

DANCE CONSORTIUM PRESENTS

ALVIN AILEY® AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

UK TOUR 2016

6 SEPTEMBER – 19 OCTOBER

- Dance Consortium announces Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater UK Tour 2016
 - UK engagement kicks off with a two-week season at Sadler's Wells, London
- Tour heads to Plymouth, Birmingham, Bradford, Nottingham, Cardiff, Salford Quays, Southampton, Canterbury and Edinburgh
- Five UK premieres: *Awakening* by Robert Battle - his first world premiere since becoming Artistic Director; *Exodus* by Rennie Harris; *Four Corners* by Ronald K. Brown; *LIFT* by Aszure Barton; and *Open Door* by Ronald K. Brown
- Two Company UK premieres: *After the Rain pas de deux* by Christopher Wheeldon; and *Piazzolla Caldera* by Paul Taylor
- Three classics by company founder Alvin Ailey: *Cry*; *Night Creature*; and signature masterpiece *Revelations*

www.danceconsortium.com

Media release: 20th April 2016 - **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**, one of the world's most popular dance companies, will return to the UK for the first time in six years to present 10 works during six exhilarating programmes. The autumn tour will mark the fourth time Ailey is presented by Dance Consortium and begins on 6 September with a two-week, four-programme season at Sadler's Wells, London and concludes at Festival Theatre, Edinburgh on 19 October.

Founded in 1958, the company is recognised by the U.S. Congress as a vital American "Cultural Ambassador to the World." Under the leadership of Artistic Director **Robert Battle**, Ailey's performances celebrate the human spirit through the African-American cultural experience and the American modern dance tradition. In almost six decades, Ailey's artists have performed for over 25 million people in 71 countries on six continents and continue to wow audiences and critics around the world.

Commenting about the Company's return to the UK, Ailey's Artistic Director Robert Battle said: "*I'm proud to continue Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's legacy of extensive international tours with my inaugural visit leading the Company's extraordinary dancers through the United Kingdom. Presented by Dance Consortium six years after they so successfully last welcomed Ailey, we'll share a diverse repertory of works including several UK premieres. I'm excited for audiences old and new to experience the uplifting performances that have inspired people the world over, fulfilling Mr. Ailey's belief that 'Dance came from the people and should always be delivered back to the people.'*"

The UK tour will include **UK premieres** by some of today's most acclaimed choreographers: the uplifting **Exodus** by hip hop choreographer Rennie Harris; the spiritual journey of **Four Corners** by Ronald K. Brown; the Cuban-inspired **Open Door** by Ronald K. Brown; **LIFT** by Aszure Barton accentuates the physical prowess of the Ailey dancers; and Robert Battle's powerful **Awakening** – his first world premiere since becoming Artistic Director.

Company UK premieres include the dreamlike duet **After the Rain Pas de Deux** by Christopher Wheeldon; and the passionate homage to tango's Argentinian working class roots in **Piazzolla Caldera** by Paul Taylor.

The company will perform three **Ailey Classics** during the UK tour: the classic tour-de force female solo **Cry** by Company founder Alvin Ailey; **Night Creature** by Alvin Ailey is set to sparkling music by Duke Ellington; and the beloved crowd-pleaser **Revelations** by Alvin Ailey is the most widely-seen modern dance work in the world and will be performed by the incomparable Ailey dancers in all programmes during the UK tour. *Revelations* premiered in 1960 and continues to bring audiences all around the world to their feet.

The Ailey UK tour 2016 programme, which is subject to alteration, will be as follows:

Programme A (London, Plymouth, Birmingham, Nottingham, Cardiff, Southampton and Edinburgh): **Exodus / Four Corners / After the Rain Pas de Deux / Revelations**

Programme B (London, Birmingham and Edinburgh): **Open Door / Piazzolla Caldera / Revelations**

Programme C (London): **LIFT / Awakening / Cry / Revelations**

Programme D (Mini Matinee in London & Southampton): **Night Creature Excerpt / Revelations**

Programme E (Bradford & Canterbury): **Exodus / Night Creature / After the Rain Pas de Deux / Revelations**

Programme F (Salford Quays): **LIFT / Four Corners / Cry / Revelations**

UK Premieres

Awakening (2015) **Choreography by Robert Battle / Music: John Mackey.** Battle uses his signature taut, ritualistic choreographic style and a score by composer John Mackey in his first world premiere since becoming artistic director. Buoyed by the complex rhythmic quality of Mackey's music (*Turning and The Attentions of Souls*, the third movement from the symphony *Wine-Dark Sea*) and a cast of a dozen of Ailey's extraordinary dancers, Battle's work leads the audience on a cathartic journey of dissonance and harmony, chaos and resolution.

