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[Press Room](#)



Images of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER
COMPANY'S 60TH-ANNIVERSARY BERKELEY PERFORMANCES
FEATURE THREE BAY AREA PREMIERES
INCLUDING CAL PERFORMANCES CO-COMMISSIONED *LAZARUS*
TUESDAY–SUNDAY, APRIL 9–14

The company's residency includes the fourth annual
"Berkeley Dances *Revelations*" flash mob performance, a community dance class,
and two SchoolTime performances for K–12 students

Berkeley, March 7, 2019 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes back the **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**—currently celebrating its 60th anniversary—for its annual campus residency, featuring three works receiving their Bay Area premieres, from Tuesday, April 9 through Sunday, April 14 in Zellerbach Hall. The company's four programs offer a wide range of choreography, celebrating the rich cultural expression of African Americans, while also engaging with relevant issues of social justice, homelessness, and inequality. The three works new to Bay Area audiences are **Rennie Harris'** *Lazarus*, co-commissioned by Cal Performances and inspired by Alvin Ailey's life and legacy; **Ronald K. Brown's** *The Call*, which seamlessly blends modern and West African dance idioms, as "a love letter to Mr. Ailey"; and **Jessica Lang's** celebratory ensemble work

EN. The residency also includes **Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's** *Shelter*, which explores the plight of the homeless, and company artistic director **Robert Battle's** *Ella*, a joyful tribute to jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald. Two matinee performances are devoted to *Timeless Ailey*, a retrospective program covering 30 years of treasures from Alvin Ailey's rich body of work that culminates with his iconic *Revelations*.

Program A, performed Tuesday, April 9 at 8pm and Saturday, April 13 at 8pm, features the Bay Area premiere of hip hop dance pioneer Rennie Harris' *Lazarus* (2018), inspired by the life and legacy of Alvin Ailey. The work is the company's first two-act ballet and was a 2018 recipient of the New England Foundation For the Arts prestigious National Dance Project grant. With *Lazarus*, which has a score by Darrin Ross, Harris addresses the racial inequities America faced when Ailey founded this company in 1958 and still faces today. True to tradition, the program closes with *Revelations*, Ailey's 1960 masterpiece celebrating the African-American experience.

Program B, performed Wednesday, April 10 at 8pm and Friday, April 12 at 8pm, includes four works. British choreographer Wayne McGregor's *Kairos* (2014) is set to Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, as re-imagined by composer Max Richter, and uses walls to create a starkly dramatic onstage world—a counterpoint to McGregor's sinuous, angular movement. Ailey is the first American company to perform this work, which garnered rave reviews at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2015. Urban Bush Women founder Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's *Shelter* (1988), first performed by the Ailey company in 1992, explores the emotional trauma of homelessness. Danced by an all-female cast, the work features a music score with drumming by Junior "Gabu" Wedderburn and poetry by Hattie Gossett and Laurie Carlos. Artistic director Robert Battle's *Ella* (2008), a joyful tribute to jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald, was first created as a solo in 2008, and re-invented as a duet in honor of Fitzgerald's centennial in 2017. The work is set to a recording of a live Fitzgerald performance of the jazz standard "Airmail Special." Also on the program, Jessica Lang makes her choreographic debut with the Ailey company with *EN* (2018), receiving its Bay Area premiere. "En" is a Japanese word with multiple meanings—including "circle," "destiny," or "fate"—and the theme of the work, which is set to an original score by Jakub Ciupinski, is about coming full circle.

Program C, performed Thursday, April 11 at 8pm, features *Members Don't Get Weary* (2017) by veteran Ailey company member Jamar Roberts, who is well-known for his commanding presence as

a dancer. Set to two contrasting recordings by John Coltrane (“Dear Lord” and “Olé”), Roberts’ first choreographic work for the company revels in the emotional urgency and transcendence of the blues. Receiving its Bay Area premiere, Ronald K. Brown’s acclaimed *The Call* (2018) weaves modern dance and West African forms in a joyous, spiritual work danced to works by J.S. Bach, Mary Lou Williams, and Asase Yaa Entertainment Group. The program continues with Robert Battle’s *Juba* (2003), an explosive work for three men and one woman with an original score for string quartet and percussion by John Mackey. Ailey’s *Revelations* concludes the program.

Program D, performed at the matinees on Saturday, April 13 at 2pm and Sunday, April 14 at 3pm, is dedicated to *Timeless Ailey (1958–1986)*, a special program comprised of highlights from ballets choreographed by Ailey, including some seldom-seen gems. The program features excerpts from 1974’s *Night Creature* (music by Duke Ellington); 1972’s *The Lark Ascending* (Vaughan Williams); 1958’s *Blues Suite* (Brother John Sellers); 1971’s *Cry* (Voices of East Harlem); 1972’s *Love Songs* (Donny Hathaway); and 1979’s *Memoria* (Keith Jarrett), along with several other works. The historical program concludes with Ailey’s classic *Revelations*, performed in its entirety at both performances.

