

# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

## *Polish Pieces* (1995)

(New Production - 2014, Ailey Company Premiere – 1996)

Choreography by Hans van Manen

Staged by Mea Venana

Music by Henryk-Mikolaj Górecki \*

Set and Costumes by Keso Dekker

Special fabric treatment by Elissa Tatigikis Iberti

Lighting by Joop Caboot

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 of energy in pulsating group sections. The endlessly shifting formations contrast with two sensual and lyrical pas de deux.



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in *Polish Pieces*.  
Photo by Paul Kolnik.

“A beautifully rehearsed ensemble, bobbing dynamically through changing angular shapes, **gave the striking abstract design of Hans van Manen's “Polish Pieces” clarity and wit. There was also time for strong emotions in the work's duets...**”

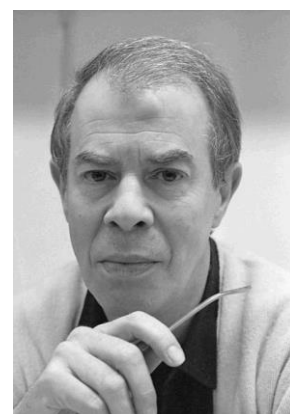
–*New York Times*

“*Polish Pieces* is **a treasure in many ways**, not least in the sheer excitement of the Ailey troupe's advocacy of a choreographer who has been inexplicably neglected by American dancers.”

–*San Francisco Chronicle*

### **Hans van Manen**

**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 has gone on to create over 50 ballets for the Nederlands Dans Theater, where he has also been 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. During 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.



Hans van Manen. Photo by Roland Gerrits.

### **Henryk Mikolaj Górecki**

**Henryk Mikolaj Górecki** is a Polish composer best known for his work, Symphony No. 3 – Symphony of Sorrowful Songs (Symfonia pieśni żalonych) – released to commemorate those lost during the Holocaust. He has earned many awards and high honors for his contemporary, classical music scores, including the Minister of Culture and Art Award, the Commander's Cross with Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta and Poland's highest decoration, the Order of the White Eagle. He studied at the high school of music in Katowice and was granted honorary doctorates by the University of Warsaw, the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and the University of Montreal.