rest of the students came from countries and cultures around the globe, underscoring Dance Theatre of Harlem’s wholehearted embrace of diversity, which continues to this day.

Dr. King and his fellow defenders of civil rights — of equal rights for all — would surely approve. And that would surely please Mitchell. “When I go home at night, I can sleep. I can rest [knowing] I’ve given back and done something,” he said.

Passage
Choreography: Claudia Schreier
Music: Jessie Montgomery
Dancers: Dance Theatre of Harlem

Commissioned by the Virginia Arts Festival and American Evolution™, the state-sponsored 2019 commemoration organization, Dance Theatre of Harlem’s new ballet features an all-female creative team. “This is our way of breaking new ground, just as this time in history broke new ground,” company director and founding member Virginia Johnson told The Virginian-Pilot newspaper. To accomplish that, she brought in Claudia Schreier, an award-winning young choreographer who’s drawn attention for new work from American Ballet Theatre, the Vail Dance Festival, and more. This new piece, created for a dozen dancers and performed in three parts, is set to a score composed by Jessie Montgomery, whose music The Washington Post hails as “wildly colorful and exploding with life.”

This ballet — featuring astonishing bursts of strength, flexibility, and precision from the company’s dancers — is not literally about the historic events, Schreier explained to The Virginian-Pilot, but inspired by them. “We are looking more to pull out the essence of what can be gleaned from studying the past, rather than just duplicating it.”

Whether for religious reasons, social celebrations, as entertainment for others, or for their own enjoyment, people have always danced, historians believe. Pictures on pottery and stone show dances from thousands of years ago in ancient Egypt and Greece.

When people dance, they move their bodies—usually accompanied by music—to express emotions or ideas. In this way, dance is a language. People might dance alone or with others. When people dance to entertain an audience, they often do so as part of a performing group called a dance company. Dance companies usually specialize in a certain type of dance, such as modern, jazz, tap, or ballet.

Choreography is the art of creating dances. A choreographer envisions how a dance will look. Choreographers arrange steps and movements into dances. Choreographers not only have to be knowledgeable in their chosen dance form, but they must select music and work with set, lighting, and costume designers. Choreographers are usually dancers or former dancers too.

**ELEMENTS OF DANCE**

All forms of dance can be broken down into its most basic parts. The acronym BASTE can help you remember these dance building blocks. As you watch a dance performance, keep these elements in mind. They can help in your analysis and understanding of the performance.

**BODY**

A dancer uses parts of the body or the entire body in various ways.
Example: Dancers might use their arms, legs, hands, feet, even their necks and heads.

**ACTION**

A dancer moves or makes actions in various ways.
Example: A dancer might bend, sway, or leap.

**SPACE**

A dancer moves through space in various ways.
Example: A dancer might move forward, backward, diagonally, up, or down.

**TIME**

A dancer moves in time in various ways.
Example: A dancer might move at a quick tempo or in a certain rhythm.

**ENERGY**

A dancer moves with varied energy.
Example: A dancer might move smoothly or suddenly.

**SOURCE:** Adapted from The Elements of Dance, https://www.elementsofdance.org.
In Dancing on the Shoulders of Giants, Richard Alston Dance Company does modern dance, while Dance Theatre of Harlem does ballet. They both come from common origins, but then later diverged on different paths through more modern history.

BALLET BASICS
Ballet began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the royal court of France. These court dances were part of lavish entertainment extravaganzas presented by the monarchy to show the ruler's greatness.

In the eighteenth century, ballet spread across Europe, coming into its own as a performance art, with a well-defined vocabulary of steps, movements, and poses. Ballet was further refined into the nineteenth century with the evolution of dancing en pointe, in which a ballerina dances on the tips of her toes with special shoes. Innovations in the twentieth century, especially from Russian ballet companies, included fresh ideas about movement and expression.

Ballet often tells a story or expresses an idea or emotion, the dancers’ movements combined and ordered in a way that conveys meaning without words. Music, costumes, lighting, and scenery help set the mood or communicate the story line.

