



# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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CULTURAL  
AMBASSADOR  
TO THE WORLD

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## **ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR ROBERT BATTLE ANNOUNCES NEW YORK CITY CENTER SEASON DECEMBER 3, 2014 – JANUARY 4, 2015**

### **Expansion of Company's Diverse Repertory Continues with Premieres by a Variety of Choreographers and Performances of Over Two Dozen Ballets**

**World Premiere by Ailey's Own Matthew Rushing Pays Tribute to the Legendary Singer Odetta**

**Company Premieres of *After the Rain Pas de Deux* by Christopher Wheeldon, *Uprising* by Hofesh  
Shechter, and *Suspended Women* by Jacquelyn Buglisi Mark First Works**

**By These Three Choreographers to Join the Ailey Repertory**

**Five-Week Holiday Season to Feature New Productions of Ulysses Dove's *Bad Blood* and Performances  
of 2014-15 Season Repertory Additions *The Pleasure of the Lesson* by Robert Moses, *Awassa*  
*Astrige/Ostrich* by Asadata Dafora, *Polish Pieces* by Hans van Manen and *Caught* by David Parsons**

**NEW YORK – July 29, 2014 — [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](http://www.alvinailey.org)**, recognized as a vital "American Cultural Ambassador" to the world and New York City Center's Principal Dance Company, returns to the New York City Center stage for the 43<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year from December 3, 2014 – January 4, 2015. The Company will present 39 performances during an exciting annual season that has become a joyous holiday tradition.

Artistic Director [Robert Battle](http://www.alvinailey.org) continues the expansion of the Company's diverse repertory with premieres from a variety of choreographers and performances of over two dozen ballets which give Ailey's extraordinary dancers many opportunities to inspire audiences.

Odetta Holmes – one of the most influential singers of the 20th century – is rediscovered as renowned Ailey dancer Matthew Rushing marries soul-stirring movement to songs by the artist anointed "the queen of American folk music" by Martin Luther King, Jr. Rushing's world premiere for Ailey, created with the support of commissioning funds from **New York City Center**, will pay tribute to Holmes' life as a singer, songwriter, actress, activist and "the voice of the Civil Rights Movement," and her musical repertoire encompassing American folk music, blues, jazz, and spirituals.

Planned Company premieres will introduce Ailey audiences and dancers to ballets by three different and respected choreographers whose works are being performed by Ailey for the first time – Christopher Wheeldon, Jacquelyn Buglisi and Hofesh Shechter.

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**Christopher Wheeldon's** dreamlike *After the Rain Pas de Deux* – praised for its sublime simplicity and intricate partnering – was an instant hit at New York City Ballet in 2005. Set to music by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, the sensual male-female *pas de deux* will be revealed in a fresh light as the Ailey dancers make it their own.

**Jacquelyn Buglisi's** *Suspended Women* is a mesmerizing ensemble piece created in 2000, illuminating the challenges and strength of women across the ages. Set to music by Maurice Ravel, and interpolations composed by Daniel Bernard Roumain, it is recognized as one of the signature works by this celebrated former Martha Graham dancer, choreographer and master teacher.

Created in 2006, **Hofesh Shechter's** acclaimed *Uprising* features seven men who bombard the stage with intensity in an exhilarating work set to a percussive score by the choreographer himself. Utilizing a movement style that is primal and imbued with a certain high-tension energy, the 38-year-old Israeli-born Shechter has risen to become one of Europe's most sought-after dance creators since his move to London in 2002.

In a new production of **Ulysses Dove's** *Bad Blood*, emotional passion and kinetic energy encapsulate the powerful yet extremely tender war between the sexes. The work features music by **Laurie Anderson** and **Peter Gabriel** and was originally staged on Ailey in 1986, as the fourth of seven ballets mounted on the Company by Dove. Dove is hailed as one of the most exciting choreographers to emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century.

New York City Center's five-week holiday season will also showcase 2013-2014 season premieres and new productions, including: [The Pleasure of the Lesson](#), the Company's first collaboration with **Robert Moses**, known for his sophisticated and sexy choreography; [Awassa Astrige/Ostrich](#), a groundbreaking and influential 1932 solo set to Carl Riley's score of African drumming and flute by Sierra Leone-born choreographer **Asadata Dafora**; [Polish Pieces](#) by Hans van Manen, a colorful ensemble work where 12 dancers create a brilliant kaleidoscope through endlessly shifting formations that contrasts with two sensual pas de deux; and **David Parsons'** gravity-defying [Caught](#), a breathtaking fusion of art and technology demanding split-second timing and athletic stamina.

