



MLK Sermon Inspires New Piece For Alvin Ailey Dance Theater

By: Erin Wright

January 16, 2017



When Hope Boykin last visited WABE, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater veteran was starring as Odetta, the woman often referred to as "the voice of the Civil Rights movement," in a world premiere piece by Matthew Rushing.

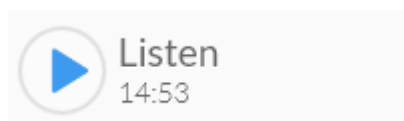
Now, as Boykin prepares to return to Atlanta, she's bringing a work of her own to the Fox Theatre's stage.

"r-Evolution, Dream.," as it turns out, was actually inspired by a quiet moment Hope spent in the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. As she listened to Dr. King's sermon "Drum Major Instinct," in which the civil rights leader imagines his own funeral, she told Lois Reitzes that something in his sermon "landed differently in spirit," even though she knew some of the words by heart.

She started playing his sermons and speeches in the dance studio, moving her body along to the words. Eventually, a piece began to take shape, and Ailey Artistic Director Robert Battle gave his full blessing for a completely new work.

Hope enlisted the talents of her friend Ali Jackson, perhaps best known for his work in the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, to write the original score. Leslie Odom, Jr. of "Hamilton" fame – also a friend of Hope's – provided the narration.

"r-Evolution, Dream." premieres in Atlanta during their annual run at the Fox Theatre, Feb. 15-19.



Listen to broadcast here:

<http://news.wabe.org/post/mlk-sermon-inspires-new-piece-alvin-ailey-dance-theater>