

# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

## *No Longer Silent (2007)*

Ailey Company Premiere (June 17, 2015)

*Choreography:* Robert Battle

*Restaging:* Marlena Wolfe

*Music:* Erwin Schulhoff

*Set:* Mimi Lien

*Costumes:* Fritz Masten

*Lighting:* Nicole Pearce

*No Longer Silent* is a large ensemble work featuring the imaginative interplay of four groups of dancers evoking a complex and mysterious ritual to Jewish composer **Erwin Schulhoff's** percussive score "**Ogelala**." Originally created in 2007 for The Juilliard School, **Robert Battle's** alma mater, it was part of a concert of choreography that brought to life long-forgotten scores by composers whose work the Nazis had banned. Powerful phrases stir the imagination with images of flight and fatigue, chaos and unity, and collectivity and individualism as dancers travel in military rows. Created between 1922-1924, the music tells the story of a pre-Columbian Mexican warrior and its ever-shifting mechanical cadence is the backdrop against which the dancers, dressed in all black, dramatically build to the work's piercing conclusion. Lamentably, the composer was denied employment after the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia and, after being prevented from emigrating, died of tuberculosis in the Wülzburg concentration camp in 1942. This work is presented in conjunction with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of concentration camps Auschwitz and Buchenwald, marking the end of the Holocaust.

"... **highly imaginative and artistically exceptional**... complex"

*The New York Times*

"From the very start he seizes attention with his skill ... told not one story but suggested many... **I immediately imagined the Alvin Ailey company, for which Mr. Battle already choreographs, staging this to great effect.**"

*The New York Times*

### **Robert Battle**

Robert Battle became artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in July 2011 after being selected by Judith Jamison, making him only the third person to head the Company since it was founded in 1958. A frequent choreographer and artist-in-residence at Ailey since 1999, he has set many of his works on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Ailey II, and at The Ailey School. The Company's current repertory includes his ballets *The Hunt*, *In/Side*, *Strange Humors*, and *Takademe*. In addition to expanding the Ailey repertory with works by artists as diverse as Kyle Abraham, Aszure Barton, Ronald K. Brown, Garth Fagan, Bill T. Jones, Jiří Kylián, Wayne McGregor, Robert Moses, Ohad Naharin, and Paul Taylor, he also instituted the New Directions Choreography Lab to help develop the next generation of choreographers. He is also committed to using the arts as a vehicle for change and education, as exhibited by the introduction of *No Longer Silent* into the Ailey repertory, as well as the 2014 commission of Matthew Rushing's *ODETTA*, a world premiere tribute to Odetta Holmes, "the voice of the Civil Rights Movement." Mr. Battle attended Miami's New World School of the Arts and The Juilliard School. He danced with the Parsons Dance Company from 1994 to 2001, setting choreography on that company, before founding Battleworks Dance Company in 2001. Battleworks performed at venues including The Joyce Theater, Dance Theater Workshop, American Dance Festival, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Mr. Battle was honored as one of the "Masters of African-American Choreography" by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2005, and he received the prestigious Statue Award from the Princess Grace Foundation-USA in 2007. In 2014, he received an honorary doctorate from The University of the Arts. Most recently, Mr. Battle was named a 2015 Visiting Fellow for The Art of Change, an initiative by the Ford Foundation. *No Longer Silent* is the eighth work by Mr. Battle to enter the Ailey repertory.



Robert Battle.  
Photo by Andrew Eccles.

### **Erwin Schulhoff**

Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942) was a Czech composer and pianist whose successful career was prematurely terminated by the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany. One of the first generation of classical composers to find inspiration in the rhythms of jazz music, Schulhoff also embraced the avant-garde influence of Dadaism in his performances and compositions after World War I. In the 1930s, Schulhoff was blacklisted by the Nazi regime, because of his Jewish descent. He could no longer give recitals in Germany, nor could his works be performed publicly. He moved to Prague, where he found employment as a radio pianist, but earned barely enough to cover the cost of everyday essentials. When the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in 1939, he had to perform under a pseudonym. In 1941, the Soviet Union approved his petition for citizenship, but he was arrested and imprisoned before he could leave Czechoslovakia. In June 1941, Schulhoff was deported to the Wülzburg concentration camp, near Weißenburg, Bavaria, where he died on August 18, 1942 from tuberculosis.

### ***No Longer Silent***

Music Credit Information

Music: *Ogelala "Balletmysterium" Op. 53* (1925)

By: Erwin Schullhof