"Alvin Ailey was a pioneer in creating an American modern dance repertory company, and I am honored to continue expanding our founder's legacy 25 years after his passing. I look forward to returning to New York City Center for the holidays with Ailey's exciting dancers showcasing a wide variety of new works and choreographers in our repertory for the first time," stated Artistic Director Robert Battle. "We are delighted to open the season with a joyful celebration of Joan Weill - someone who means so much to all of us at Ailey and who has helped move the organization forward by leaps and bounds."

The **December 3<sup>rd</sup> Opening Night Gala Benefit** performance and party launches the season while raising support for Ailey's extensive educational and training programs for young people. **This year's gala will honor Board Chair Joan Weill for 20 years of incomparable leadership at Ailey.** The memorable opening performance will begin with the exciting Company premiere of *Uprising*, and *Revelations*, danced to live music, as the inspiring finale.

In addition to performances of Ailey classics, including Alvin Ailey's signature American masterpiece [Revelations](#) and an Ailey/Ellington program, notable ballets from Ailey's recent seasons will also be presented, including **Aszure Barton's** propulsive work [LIFT](#), **Wayne McGregor's** spellbinding ballet [Chroma](#), **Bill T. Jones'** modern dance classic [D-Man in the Waters](#), two works by celebrated choreographer **Ronald K. Brown**; the spiritually-charged work [Grace](#) and 2013-2014 world premiere work [Four Corners](#), and Ohad Naharin's unique and innovative [Minus 16](#).

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Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater inspires all in a universal celebration of the human spirit using the African-American cultural experience and the American modern dance tradition. A quarter of a century after the passing of the Company's legendary founder, Ailey continues to move forward this season under the leadership of Robert Battle. This December, Ailey's dancers will move audiences in a diverse repertory of premieres, new productions and repertory classics by a variety of choreographers, revealing once again why Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is one of the world's most beloved dance companies.

**A detailed performance schedule for the season will be announced prior to the September 2<sup>nd</sup> on sale date. Tickets starting at \$25** will be available for purchase at the New York City Center Box Office, through CityTix® at (212) 581-1212 or online at [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org) or [www.nycitycenter.org](http://www.nycitycenter.org). Discount tickets are available for Ailey Super Fans who purchase tickets for more than one performance, for students with an appropriate ID and for groups of 10 or more (discounts do not apply to \$25 tickets). For group sales, call 212-405-9082 or e-mail [groupsales@alvinailey.org](mailto:groupsales@alvinailey.org). For further information about Ailey's New York City Center season please visit [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org).

***Wells Fargo is the sponsor of  
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's New York Season.***

**American Express is the Official Card of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the lead funder of ODETTA.**

**The creation of ODETTA is supported by commissioning funds from New York City Center.**

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater gratefully acknowledges the support of Diageo during the New York City Center Season.**

**Opening Night Gala Benefit Sponsors: Simin Allison, American Express, BET Networks, BNY Mellon, Daria L. & Eric J. Wallach, Joan & Sandy Weill and The Weill Family Foundation**

**The 2014-2015 season is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.**

For further information, the public may visit [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org). For additional press materials or photos, members of the media may visit [pressroom.alvinailey.org](http://pressroom.alvinailey.org) or **Ctrl+Click Photos for High Resolution Download.**



(L to R) AAADT's Yannick Lebrun & Sarah Daley; Artistic Director Robert Battle & Associate Artistic Director Masazumi Chaya with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; AAADT's Glenn Allen Sims; AAADT's Akua Noni Parker, Sarah Daley, & Jacqueline Green. All photos by Andrew Eccles.