Residency Activities

A number of residency activities are planned on the UC Berkeley campus as part of the company’s visit. For the fourth year, company dancers will host a series of “Berkeley Dances *Revelations*” workshops, during which the public is invited to learn choreography from Alvin Ailey’s iconic *Revelations*. The free 30-minute workshops will take place in the Hearst Gymnasium on Friday, April 12, at 10am, 10:45am, and 11:30am; registration is required at calperformances.org. Following the workshops, everyone is invited to Lower Sproul Plaza on the UC Berkeley campus for a “Berkeley Dances *Revelations*” Flash Mob at 12:30pm. Members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will lead this public performance of the “Wade in the Water” section from Ailey’s *Revelations*. The event is free and open to the public.

A community dance class with members of the company is planned in the Bancroft Studio on Sunday, April 14 at 11am. The class, open to participants of all ages and abilities, includes technique and choreographic excerpts from the company’s current repertory. Admission is \$10 per person, and pre-registration required at calperformances.org.

Two matinee performances by the company are also offered to area K–12 schoolchildren as part of the Cal Performances SchoolTime series, on Wednesday and Thursday, April 10–11 at 11am. Pre-registration and ticket purchase is required by filling out the order form at calperformances.org.

Ticket Information

Tickets for the *Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater* on Tuesday–Friday, April 9–12 at 8pm; Saturday, April 13 at 2pm and 8pm; and Sunday, April 14 at 3pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$38–\$145 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Tuesday, April 9, 8pm

Wednesday, April 10, 8pm

Thursday, April 11, 8pm

Friday, April 12, 8pm

Saturday, April 13, 2pm and 8pm

Sunday, April 14, 3pm

**Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley Campus**

Dance

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Robert Battle, *artistic director*

Masazumi Chaya, *associate artistic director*

Program: The revered Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater—which first visited Cal Performances more than 50 years ago in 1968—returns to Berkeley for its annual residency. The company’s four programs offer a wide range of choreography, and celebrate the cultural expression of African Americans through jazz, hip hop, and the blues, while also engaging with relevant issues of social justice, homelessness, and inequality. Highlights include three Bay Area premieres— Cal-Performances co-commissioned *Lazarus*, a new ballet by hip hop pioneer Rennie Harris, inspired by Ailey’s life and legacy; Ronald K. Brown’s *The Call*, which seamlessly blends modern and West African dance idioms as “a love letter to Mr. Ailey”; and Jessica Lang’s vivid, celebratory work, *En*. Also on the program: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar’s *Shelter*, which explores the plight of the homeless; and artistic director Robert Battle’s joyful jazz tribute, *Ella*. The residency also includes two matinee performances of *Timeless Ailey*, a retrospective program covering 30 years of treasures from Alvin Ailey’s rich body of work that culminates in his best-loved masterpiece, *Revelations*.

Program A (April 9 & 13, 8pm)

Rennie Harris/*Lazarus* (2018) (Bay Area Premiere; Cal Performances Co-Commission) (music: Darrin Ross)

Alvin Ailey/*Revelations* (1960) (music: various traditional spirituals)

Program B (April 10 & 12, 8pm)

Wayne McGregor/*Kairos* (2014) (Company Bay Area Premiere) (music: Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, re-composed by Max Richter)

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar/*Shelter* (1988) (music: Junior "Gabu" Wedderburn and Victor See Yuen)

Robert Battle/*Ella* (2008) (music: Ella Fitzgerald)

Jessica Lang/*EN* (2018) (Bay Area Premiere) (music: Jakub Ciupinski)

Program C (April 11, 8pm)

Jamar Roberts/*Members Don't Get Weary* (2017) (music: John Coltrane)

Ronald K. Brown/*The Call* (2018) (Bay Area Premiere) (music: Johann Sebastian Bach, Mary Lou Williams, Asase Yaa Entertainment Group)

Robert Battle/*Juba* (2003) (music: John Mackey)

Alvin Ailey/*Revelations* (1960) (music: various traditional spirituals)

Program D (April 13, 2pm & April 14, 3pm)

Alvin Ailey/*Timeless Ailey* Special Program (1958–1986) (music: various)

Ailey/*Revelations* (1960) (music: various traditional spirituals)

Tickets: \$38–\$145 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities

Workshop

Berkeley Dances *Revelations*

Hearst Gymnasium

Friday, April 12 at 10am, 10:45am, and 11:30am

Participants are invited to take part in the fourth annual "Berkeley Dances *Revelations*" flash mob performance. Three morning sessions are offered to first learn choreography from Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*, led by Ailey company members; then join the performance on the UC Berkeley campus in Lower Sproul Plaza at 12:30pm. Free and open to the public; reservations are required at calperformances.org.

"Berkeley Dances *Revelations*" Flash Mob

Friday, April 12, 12:30pm

Lower Sproul Plaza

A community celebration of Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*, led by members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Free and open to the public.

Community Dance Class

Bancroft Studio

Sunday, April 14 at 11am

A dance class for all ages and abilities, taught by a dancer from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Participation is \$10, and advance purchase is required at calperformances.org.

SchoolTime Performance

Zellerbach Hall

Wednesday and Thursday, April 10–11 at 11am

A matinee performance by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for area K-12 schoolchildren. Pre-registration and ticket purchase is required by filling out the order form at calperformances.org.