

CONTACT: **Louisa Spier**  
**Cal Performances**  
(510) 643-6714  
[lspier@calperformances.org](mailto:lspier@calperformances.org)

**Jeanette Peach**  
**Cal Performances**  
(510) 642-9121  
[jpeach@calperformances.org](mailto:jpeach@calperformances.org)

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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  
FEATURING THE BAY AREA PREMIERES OF WORKS BY  
RESIDENT CHOREOGRAPHER JAMAR ROBERTS AND DONALD BYRD,  
AND BAY AREA COMPANY PREMIERES OF WORKS BY  
CAMILLE A. BROWN AND ASZURE BARTON  
MARCH 31–APRIL 5, 2020**

**The Ailey’s UC Berkeley residency includes the fifth annual  
“Berkeley Dances *Revelations*” flash mob performance, a community dance class,  
an artist talk, and SchoolTime performances for K–12 students**

**Berkeley, February 24, 2020** — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes the **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**—now led by artistic director Robert Battle in its seventh decade—for its annual campus residency, with two works receiving their Bay Area premieres, and two receiving their company Bay Area premieres, from Tuesday, March 31 through Sunday, April 5 in Zellerbach Hall. The company’s four programs honor its legacy of innovation and excellence, with diverse

works by preeminent choreographers, new productions, returning favorites, and timeless classics by Alvin Ailey.

Two Bay Area premieres highlight social issues from the perspective of both history and current events: celebrated choreographer **Donald Byrd's** *Greenwood* draws on the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, and Ailey dancer and inaugural resident choreographer **Jamar Roberts' Ode** offers a meditation on the beauty and fragility of life in a time of growing gun violence. The Ailey company also performs works by **Camille A. Brown** (*City of Rain*) and **Aszure Barton** (*BUSK*) for the first time in the Bay Area, and several works return from last season's residency: **Rennie Harris' Lazarus**, a Cal Performances co-commission; **Jessica Lang's EN**; and **Robert Battle's Ella**. The 2020 Ailey residency at UC Berkeley also features a new production of **Judith Jamison's Divining**, as well as her *A Case of You*; a recently revived production of **Lar Lubovitch's Fandango**; and two of Mr. Ailey's most popular classics, *Cry* and *Revelations*.

Program A, performed Tuesday, March 31 and Saturday, April 4 at 8pm, includes the Bay Area premiere of Bessie Award-winning Ailey dancer Jamar Roberts' *Ode* (2019), acclaimed as "a powerful and poetic exploration of the effects of gun violence" by *The New York Times*. The production features Roberts' own costume designs for the six cast members, and is set to a jazz score by Don Pullen. *Ode* is Roberts' first in a series of three works planned for the Ailey company in his role as the company's resident choreographer. The program also includes a new production of Lar Lubovitch's sensually athletic duet *Fandango* (1990), the movement propelled by the lush intensity of Maurice Ravel's *Boléro*. Artistic director Robert Battle's *Ella* (2008) is a joyful tribute to jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald, which was first created as a solo and later re-worked as a duet in honor of Fitzgerald's birth centennial in 2017. The work is set to a recording of a live Fitzgerald performance of the jazz standard "Airmail Special." Ailey's masterpiece *Revelations* (1960), which combines powerful storytelling and the soul-stirring music of traditional African-American spirituals, closes the program.

Program B, performed Wednesday, April 1 at 8pm and Saturday, April 4 at 2pm, features works by several generations of acclaimed women choreographers, including two in their Ailey company Bay Area premieres. Canadian choreographer Aszure Barton's *BUSK* (2009) explores the fragility, tenderness, and resilience that define the human experience. Set to a spirited score, *BUSK* features Barton's layered and intricate choreographic structures, which highlight dancers as individuals as well

as parts of a collective whole. Camille A. Brown's lyrical *City of Rain* (2010) honors the struggles and grace of a close friend, Greg "Blyes" Boomer, who died from an illness that paralyzed him from the waist down. Set to an original composition by Jonathan Melville Pratt, this re-staged production utilizes the vulnerable physicality of 10 dancers to pay tribute to Boomer's story. The program also includes Judith Jamison's 2004 duet, *A Case of You*, with music by Joni Mitchell, performed by Diana Krall; and Jessica Lang's *EN* (2018), a reflection on the passing of time and returning to one's roots ("En" is a Japanese word meaning "circle," "karma," and "fate"). Lang's dance is underscored by Jakub Ciupinski's haunting music and illuminated by scenic elements that evoke an otherworldly atmosphere.

The centerpiece of Program C, performed Thursday, April 2, 8pm and Sunday, April 5 at 3pm, is the Bay Area premiere of Donald Byrd's *Greenwood* (2019), which uses as its source the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, one of the worst incidents of racial violence in US history. *Greenwood* tells the story through the various lenses of those who were affected, with music by Israeli violist and composer Emmanuel Witzthum. Byrd is a Bessie Award-winner and 2019 Doris Duke Artist Award recipient, and his most recent work presented at Cal Performances was the 2017–18 season's *A Rap on Race*, a co-creation with playwright, actor, and professor Anna Deveare Smith. The program also includes a new production of Judith Jamison's 1984 dance, *Divining*—her first choreographic effort—which is set to the polyrhythmic African music of Kimati Dinizulu and Monti Ellison, and builds on a variety of African dance idioms to create a pulsating, strikingly modern work. Two Alvin Ailey classics complete the program: *Revelations* and *Cry* (1971), a tour-de-force 16-minute solo dedicated to "all black women everywhere—especially our mothers," danced to Alice Coltrane's "Something about John Coltrane," Laura Nyro's "Been on a Train," and the Voices of East Harlem singing "Right On, Be Free."