**(CTRL+ CLICK ON PHOTOS FOR HI-RES DOWNLOAD)**

**FULL PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE TO BE ANNOUNCED PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup>**

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## **The 2014-2015 Season Program Highlights:**

Artistic Director Robert Battle continues the expansion of Ailey's diverse repertory with premieres from a variety of choreographers and performances of over two dozen ballets giving Ailey's extraordinary dancers many opportunities to inspire audiences. The premieres provide a platform for a rising choreographer and acclaimed long-time Ailey dancer and expose Ailey audiences and dancers to works by five respected choreographers whose work is being performed by Ailey for the first time, including a celebrated dance maker's iconic duet that will be inspiringly interpreted by the Ailey dancers and a groundbreaking solo that historically influenced American concert dance. The season presents new productions of a breathtaking signature solo by an award-winning American choreographer, a colorful and sensual ensemble piece by a Dutch master, and a breakthrough work by an exciting voice from the end of the twentieth century whose choreographic mentors were Alvin Ailey and Merce Cunningham.

## **2014-2015 Season World Premieres**

### ***ODETTA***

#### **Choreography by Matthew Rushing**

#### **Music by Odetta**

**Odetta Holmes** – one of the most influential singers of the 20th century – is rediscovered as renowned Ailey dancer **Matthew Rushing** marries soul-stirring movement to songs by the artist anointed “the queen of American folk music” by Martin Luther King, Jr. Rushing's world premiere for Ailey, created with the support of commissioning funds from **New York City Center**, will pay tribute to Holmes's life as a singer, songwriter, actress, activist and "the voice of the Civil Rights Movement." With a musical repertoire encompassing American folk music, blues, jazz, and spirituals, Odetta influenced many key figures of the 1960s folk-revival scene including Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Mavis Staples, and Janis Joplin. Her song "Take This Hammer" was included on *TIME* magazine's list of the All-Time 100 Songs. *ODETTA* will be Matthew Rushing's third ballet created for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater following *Acceptance In Surrender* (2005), a collaboration with Hope Boykin and Abdur Rahim-Jackson, and *Uptown* (2010), a celebration of the Harlem Renaissance.

### **[The Pleasure of the Lesson \(2014\)](#)**

#### **Choreography by Robert Moses**

#### **Music by Robert Moses, David Worm**

**Robert Moses' world premiere *The Pleasure of the Lesson*** was created on a cast of ten especially for the Company's 2014 Koch Theater engagement and marked his first collaboration with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Known for sexy, sophisticated choreography that makes audiences want to dance too, he has created numerous works of varying styles and genres for his highly praised dance company Robert Moses' Kin, founded in 1995 in San Francisco. His work explores topics ranging from oral traditions in African American culture (*Word of Mouth*, 2002), the life, times, and work of author James Baldwin (*Biography of Baldwin*, 2003), and the dark side of contemporary urban culture (*Cause*, 2004), to the nuanced complexities of parentage and identity (*The Cinderella Principle*, 2010), and the simple joys of the expressive power of pure movement (*Toward September*, 2009). Since 2008, Moses has composed original scores for several of his dances. Moses has also choreographed for film, opera, theater and other dance companies, including: San Francisco Opera (*La Forza del Destino*, 2005), Philadanco, Cincinnati Ballet, African Cultural Exchange (UK), Oakland Ballet, the Lorraine Hansberry Theater, and Olympic Arts Festival, among others. In 2005, Moses was named Choreographer-in-Residence and Artistic Director of the Committee on Black Performing Arts at Stanford University, where he has been on the dance faculty since 1995. An alumni of California State University Long Beach and a highly regarded master teacher, Moses has taught on campuses and at festivals throughout the United States, including Bates Dance Festival, Colorado Dance Festival, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, University of Texas, and University of Nevada. He conducts movement and performance workshops internationally, most recently for artists of African descent with State of Emergency Limited in the United Kingdom.

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## **2014-2015 Season Company Premieres**

### ***After the Rain Pas de Deux* (2005)**

**Choreography by Christopher Wheeldon**

**Music by Arvo Pärt**

An instant hit at New York City Ballet in 2005, **Christopher Wheeldon's** dreamlike duet – praised for its sublime simplicity and intricate partnering – is revealed in a fresh light as the Ailey dancers make it their own. Set to music by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, the sensual male-female *pas de deux* has resonated deeply with audiences and will be the first work by Christopher Wheeldon to enter the Ailey repertory. *Dance Magazine* described *After the Rain* as “an intelligently, masterfully choreographed ballet that strikes an emotional chord. The still point at the heart of the work lingers long after the curtain has descended.”