Exodus (2015) **Choreography by Rennie Harris / Music: Original compositions by Raphael Xavier, "A New Deal" by Ost & Kjex.** Acclaimed hip-hop choreographer Rennie (Lorenzo) Harris created a work that explores the idea of "exodus" – from one's ignorance and conformity – as a necessary step toward enlightenment. Set to gospel and house music along with spoken word, the work underscores the crucial role of action and movement in effecting change. Exemplifying his view of hip hop as a "celebration of life", *Exodus* marks Harris' latest invitation to return to spiritual basics and affirm who we are. His previous contributions to the Ailey repertory include *Home* (2011) and *Love Stories* (2004), Judith Jamison's dynamic collaboration with Harris and Robert Battle.

Four Corners (2013) **Choreographer: Ronald K. Brown / Music: Carl Hancock Rux, Yacoub & Various Artists.** *Four Corners* brings to life the vision of four angels standing on the four corners of the earth holding the four winds. Drawing inspiration from the lyrics of Rux's *Lamentations*, *Four Corners* trails 11 dancers as they rise to seek a life of peace on the "mountaintop"; a powerful and hope-filled journey of tribulation, devotion and triumph.

LIFT (2013) **Choreography: Aszure Barton / Original Music: Curtis Macdonald.** *LIFT* is by in-demand choreographer Aszure Barton and marked her first commission for Ailey. The work accentuates the vitality and physical prowess of the Ailey Company, driven by the dancers' passion, skill and collective power. *LIFT* was created over a 5-week developmental process with the entire Company. The original percussive score, composed by Curtis Macdonald, is infused with the infectious energy and heart that she observed in

her initial encounters with the Ailey dancers. With a collaborative stylistic approach that constantly evolves like no other, Barton's exhilarating work celebrates and challenges the dancers with its markedly intricate rhythmic patterns and mercurial structure.

Open Door (2015). **Choreography by Ronald K. Brown / Music: Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra.** Acclaimed choreographer Ronald K. Brown's Cuban-inspired *Open Door* is a work for 10 dancers set to the music of Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, including their recent Grammy-Award winning album *Cuba: The Conversation Continues*. Brown's travels to Cuba inspired much of the movement, from the salsa partnering to the references to Elegba – the Santería god who opens pathways. A testament to the power of dance and music as vehicles for culture and compassion, *Open Door* marked Brown's sixth work for the Company.

Company UK premieres

After the Rain Pas de Deux (2005 / Ailey Company Premiere 2014) **Choreography by Christopher Wheeldon / Music: Arvo Pärt.** An instant hit at New York City Ballet in 2005, Christopher Wheeldon's dreamlike duet – praised for its sublime simplicity and intricate partnering – is revealed in a fresh light as the Ailey dancers make it their own. Set to music by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, the sensual male-female pas de deux has resonated deeply with audiences and marked the first work by Christopher Wheeldon to enter the Ailey repertory.

Piazzolla Caldera (1997 / Ailey Company Premiere 2015) **Choreography by Paul Taylor / Music: Astor Piazzolla and Jerzy Peterburshsky.** Set to music by Astor Piazzolla and Jerzy Peterburshsky, *Piazzolla Caldera* is a finely wrought work sizzling with erotic energy by modern dance master Paul Taylor that captures the essence of tango culture. Men and women engage in a series of fiery encounters, in turns playful and predatory, in vivid duets and trios through the work's four sections, in this passionate homage to tango's Argentinian working class roots.

Ailey Classics

Cry (1971 / New Production 2015) **Choreography by Alvin Ailey / Music: Alice Coltrane, Laura Nyro, Voices of East Harlem.** In 1971, Alvin Ailey choreographed the ballet *Cry*, as a birthday present for his mother Mrs. Lula Cooper, and created the dance on his stunning muse, Judith Jamison. It was an instant sensation and went on to become an enduring work of American art. This physically and emotionally demanding 16-minute solo is dedicated to "all black women everywhere – especially our mothers." The solo is made up of three parts –the first set to Alice Coltrane's *Something about John Coltrane*, the second to Laura Nyro's *Been on a Train* and the last has the Voices of East Harlem singing *Right On, Be Free*. Ms. Jamison, who has since taught the treasured role to subsequent generations of Ailey women, wrote of the work in her autobiography *Dancing Spirit*: "*In my interpretation, she represented those women before her who came from the hardships of slavery, through the pain of losing loved ones, through overcoming extraordinary depressions and tribulations. Coming out of a world of pain and trouble, she has found her way-and triumphed.*"

Night Creature (1974) **Choreographer: Alvin Ailey / Music: Duke Ellington.** Combining modern dance, classical ballet and jazz, *Night Creature* is a perfect fusion of Alvin Ailey's buoyant choreography and Duke Ellington's sparkling music. Duke Ellington first composed the phenomenal *Suite For Orchestra* in 1955, later adding the second and third movements in 1963. He said that "night creatures, unlike stars, do not come OUT at night – they come ON, each thinking that, before the night is out, he or she will be the star." This large ensemble work is full of such stars — strutting, leaping and slinking jazz babies and night owls. *Night Creature* is the definitive Ailey homage to the exuberance of The Duke's jazz, and remains one of Mr. Ailey's most popular works.

