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**ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER RETURNS TO THE AUDITORIUM THEATRE  
WITH SIX CHICAGO PREMIERES AND CLASSIC FAVORITES  
MARCH 6 – 15, 2015**

Artistic Director Robert Battle Brings Company Back to Their Chicago Home  
After Accepting Presidential Medal of Freedom Honoring the Powerful Legacy of Alvin Ailey

CHICAGO — Returning to Chicago for the longest stop on a robust 18-city U.S. Tour, [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) graces the [Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University's](#) landmark stage March 6 – 15, 2015. After accepting the Presidential Medal of Freedom on behalf of Alvin Ailey, **Robert Battle** leads the company for his fourth year as Artistic Director challenging “America’s Cultural Ambassador to the World” with bold new work as well as classic favorites. Tickets (\$32 – \$97) are on sale now and available online at [AuditoriumTheatre.org](#), by calling (800) 982-ARTS (2787) or at the Auditorium Theatre Box Office (50 E. Congress Pkwy). *Student Matinee performances are offered on March 12 and 13, open to any elementary through high school student for \$15 each. For more information please call (312) 341-2357.*

“For over 45 years the Auditorium has been the Chicago home for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and we are once again thrilled to have them back on our stage to celebrate with us during our milestone 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season,” said Auditorium Theatre Executive Director **Brett Batterson**. “The Presidential Medal of Freedom that was recently awarded to Alvin Ailey could not have been more deserved and speaks to the long lasting legacy that Mr. Ailey, Judith Jamison and now Robert Battle continue to carry on from generation to generation.”

Artistic Director **Robert Battle** who “[takes] the troupe in new directions while maintaining its beloved traditions,” (Chicago Tribune) continues to enhance the already rich repertory of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater by combining a vibrant array of new choreographic voices with classical and traditional pieces. Not only does Battle bring in choreographers from around the world to work with the company, he also looks inside the Ailey family as seen with the recent premiere of “**ODETTA**” by Ailey dancer and Rehearsal Director **Matthew Rushing**. The diverse Chicago programming also features exciting new work including the company premieres of **Christopher Wheeldon’s “After the Rain (Pas de Deux),” Hofesh Shechter’s “Uprising,” Ulysses Dove’s “Bad Blood,” Asadata Dafora’s “Awassa Astrige/Ostrich” and Hans van Manen’s “Polish Pieces.”**

Other pieces include **Ronald K. Brown’s “Grace,” Ulysses Dove’s “Episodes”** as well as Ailey’s personal masterpiece, “**Revelations.**”

“After celebrating 25 years since the passing of Alvin Ailey and accepting the Presidential Medal of Honor on his behalf, it is only fitting that we return to our second home, Chicago, to celebrate with them during their 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” said Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Artistic

Director **Robert Battle**. “Just as Mr. Ailey told a story through dance, the Auditorium tells a story through the incredible history of talent that has graced its stage. We are always thrilled to present both new work and some of our favorites to the Chicago audiences and we look forward to the next 125 years of performing at the Auditorium.”

*The International Dance Series is sponsored by the **NIB Foundation**. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is sponsored in part by **Arts Midwest**.*

### **Program Details**

*\*Denotes Chicago Premiere*

#### **\*ODETTA**

Odetta Holmes—one of the most influential singers of the 20th century—is rediscovered as renowned Ailey dancer and Rehearsal Director **Matthew Rushing** marries soul-stirring movement to songs by the artist anointed “the queen of American folk music” by Martin Luther King, Jr. in “**ODETTA**.” Rushing’s world premiere for Ailey pays tribute to Holmes’ life as a singer, songwriter, actress, activist and “the voice of the Civil Rights Movement” which the Associated Press proclaims “...the timing could hardly be more apt for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s new civil rights-themed piece.” With a musical repertoire encompassing American folk music, blues, jazz, and spirituals, Odetta influenced many key figures of the 1960s folk-revival scene including Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Mavis Staples and Janis Joplin. With projections by artist **Stephen Alcorn**, “ODETTA” marks Rushing’s third ballet created for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. The cast of 12 perform to spoken word and songs by Odetta, including “This Little Light of Mine,” “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child,” “Cool Water” and “Glory, Glory.” It also includes an original recording of the “Freedom Trilogy” Odetta famously performed at the 1963 March on Washington that was recreated for the ballet by Ysaye M. Barnwell. “ODETTA” was created with the support of commissioning funds from New York City Center.

#### **\*After the Rain (Pas de Deux)**

**Christopher Wheeldon**’s “**After the Rain**” premiered in 2005 at New York City Ballet’s annual New Combinations Evening in which Dance Magazine stated, “rare is the ballet that resonates so profoundly with audiences that it becomes an instant hit.” A ballet in two parts, the company will perform the work’s second section, a male-female pas de deux that has become a standalone piece. Praised for its sublime simplicity and intricate partnering, it will be revealed in a fresh light as the Ailey dancers make it their own. Set to music by the Estonian composer **Arvo Pärt**, the sensual duet has resonated deeply with audiences and will be the first work by Christopher Wheeldon to enter the Ailey repertory.