### ***Awassa Astrige/Ostrich* (1932)**

**Choreography by Asadata Dafora**

**Music by Carl Riley**

Sierra Leone-born choreographer **Asadata Dafora** blended his vision of a traditional African dance with Western staging in *Awassa Astrige/Ostrich* - a groundbreaking 1932 solo set to Carl Riley's score of African drumming and flute. With arms flapping like wings, torso rippling and head held high, a warrior is transformed into the proud, powerful ostrich — the king of birds. Dafora is recognized as one of the first to present African dance on the concert stage, influencing many future artists like Pearl Primus and Katherine Dunham. Asadata Dafora, a native of free town Sierra Leone, West Africa, was 40 years old when he came to New York in 1929. Earlier, he had been in Europe teaching African dance while studying music, and for a time, sang at La Scala. However his true interest was always the rich heritage of African art and culture. Not only did he study the folklore of his own country, but he traveled extensively throughout Africa seeking additional knowledge as well. His unique talents burst upon the New York entertainment scene with a short run of the Opera Kykunkor, subtitled the Witch Women. Kykunkor not only shattered many myths concerning the potential of Black ethnic materials as themes for concert dance, but proved that black dancers could be successful on the American concert stage. His company, Shologa Oloba, was made up of 25 Africans and African Americans whose dancing was acclaimed by critics and audiences.

### ***Suspended Women* (2000)**

**Choreography by Jacquelyn Buglisi**

**Music by Maurice Ravel (interpolations by Daniel Bernard Roumain)**

A mesmerizing ensemble work illuminating the challenges and strength of women across the ages, **Jacquelyn Buglisi's** *Suspended Women* is set to music by Maurice Ravel, with interpolations composed by Daniel Bernard Roumain. Created in 2000 and now recognized as one of Buglisi's signature works, it is the first piece by this celebrated former Martha Graham dancer, choreographer and master teacher to be performed by Ailey. *Dance Magazine* described Buglisi's choreography as a series of “images that seduce the eye as much as the imagination, with shapes, luminous textures, and stilled moments in time that offer an adventure in perception.”

### ***Uprising* (2006)**

**Choreography by Hofesh Shechter**

**Music by Hofesh Shechter, additional music by Vex'd**

Created in 2006, **Hofesh Shechter's** critically-acclaimed *Uprising* features seven men who bombard the stage with virile intensity in an exhilarating work set to a percussive score by the choreographer himself. Utilizing a movement style that is primal and imbued with a certain high-tension energy, and a natural ability to deal with big themes, the 38 year old Israeli-born Shechter has risen to become one of Europe's most sought-after dance creators since his move to London in 2002. *Uprising* is the first work by Schechter to enter the Ailey repertory.

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## **2014-2015 Season New Productions**

### ***Bad Blood* (1986)**

#### **Choreography by Ulysses Dove**

#### **Music by Laurie Anderson and Peter Gabriel**

In *Bad Blood*, emotional passion and kinetic, athletic energy encapsulate the powerful yet extremely tender war between the sexes, asking the question “can we be a duo and an individual at the same time?” With music by Laurie Anderson and Peter Gabriel, *Bad Blood* was the precursor to two other phenomenal Dove ballets on the same theme, *Episodes* and *Urban Folk Dance*, and the fourth of what would eventually be seven Dove ballets performed by the Ailey dancers. **Ulysses Dove** has been hailed as one of the most exciting choreographers to emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century, renowned for a style that merged the influences of his choreographic mentors, Alvin Ailey and Merce Cunningham.