Two substantial works comprise Program D, performed Friday, April 3 at 8pm. The first half of the evening performance is hip-hop dance pioneer Rennie Harris' *Lazarus* (2018), co-commissioned by Cal Performances and inspired by Alvin Ailey's life and legacy. *Lazarus*, the company's first two-act ballet, addresses the racial inequities faced by Ailey when founding his company in 1958, many of which persist today. The work has a soundtrack produced by Darrin Ross, with his original music, and featuring music by Nina Simone, Terrence Trent D'Arby, Michael Kiwanuka, and Odetta, as well as spoken text written and adapted by Harris that is performed by Wadud Ahmad and Rennie Harris; *Lazarus*

also features the recorded voice of Alvin Ailey. True to tradition, the program closes with *Revelations*, Ailey's masterpiece celebrating the African-American experience.

### **Residency Activities**

Several residency activities are planned on and near the UC Berkeley campus in conjunction with the company's performances. First, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater rehearsal director Ronni Favors will present an artist talk as a guest of the academic course "Thinking Through Art and Design @Berkeley: Public Art and Belonging," in which he will discuss Ailey's vision and goals when founding the company more than 60 years ago. The talk is on Thursday, April 2 at 12:10pm at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) Osher Theater, 2155 Center St., Berkeley; admission is free and open to the public.

For the fifth year, Hope Boykin and 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*. Boykin is currently performing in her final season after two decades as a dancer, choreographer, and teacher with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and has led "Berkeley Dances *Revelations*" on campus since its inception. The free 30-minute workshops will take place in the Hearst Gymnasium on Friday, April 3, at 10am, 10:45am, and 11:30am; registration is required at [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org). Following the workshops, all participants are invited to Lower Sproul Plaza on campus for a "Berkeley Dances *Revelations*" flash mob performance at 12:30pm. Members of the company will lead this public performance of the "Rocka My Soul" section from *Revelations*. The flash mob event is free and open to the public.

A community dance class with members of the company is also planned in the Bancroft Studio on Sunday, April 5 at 11am. The class is open to participants of all ages and abilities, and covers technique and choreographic excerpts from the company's current repertory. Admission is \$10 per person, with pre-registration required at [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org). In addition, two daytime performances by the company are offered to area K-12 schoolchildren as part of the Cal Performances SchoolTime series, on Wednesday and Thursday, April 1-2 at 11am. Pre-registration and ticket purchase is required by filling out the order form at [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org).

### **Ticket Information**

Tickets for the *Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater* on Tuesday–Friday, March 31–April 3 at 8pm; Saturday, April 4 at 2pm and 8pm; and Sunday, April 5 at 3pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$40–\$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](http://calperformances.org), and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to [calperformances.org/discounts](http://calperformances.org/discounts).

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Tuesday, March 31, 8pm**  
**Wednesday, April 1, 8pm**  
**Thursday, April 2, 8pm**  
**Friday, April 3, 8pm**  
**Saturday, April 4, 2pm**  
**Saturday, April 4, 8pm**  
**Sunday, April 5, 3pm**

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

*Dance*

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**

**Robert Battle**, *artistic director*

**Matthew Rushing**, *associate artistic director*

**Program A (Mar 31 & Apr 4, 8pm)**

Jamar Roberts/*Ode* (2019; Bay Area Premiere; music: Don Pullen)

Lar Lubovitch/*Fandango* (1990; music: Ravel's *Boléro*)

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

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

**Program B (Apr 1, 8pm & Apr 4, 2pm)**

Aszure Barton/*BUSK* (2009; Company Bay Area Premiere; music: various artists)

Camille A. Brown/*City of Rain* (2010; Company Bay Area Premiere; music: Jonathan Melville Pratt)

Judith Jamison/*A Case of You* (2004; music: Joni Mitchell, performed by Diana Krall)

Jessica Lang/*EN* (2018; music: Jakub Ciupinski)

**Program C (Apr 2, 8pm & Apr 5, 3pm)**

Judith Jamison/*Divining* (1984; New Production; music: Monti Ellison and Kimati Dinizulu)

Alvin Ailey/*Cry* (1971; music: Alice Coltrane and Laura Nyro, The Voices of East Harlem)

Donald Byrd/*Greenwood* (2019; Bay Area Premiere; music: Emmanuel Witzthum)

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

**Program D (Apr 3, 8pm)**

Rennie Harris/*Lazarus* (2018; music: Darrin Ross)

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

**Tickets:** \$40–\$145 (prices subject to change)

**Residency Activities**

**Artist Talk**

**BAMPFA Osher Theater, 2155 Center St., Berkeley**

**Thursday, April 2, 12:10pm**

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater rehearsal director Ronni Favors presents an artist talk as a guest of the academic course “Thinking Through Art and Design @Berkeley: Public Art and Belonging.” Admission is free and open to the public.

**SchoolTime Performances**

**Zellerbach Hall**

**Wednesday and Thursday, April 1–2 at 11am**

Daytime performances 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](http://calperformances.org).

**Workshops**

**“Berkeley Dances *Revelations*”**

**Hearst Gymnasium**

**Friday, April 3 at 10am, 10:45am, and 11:30am**

Workshop participants are invited to take part in the fifth annual “Berkeley Dances *Revelations*” flash mob performance. Three morning sessions are offered to learn choreography from Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations*, led by Ailey company members; afterwards, join the performance on campus in Lower Sproul Plaza at 12:30pm. Free and open to the public; reservations are required at [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org).

**“Berkeley Dances *Revelations*” Flash Mob**

**Friday, April 3, 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 5 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](http://calperformances.org).