#### **\*Uprising**

**Hofesh Shechter**, “one of the most inventive new choreographic voices to turn up in quite a while,” (The New York Times) created his critically-acclaimed piece “**Uprising**” in 2006. The first piece of Shechter’s to enter into the Ailey repertory features seven men who emerge from the shadows to bombard the stage with furious intensity, bonding and sparring in a highly charged work set to a percussive score by the choreographer himself. Widely considered his breakthrough work, “Uprising” defined Shechter as a new rebellious voice in dance with an untouchable ability to captivate audiences and set hearts pounding. Utilizing a movement style

that is primal and imbued with a certain high-tension energy, the Israeli-born Shechter has risen to become one of Europe's most sought-after dance creators since his move to London in 2002.

### ***\*Bad Blood***

In "**Bad Blood**," choreographed by **Ulysses Dove** in 1986, passionate emotions and kinetic, athletic energy encapsulate the powerful yet extremely tender war between the sexes, asking the question "can we be a duo and an individual at the same time?" In a desperate and futile search for connection through physical impact, the seven dancers leapfrog over one another, hurl and fling themselves at each other, ending up in fierce and violent embraces. With music by **Laurie Anderson** and **Peter Gabriel**, "Bad Blood" was the precursor to two other Dove ballets on the same theme, "Episodes" (which can be seen in different Ailey programs during their Chicago visit) and "Urban Folk Dance," and was the fourth of what would eventually be seven Dove ballets performed by Ailey dancers. Ulysses Dove has been hailed as one of the most exciting choreographers to emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century, renowned for a style that merged the influences of his choreographic mentors, Alvin Ailey and Merce Cunningham.

### ***\*Awassa Astrige/Ostrich***

Set to **Carl Riley**'s score of African drumming and flute, Sierra Leone-born choreographer **Asadata Dafora**'s "**Awassa Astrige/Ostrich**" was one of the first modern dance compositions to fuse African movements with Western staging. This groundbreaking 1932 solo—showcasing a man with arms flapping like wings, torso rippling and head held high, depicts a warrior transforming into the proud, powerful ostrich — the king of birds.

### ***\*Polish Pieces***

In "**Polish Pieces**," Dutch choreographer **Hans 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 that the New York Times says is "a beautifully rehearsed ensemble, bobbing dynamically through changing angular shapes."

### ***Grace***

**Ronald K. Brown**'s landmark "**Grace**," created for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1999, returns in a rapturous, spiritually-charged new production. Infused with Brown's signature blend of modern dance and West African idioms, this moving journey acknowledging the grace that surrounds us all is set to Duke Ellington's classic "Come Sunday," Roy Davis' hit "Gabriel," and the powerful rhythms of Fela Kuti's Afro-Pop. Brown has created and presented dances since 1985 with his company Evidence and honors include the Bessie Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the American Dance Festival Humphrey/Weidman/Limon Award, among others. Most recently he received accolades for his Astaire award-winning choreography for the Broadway revival of The Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess." Says Battle, "Brown's choreography uses African dance in a unique and potent way. 'Grace' is a brilliant work, and an important part of the Ailey repertory. From the beautiful opening solo...there are elements that represent both the religious and secular. The strong tension between these two opposites, and how they sometimes reflect one another, remains gripping right to the very end."

### ***Episodes***

Former Alvin Ailey dancer turned choreographer **Ulysses Dove** first created his explosive choreographic masterpiece, “**Episodes**,” for the classical London Festival Ballet in 1987 where the piece was danced in bare feet. The following year, Dove re-choreographed the dance en pointe for Patrick Dupond’s Ballet Francais de Nancy and in 1989, Alvin Ailey took “Episodes” into the repertory of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, allowing audiences a glimpse of what dance would look like in the next century. Like his mentor Ailey, who was always exploring the battle of the sexes in his choreography, Dove sharply exposed the eternal dilemma of men and women—can we live with each other or can we live without each other? —to a provocative score by **Robert Ruggieri**.

### ***Revelations***

Rounding out the program is one of Alvin Ailey’s personal masterpieces that has become a signature American classic. “**Revelations**,” (1960) a suite of dances that fervently explores the places of deepest grief and holiest joy in the soul, will be performed at each performance throughout the two weekend engagement.

### **Community Engagement Programming**

In tandem with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Auditorium’s **Department of Creative Engagement** utilizes innovative programming to engage Chicago students and the community by highlighting the importance of dance and artistic expression.

The **Auditorium Theatre Master Class Series** continues with four Ailey Master Class opportunities. High school, pre-professional, and adult dancers with intermediate to advanced dance experience are invited to learn from some of the most accomplished dancers working today in various dance styles including hip-hop, modern and Horton technique. Classes take place on Saturday, March 7 and Saturday, March 14, 2015 and are *free* for all CPS Students, \$10 for college students and \$20 for dancers. All classes are limited to 30 participants. For more information or to sign up, please email [atru-education@auditoriumtheatre.org](mailto:atru-education@auditoriumtheatre.org) or call (312) 341-2359 for an application.