### ***Polish Pieces* (1995)**

#### **Choreography by Hans van Manen**

#### **Music by Henryk Mikolaj Górecki**

In *Polish Pieces*, Dutch choreographer **van Manen** displays his mastery for building dazzling creations from simple motifs and geometric patterns. Driven by the rhythms of Henryk Górecki’s score, the 12 dancers in this colorful-ensemble work create a brilliant kaleidoscope through endlessly shifting formations that contrasts with two sensual pas de deux. Hans van Manen began his ballet career in 1951 as a member of Sonia Gaskell's Ballet Recital. He created his first ballet for the Nederlandse Opera Ballet in 1957 and created over 50 ballets for the Nederlands Dans Theater, where he was also the artistic director and a dancer. He has created over 120 ballets and his works have been staged by companies all over the world including the Stuttgart Ballet, Berlin Opera, the National Ballet of Canada, Pennsylvania Ballet, the Royal Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet and the State Opera in Vienna. In 1992, the year of his 35th anniversary as a choreographer, he was given a Knighthood in the Order of Orange Nassau by the Queen of The Netherlands. He has been honored for his work many times, including the prestigious German Dance Prize for his influence on German dance, the much-heralded Erasmus Prize for his outstanding achievements in Dutch dance, and the Benois de la Danse for Lifetime Achievement. At the occasion of his 75th birthday at the gala premiere of the Hans van Manen festival, Amsterdam’s mayor honored him with the Commandeur in de Orde van de Nederlandse Leeuw.

### ***Caught* (1982)**

#### **Choreography by David Parsons**

#### **Music by Robert Fripp**

**David Parsons’** signature solo *Caught* is a breathtaking fusion of art and technology demanding split-second timing and athletic stamina. The concept behind *Caught* is amazingly simple but wonderfully unexpected, with the dancer executing a continual series of over 100 leaps synchronized to the flashes of a strobe light to a soundtrack by English guitarist **Robert Fripp**. The effect is a stunning suspension of weight in which the dancer appears to fly through the air, devouring space as he magically moves across the stage. At the root of the piece is humankind’s fascination with flight, something that Parsons believes is universal. Born near Chicago and raised in Kansas City, Parsons received an MFA from Jacksonville University under the Howard Gilman fellowship and an honorary Doctorate from the University of Kansas City. From 1978-1987, Parsons was a leading dancer with the Paul Taylor Dance Company, where Taylor created many roles for him in works such as *Arden Court*, *Last Look*, and *Roses*. Parsons founded Parsons Dance in 1985 with lighting designer Howell Binkley. Since then, he has created more than 70 works, both for the company and through commissions from Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theatre, the American Dance Festival, Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, New York City Ballet, Paul Taylor Dance Company, and the Spoleto Festival, among others. He is a recipient of the 2000 Dance Magazine Award, the 2001 American Choreography Award and the 2011 Dance Masters of America Award.

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## **CALENDAR LISTING INFORMATION**

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**, beloved as one of the world’s most popular dance companies, returns to the New York City Center stage December 3, 2014 – January 4, 2015. Led by Artistic Director Robert Battle, Ailey’s inspiring dancers will move audiences with premieres, new productions and repertory favorites in a 39-performance season that has become a joyous holiday tradition. **Tickets starting at \$25 go on sale September 2<sup>nd</sup>** and can be purchased at the New York City Center Box Office, through CityTix® at (212) 581-1212 or online at [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org) or [www.nycitycenter.org](http://www.nycitycenter.org). Discount tickets are available for Ailey Super Fans who purchase tickets for more than one performance, for students with an appropriate ID and for groups of 10 or more (discounts do not apply to \$25 tickets). The Saturday Family Matinee series includes a post-performance Q & A with the Ailey dancers and an increased availability of \$25 tickets, but buy early for the best seat selection. For group sales, call 212-405-9082 or e-mail [groupsales@alvinailey.org](mailto:groupsales@alvinailey.org). For further information, visit [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org).

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater – December 3, 2014 – January 4, 2015  
New York City Center - 131 West 55th Street, between 6th and 7th Avenues, New York, NY  
(212) 581-1212 / [www.nycitycenter.org](http://www.nycitycenter.org)

### Performance Times:

Opening Night Gala (December 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	7:00pm (note earlier curtain time)
Tuesday - Thursday evenings	7:30pm
Friday & Saturday evenings	8:00pm
Sunday evenings	7:30pm
Saturday matinees	2:00pm
Sunday matinees	3:00pm
Wednesday (12/24 & 12/31) matinees	2:00pm
New Year’s Eve (December 31 <sup>st</sup> )	7:00pm

## **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, 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 23 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents, promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition. In addition to being the Principal Dance Company of New York City Center, where its performances have become a year-end tradition, the Ailey company performs annually at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County in Miami, The Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley, CA and at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark where it is the Principal Resident Affiliate), and appears frequently in other major theaters throughout the United States and the world during extensive yearly tours. 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](http://www.alvinailey.org).

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