

# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

## *Walking Mad*

(2001)

(Ailey Company Premiere – 2016)

*Choreography:* Johan Inger

*Music:* Maurice Ravel and Arvo Pärt

*Rehearsal Assistant:* Yvan Dubreuil

*Costume and Scenic Design:* Johan Inger

*Costume Project Manager:* Rebecca Josue

*Lighting:* Erik Berglund



AAADT's Jamar Roberts, Jacquelin Harris, and Glenn Allen Sims  
in Johan Inger's *Walking Mad*. Photo by Paul Kolnik

Renowned Swedish choreographer Johan Inger's *Walking Mad* is a riveting piece for nine dancers. The daring contemporary take on Ravel's *Boléro* brings Inger's revered choreography to the Ailey repertory for the first time. The work, which also features music by minimalist master Arvo Pärt, brings waves of emotion: first laughter, then tears. The dancers share the space with a moveable wall, which divides the space, setting the stage for a variety of scenes and interactions, and serves as a symbol of the barriers people construct in their relationships. The wall also serves as an object for the dancers to move around, lean against, hang from, walk through, and perch atop. According to the choreographer, "Boléro from Ravel with its sexual, almost kitschy history was the trigger point to make my own version. I quickly decided that it was going to be about relationships in different forms and circumstances. I came up with the idea of a wall that could transform the space during this minimalistic music and create small pockets of space and situations. *Walking Mad* is a journey in which we encounter our fears, our longings and the lightness of being." Since its world premiere in 2001 by Nederlands Dans Theater, *Walking Mad*, whose title was inspired by Socrates' saying that "our greatest blessings come to us by way of madness," has been performed by companies around the world. It has become Johan Inger's most famous piece of work.

"...playful, theatrical, and full of life."

*The Vancouver Sun*

**Johan Inger**, born in Stockholm in 1967, attended the Royal Swedish Ballet School and the National Ballet School in Toronto before dancing with the Swedish Ballet in Stockholm and later joining Nederlands Dans Theater, where he danced until 2002. Inger was first asked to choreograph for Nederlands Dans Theater II in 1995, and his debut work *Mellantid* received overwhelming praise, including the Philip Morris Finest Selection Award in the Contemporary Dance category at the 1996 Holland Dance Festival. Inger served as the Artistic Director of Cullberg Ballet from 2003 to 2008 and as Associate Choreographer with Nederlands Dans Theater from 2009 to 2015. In 2013, Inger was awarded the prestigious Carina Ari Medal for the promotion of the art of dance in Sweden. Inger is a 2016 Benois de la Danse nominee.

**Maurice Ravel** (1875-1937) was a French composer, pianist and conductor. He attended the Paris Conservatoire, France's premiere music college, and went on to develop a unique style that integrated elements of baroque, neoclassicism, and jazz. Over the course of his career, Ravel maintained a fascination with dance and dance forms – the pavane, minuet, forlane, rigaudon, waltz, czardas, habanera, and passacaglia. *Boléro* is Ravel's most famous work. The one-movement orchestral piece was composed as a ballet commissioned by Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein. It premiered at the Paris Opera in 1928, performed by a large orchestra, with choreography by Bronislava Nijinska and set design by Alexandre Benois. Since its premiere, *Boléro* has gained widespread popularity: appearing in film, television, and videogame soundtracks; adapted by popular singer Angélique Kidjo; used as the score for the gold-medal-winning ice dancing performance at the 1984 Winter Olympics; and inspiring choreographers around the world, including Johan Inger.

*Walking Mad* Music Credit Information

Song: Boléro

Composed by: Maurice Ravel

Song: Für Alina

Composed by: Arvo Pärt