

## Banned by Nazis, composer's work appears onstage 90 years later

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What do dance and social justice have in common?

“No Longer Silent,” a new piece from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, provides one answer. The piece is set to music by Erwin Schulhoff, a Jewish Czech composer whose work the Nazis labeled “degenerate” and banned.

Dance can help tell stories that have been historically underrepresented, says Robert Battle, artistic director at Alvin Ailey. Battle is the third leader of the dance company, having been selected to replace renowned dancer Judith Jamison five years ago.

Ailey formed the company in 1958 as a troupe that celebrated African-American culture. The company’s work “is really about ... social justice, the notion of inspiring change or choosing some historical importance that he’s trying to convey,” he said. “And for me, I’ve been drawn to that kind of work.”

After the Nazis banned Schulhoff’s work in Germany, he tried to emigrate, but no country would take him in, including the U.S. He eventually became a Soviet citizen, but before he received his paperwork he was arrested, sent to a concentration camp in Bavaria and died a year later.

The piece is set to “Ogelala,” a piece that Schulhoff composed between 1922 and 1925. Battle said when he held Schulhoff’s score in his hands, “I felt I was holding his words in my hand. And then I knew I could tell the story.”

Watch video here:

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/banned-by-nazis-composers-work-appears-onstage-90-years-later/>