

## The Frame

### How Alvin Ailey's 'superheroes of dance' are advancing social justice

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If you head to the The Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion from March 8-12, it's all about dance. And a lot of the dance is all about social justice.

Through Sunday, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is rotating nine different works, one of which is a new piece titled *r-Evolution, Dream*.

It's choreographed by veteran Alvin Ailey dancer Hope Boykin, and inspired by the sermons and speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.

"If you haven't seen the company, get ready," Boykin says. "I work with the superheroes of dance. They are at the top. So to have them in a room doing what I ask them to do is unreal."

When Boykin and Robert Battle, the company's artistic director, visited The Frame, they said Alvin Ailey's founding idea of using dance to address the most pressing issues has rarely been more necessary than today.

#### Interview highlights:

##### **Hope Boykin on being inspired by Martin Luther King Jr.'s voice:**

The sound of his voice was so rhythmical for me, at that moment, I heard movement through it. And I could see movement with what he was saying. And so how could I get into the studio and articulate something that is abstract—movement is abstract—how can I articulate the sound of his voice and put movement to it, and make it worth something?

##### **Robert Battle on how *r-Evolution, Dream* fits into the Ailey dance company's larger mission:**

I have to go back to when I first knew about the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and its importance and the importance of the Alvin Ailey himself to the cultural fabric of this nation. And the thing that I was struck by was the idea of social justice in the work, in modern dance. That it was about things that really mattered... and so that sort of gave me my queues [as] to why, still, I'm drawn to work that makes a statement that is somehow reflective of the people in the audience... at this time in our nation's history I think works like this are very important.

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