



For Immediate Release

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**Michigan Opera Theatre to Present Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater  
60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program**

*Performance to feature "Lazarus" ballet on founder's life*

*March 15-17 at the Detroit Opera House*

**Detroit, March 5, 2019** - Michigan Opera Theatre will present Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for three performances March 15-17 at the Detroit Opera House. The event celebrates the company's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special, two-act ballet, "Lazarus," as well as their signature piece, "Revelations" and other works. The company, recognized by the U.S. Congress as a vital American "Cultural Ambassador to the World," is known for celebrating the African-American cultural experience and the American modern dance tradition.

"The Alvin Ailey company has been a long-term favorite with our patrons, and we are delighted to welcome them back for their 12<sup>th</sup> visit to the Detroit Opera House," said MOT President and CEO Wayne S. Brown. "As they celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are honored that Detroit will serve as a host city for this special commemorative season."

"Lazarus," commissioned for their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary tour, is the Company's first two-act ballet, celebrating the life of their founder based on his experiences. It examines Civil Rights through time and questions how much has changed or hasn't changed since Ailey formed his company in the late 50s. It is the third in a series of works by acclaimed hip-hop choreographer Rennie Harris, following "Home," about the club culture around AIDS, and "Exodus," about police brutality and activism. Ailey will perform the work during its March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> performances.

The March 17<sup>th</sup> performance will feature a repertory program including "Stack Up," "Shelter" and "Juba." Ailey's signature piece, "Revelations," will be performed at all three performances.

MOT will offer an afterglow following Saturday evening's performance where attendees will have the opportunity to meet company dancers. The event also includes drinks, a strolling reception and DJ & dancing.

Ticket prices for the performance range from \$35 to \$105. Tickets for the afterglow are \$40 per person or \$75 per couple (performance tickets are sold separately). Tickets may be purchased online at [www.MichiganOpera.org](http://www.MichiganOpera.org), by calling (313) 237-7464 or in person at the Detroit Opera House (1526 Broadway, Detroit).

MOT's 2018-19 dance season is sponsored by the Lear Corporation.

For more information visit <https://michiganopera.org/season-schedule/alvin-ailey-american-dance-theater/>.

## Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

*Performed at the Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit*

### Friday, March 15, 7:30 p.m.

- Works:
  - "Lazarus Act 1"
  - "Lazarus Act 2"
  - "Revelations"

### Saturday, March 16, 7:30 p.m.

- Works:
  - "Lazarus Act 1"
  - "Lazarus Act 2"
  - "Revelations"

### Sunday, March 17, 2:30 p.m.

- Works:
  - "Stack Up"
  - "Shelter"
  - "Juba"
  - "Revelations"

## Works

### "Lazarus"

- In the Company's first two-act ballet, acclaimed hip-hop choreographer Rennie Harris completes a trilogy of works - including past Ailey audience favorites "Exodus" and "Home" – with this hour-long work inspired by the life and times of Mr. Ailey. With Lazarus, Harris connects past and present in a powerful work that addresses the racial inequities America faced when Mr. Ailey founded this company in 1958 and still faces today.

### "Stack Up"

- 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. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performed the work during its 25th anniversary season in 1983 at New York City Center, and is being restaged in advance of the upcoming centennial of choreographer Talley Beatty's birth.

Set to the background of a throbbing 1970s beat (including music by Earth, Wind & 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 Beatty.

### "Shelter"

- Originally performed by the Ailey company in 1992, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar’s Shelter is a passionate statement about the physical and emotional deprivation of homeless people. The Ailey company has typically performed it with either an all-female or all-male cast; for its return to the Ailey repertory during the 2017–18 season, it will be performed by female dancers.

Set to an inventive score which incorporates drumming by Junior “Gabu” Wedderburn and poetry by Hattie Gossett and Laurie Carlos, Shelter delivers the compelling message that the poverty of individuals will inevitably lead to the destitution of all humanity.

### “Juba”

- This eagerly anticipated return of Artistic Director Robert Battle’s first creation for Ailey is a modern day Rite of Spring with an abstract twist—an electrifying thrill ride through ritual and folk tradition. Battle’s uninhibited movement melds seamlessly with an original score for string quartet and percussion by his frequent collaborator John Mackey.

### “Revelations”

- Using African-American spirituals, song-sermons, gospel songs and holy blues, Alvin Ailey’s Revelations fervently explores the places of deepest grief and holiest joy in the soul.

More than just a popular dance work, it has become a cultural treasure, beloved by generations of fans. 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.”

Ailey said that one of America’s richest treasures was the African-American cultural heritage – “sometimes sorrowful, sometimes jubilant, but always hopeful.” This enduring classic is a tribute to that tradition, born out of the choreographer’s “blood memories” of his childhood in rural Texas and the Baptist Church. But since its premiere in 1960, the ballet has been performed continuously around the globe, transcending barriers of faith and nationality, and appealing to universal emotions, making it the most widely-seen modern dance work in the world.

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## About Michigan Opera Theatre

Michigan Opera Theatre, one of the nation’s most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, is committed to presenting opera and dance of the highest artistic caliber. Founded in 1971 by Dr. David DiChiera, the company’s mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. The organization is led by President and CEO Wayne S. Brown, Principal Conductor Stephen Lord and Chairman of the Board Rick Williams. Visit the website at [www.michiganopera.org](http://www.michiganopera.org).