For the third year, the Department of Creative Engagement in partnership with the **Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) Network**, presents the “**Revelations**” **Residency Program** February 23 – 27. This unique five day program, taking place at Collins Academy High School (1313 S. Sacramento Dr.), is offered to junior high school and high school students in Chicago’s North Lawndale community. Led by former principal Ailey dancer and National Director /Spokesperson & Master Teacher **Nasha Thomas-Schmitt**, as well as other Alvin Ailey Arts in Education teaching artists, students will learn about community building, expression through dance and how to, like Alvin Ailey, transform their own “blood memories” into moving works of art. Students will also learn about the life and legacy of Ailey as well as part of his signature piece, “Revelations.” On February 27 at 5pm community parents, friends and any and all members of the Chicago community are invited to Collins Academy for a free performance where the students will showcase their learning and personal choreography with a reception to follow.

The **Ailey Arts in Education** team will also be leading a series of dance workshops with elementary school students and college and career conversations with Chicago area high school students throughout the week of March 9.

### **Program Schedule and Ticket Information**

#### **Week 1**

**Friday, March 6 | 7:30pm:** *ODETTA / Episodes / Revelations*

**Saturday, March 7 | 2:00 & 8:00pm:** *Polish Pieces / Awassa Astrige-Ostrich / Bad Blood / Revelations*

**Sunday, March 8 | 3:00pm:** *ODETTA / Episodes / Revelations*

#### **Week 2**

**Thursday, March 12 | 7:30pm:** *Grace / Uprising / After the Rain (Pas de Deux) / Revelations*

**Friday, March 13 | 7:30pm:** *ODETTA / Episodes / Revelations*

**Saturday, March 14 | 2:00pm:** *ODETTA / Episodes / Revelations*

**Saturday, March 14 | 8:00pm:** *Grace / Uprising / After the Rain (Pas de Deux) / Revelations*

**Sunday, March 15 | 3:00pm:** *Polish Pieces / Awassa Astrige-Ostrich / Bad Blood / Revelations*

Tickets (\$32 – \$97) are available online at [AuditoriumTheatre.org](http://AuditoriumTheatre.org), by calling (800) 982-ARTS (2787) or in-person at Auditorium Theatre's Box Office (50 E. Congress Pkwy). Discounted tickets for groups of 10 or more are available at (312) 341-2357 or [sales@auditoriumtheatre.org](mailto:sales@auditoriumtheatre.org).

[Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) is part of the Auditorium's International Dance Series, which also includes [Grupo Corpo](#), [Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg](#) and [The Royal Ballet's "Don Quixote"](#). Subscriptions are available at a 30% discount at (312) 341-2357 or at [AuditoriumTheatre.org](http://AuditoriumTheatre.org).

#### **Student Matinees**

**Thursday, March 12 | 11:00am:** *ODETTA* excerpt / *Revelations*

**Friday, March 13 | 11:00am:** *ODETTA* excerpt / *Revelations*

The Ailey student matinee performances are available to elementary through high school student groups of 10 or more for \$15 each. For more information, please call (312) 341-2357.

#### **Auditorium Theatre's 2014 – 15 Season:**

The Auditorium Theatre 2014 – 15 Season also includes [Grupo Corpo](#) (February 28 – March 1); [River North Dance Chicago](#) (March 28); [Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg](#) (May 8 – 10); [Chicago Rhythm Fest](#) (May 13); ["His Way - Sinatra's Centennial Celebration"](#) (May 30); and [The Royal Ballet's "Don Quixote"](#) (June 18 – 21). For a complete listing of events at the Auditorium Theatre, please click [here](#).

### **125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season Sponsors**

The Auditorium Theatre would like to thank their 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season Sponsors: Lead Corporate Sponsor **Nicor Gas**, Lead Foundation Sponsor **Robert R. McCormick Foundation** and **David D. Hiller**, International Dance Series Sponsor **NIB Foundation**, and “Made in Chicago” Dance Series sponsor **The Boeing Company**. Media sponsors include **Chicago Magazine** and **WXRT**, and the **Pasquinelli Family Foundation** is the Gala Dinner Celebration Sponsor. Student Matinee Series Sponsors for the 2014 – 15 Season include **The Private Bank** and **The Robert Thomas Bobins Foundation**.

### **About the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University**

**The Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University**, located at 50 E. Congress Pkwy, is an Illinois, not-for-profit organization committed to presenting the finest in international, cultural, community and educational programming to Chicago, and to the continued restoration and preservation of the National Historic Landmark Auditorium Theatre. In September of 2014, the Auditorium Theatre was awarded the inaugural Fifth Star Award by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. On December 9, 2014, the Auditorium Theatre celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday with a proclamation from the City of Chicago declaring it “Auditorium Theatre Day.”

The Auditorium Theatre is generously supported by the **MacArthur Foundation**, the **Illinois Arts Council**, the **Sage Foundation**, and the **Palmer House Hilton**. For more information about programming, volunteer and donor opportunities or theatre tours, call (312) 341-2310 or visit [AuditoriumTheatre.org](http://AuditoriumTheatre.org).

### **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 honor, 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 23 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 D.C., 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 theaters 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 [alvinailey.org](http://alvinailey.org).

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