Early ballet dancers were not as skilled as they are now. Modern ballet dancers are athletes as well as artists, capable of amazing technical feats. Professional dancers spend long hours in training, often up to eight hours a day, six days a week.

BALLET’S SEVEN MOVEMENTS
Just as all dance can be broken down into its basic elements, the specific dance form of ballet can be broken down into seven basic categories of movement. The names of ballet steps are French, as ballet began in France.

BEND: A plié (plee-AY) is a bending of the knees, with the feet and knees turned outward. The plié helps the dancer’s legs function like a spring, preparing her for jumps and cushioning her landings. A demi-plié is a small bending; a grand plié is deeper, like a deep knee bend.

STRETCH: Etendre (eh-TAHND) is the stretching of the entire body, giving it lightness and lift. A tendu (tahn-DEW) is a stretching of the leg, where one leg is extended straight out from the supporting leg — to the front, side, or back — with the foot fully pointed.

RISE UP: Relevé (rel-eh-VAY) is when a dancer rises up to the balls of her feet or to the tips of her toes.

LEAP: A sauté (so-TAY) is a jump or leap. Successfully executed jumps seem to defy gravity, with the dancer descending softly to the floor. Jumps are often used in the faster, livelier dance passages called allegro (al-LAY-groh).

DART: Elancé (ay-lan-SAY) means to move in a different direction while in the air, the dancer altering his body in a darting manner. Any jump performed elancé is done just above the floor.

GLIDE: A glissade (glee-SAHD) is a smooth, gliding movement often used to prepare for jumps. Glissé (glee-SAY), or gliding, steps are used in slower passages known as adagio (a-DAHZH-ee-o).

TURN: Tourné (toor-NAY), or turns, such as chainé (shen-AY) and pirouette (peer-o-WET) are performed in a fixed position. Chainés are a series of quick, successive turns done with alternating feet. In a pirouette, the dancer makes a complete turn of the body balanced on one foot.
ARABESQUE (ah-ra-BESK): the position where
the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg
stretched out to the back, usually at a right angle
to the body. The arms usually correspond to the
position. There are many types of arabesques
depending on the direction of the body, height of
the leg, and position of the arms.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: the person at a ballet
company who is in charge of choosing ballets to
perform, hiring dancers, rehearsing the company
for performances, and other artistic decisions.

BALLERINA (bahl-lay-REE-nah): the female
dancer in a ballet company who is usually an
exceptional performer and performs many leading
roles. The best ballerina is called the prima
ballerina.

CORPS DE BALLET (core duh bal-LAY): the
group of dancers, other than principals and
soloists, who make up a ballet company. They
work much like a chorus would for an opera.

JETÉ (zhuh-TAY): a jump in the air. There are
many different types, but the most common is the
grand, or big, jete. In this movement, both of the
dancer’s legs are split in midair.

PAS DE DEUX (pah de duh): a dance for two
people, usually a man and a woman. Deux in
French means two.

POINTE (pwent): the tip of the toe. Most female
ballet dancers dance on the tips of their toes
wearing special shoes, called pointe shoes.

PORT DE BRAS (poor duh brah): the five basic
positions of the arms corresponding to each of
the five positions of the feet.

PREMIER DANSEUR (pruh-MYAY dahn-SUHR):
a male ballet star or leading dancer of the ballet
company. He is the male version of the prima
ballerina.

TOUR EN L’AIR (toor ahn lehr): a step in which
the dancer jumps straight up in the air and
performs one or more turns of the body.

TUTU (TOO-too): a ballet costume made of a
bodice and layers of netting.
WHAT IS MODERN DANCE?

Modern dance is a style of theatrical dance that developed in the United States and Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It grew as a few pioneering dancers began to use dance as a form of personal expression. Their works often emphasized emotion and took on contemporary, or modern, subjects. This type of dancing was very different from classical ballet, which came from the courts of European royalty and often told fairy-tale stories of princesses, princes, and enchanted creatures.