Revelations (1960) **Choreography by Alvin Ailey / Music: Traditional Spirituals.** More than just a popular dance work, *Revelations* has become a cultural treasure, beloved by generations of fans. An American classic acclaimed as a must-see for all, Alvin Ailey's signature masterpiece is a tribute to his heritage and genius. Using African-American spirituals, the work fervently explores the places of deepest grief and holiest joy in the soul. Seeing *Revelations* for the first time or the hundredth can be a transcendent experience, with audiences cheering, singing along and dancing in their seats from the

opening notes of the plaintive *I Been 'Buked* to the rousing *Wade in the Water* and the triumphant finale, *Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham*.

In London and Southampton, Ailey's **Mini Matinee** is the perfect introduction to the company's repertoire. Aimed at family audiences, Mini Matinees are 60 minutes long and include short introductions before each work and a post-performance Q&A with members of the company.



L-R: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*. Photo by Gert Krautbauer; AAADT in Robert Battle's *Awakening*. Photo by Paul Kolnik; AAADT. Photo by Andrew Eccles; AAADT's Belen Pereyra in Ronald K. Brown's *Four Corners*. Photo by Paul Kolnik. (Ctrl+Click on thumbnail for high res download).

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ALVIN AILEY® AMERICAN DANCE THEATER – UK Tour 2016

Tue 6 – Sat 17 September

Sadler's Wells, **LONDON**

Tickets: 020 7863 8000 www.sadlerswells.com

NATIONAL PRESS NIGHTS: Programme A; Tuesday 6th September at 7.30pm, Programme B; Wednesday 7th September at 7.30pm and Programme C; Saturday 10th September at 2.30pm

Tue 20 & Wed 21 September

Theatre Royal **PLYMOUTH**

Tickets: 01752 267222 www.theatreroyal.com

Fri 23 & Sat 24 September

Birmingham Hippodrome, **BIRMINGHAM**

Tickets: 0844 338 5000 www.birminghamhippodrome.com

Tue 27 & Wed 28 September

Alhambra Theatre, **BRADFORD**

Tickets: 01274 432000 www.bradford-theatres.co.uk

Fri 30 September & Sat 1 October

Royal Concert Hall, **NOTTINGHAM**

Tickets: 0115 989 5555 www.trch.co.uk

Tue 4 & Wed 5 October

Wales Millennium Centre, **CARDIFF**

Tickets: 029 2063 6464 www.wmc.org.uk

Fri 7 & Sat 8 October

The Lowry, **SALFORD QUAYS**

Tickets: 0843 208 6000 www.thelowry.com

Tue 11 & Wed 12 October

Mayflower Theatre, **SOUTHAMPTON**

Tickets: 02380 711811 www.mayflower.org.uk

Fri 14 & Sat 15 October

Marlowe Theatre, **CANTERBURY**

Tickets: 01227 787787 www.marlowetheatre.com

Tue 18 & Wed 19 October

Festival Theatre, **EDINBURGH**

Tickets: 0131 529 6000 www.edtheatres.com

PRESS

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ABOUT ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER - Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recognized by U.S. Congressional resolution as a vital American “Cultural Ambassador to the World,” grew from a now-fabled March 1958 performance in New York that changed forever the perception of American dance. Founded by Alvin Ailey, recent posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation’s highest civilian honour, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle, whom Judith Jamison chose to succeed her on July 1, 2011. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 25 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents, promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition. In addition to being the Principal Dance Company of New York City Center, where its performances have become a year-end tradition, the Ailey company performs annually at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County in Miami, The Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley, CA and at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark where it is the Principal Resident Affiliate), and appears frequently in other major theatres throughout the United States and the world during extensive yearly tours. The Ailey organization also includes Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), one of the most extensive dance training programs in the world; Ailey Arts in Education & Community Programs, which brings dance into the classrooms, communities and lives of people of all ages; and The Ailey Extension (2005), a program offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of Ailey’s permanent home—the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the dance capital of the world —named The Joan Weill Center for Dance, at 55th Street at 9th Avenue in New York City. For more information, visit www.alvinailey.org

ABOUT DANCE CONSORTIUM - Dance Consortium is a group of 17 large scale venues located across the UK. Since its formation in 2000 Dance Consortium has presented 37 tours by 22 different companies from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, France, The Netherlands, Taiwan, Israel and the USA. Their performances and education activities have been experienced by hundreds of thousands of people across all parts of the UK. Dance Consortium receives investment as a national portfolio organisation of Arts Council England.

Dance Consortium members: Grand Opera House Belfast, Birmingham Hippodrome, Alhambra Theatre Bradford, Brighton Dome, Marlowe Theatre Canterbury, Wales Millennium Centre Cardiff, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, Dublin, Festival Theatre Edinburgh, Curve Theatre Leicester, Sadler’s Wells London, Milton Keynes Theatre, Theatre Royal Newcastle, Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall Nottingham with Dance 4, Theatre Royal Plymouth, The Lowry Salford, The Mayflower, Southampton, New Victoria Theatre, Woking. For more information, visit www.danceconsortium.com