Though modern dance frequently uses movements found in ballet, each of the modern dance trailblazers created his or her own movement vocabulary. Some drew from folk or ethnic dancing of other cultures, or religious dance traditions. Others explored how dancers can work with and against gravity, or how body movements can represent musical rhythms.

In contrast to the formal steps, costumes, and shoes of ballet, modern dance pioneers preferred a freer style of dancing. Modern dancers often create their own steps and choreography by interpreting their moods and feelings into movement. Modern dancers regularly perform in bare feet and costumes that don’t constrict or mask the body.

As each new generation of modern dance has inspired another, the genre has been redefined. Though it clearly isn’t ballet, it often uses balletic movements. And though it may include elements of other dance forms, it can also examine just one simple aspect of movement, such as the body’s fall through space or the contraction of the torso.

Today, modern dance continues to grow and develop as new choreographers add their unique contributions to the field.

MODERN DANCE MOVEMENT GLOSSARY

**BRUSH** Gliding the foot along the floor.

**CONTRACTION** Forward curving of the spine, starting from the pelvis.

**DOWNWARD DOG** Inverted V shape from the yoga tradition with both arms and legs supporting weight.

**FLAT BACK** Suspending the torso horizontally in space so the back resembles a tabletop.

**HANGING OVER** Standing on two legs while creasing the body at the hip joints and letting the torso, arms, and head release to gravity.

**INVERSION** Moving the body upside down in space while bearing weight with arms, hands, shoulders, or head.

**ISOLATION** Holding one part of the body still while moving another part.

**LEAP** Transferring weight from one leg to the other, during which there is a suspended moment when both feet are off the ground.

**RELEASE** Letting go of muscular tension.

**UPPER BACK ARCH** Extending the upper body and head up and back.

**WEIGHT SHIFT** Transferring body weight from one leg to the other.

**YIELD AND PUSH** Releasing body weight into the floor followed by an active pushing away from gravity.
Discussion Questions for Students:

— Dance Theatre of Harlem helped break down barriers for African Americans in the dance world. What other barriers were challenged during the civil rights era and afterward? What other groups have benefited from changes in attitudes in American society? Are there still attitudes that need to be changed?

— For centuries, ballet was the dominant form of theatrical dance. Classical ballet typically told fanciful, fairy-tale stories using traditional dance technique, footwear, and costumes. Why would modern times require a new, modern approach to theatrical dance? Write down your thoughts or discuss them in class.

— In dance, movement is used to express emotion, mood, or feeling. What movements might you make when you’re feeling happy? Sad? Angry? Surprised? Can you choreograph — or create — a short sequence using that mood’s movements? See if your classmates can guess what emotion you’re expressing.

— Imagine you’re launching your own dance company, school for the arts, or other arts organization. What social or cultural cause might you support or explore? How would your organization support that cause or advocate for change through your art?

— Think of types of contemporary dancing people do or have done in social settings, rather than to entertain an audience, such as disco, moshing, break dancing, hip-hop, line dancing. How do these dance styles reflect the culture from which they emerged? Which elements of dance do they use and how? What does the dance style’s language — its movement vocabulary — communicate to others?

Discussion Questions for Adult Book Clubs or Discussion Groups:

— After reading about the themes of American Evolution™ — the 2019 Commemoration — what do you see reflected in the dances that related to these ideas?

— How do these pieces reflect the passage across the Atlantic to America, and what do they leave out? Do you feel that these works contribute to the conversation about the beginnings of what we now consider America? What are the benefits of exploring serious topics artistically?

— What other works of art — visual, performing arts, literature — have you encountered that reflect on the events of 1619 in America?

— Image yourself watching these works twenty years ago. How might you have thought about them then versus how you think about them now? Consider everything that has gone on in the United States related to racial justice. Do you think current events affect how you relate to these dances?

— As choreographers continue to create diverse styles of ballets and contemporary movement, dance companies are giving audiences a wide range of experiences. What do you think will be the next phase for ballet or for the dance world at-large?