

For Immediate Release

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**Michigan Opera Theatre 2018-19 Dance Series Celebrates Modern Dance,  
Features Ballet Stars**

*Series includes Alvin Ailey, Martha Graham and Bill T. Jones*

*Ballet star Alessandra Ferri featured in pas de deux program*

**Detroit, June 27, 2018** - Michigan Opera Theatre's 2018-19 dance series will celebrate modern dance and include a special program featuring Italian ballet star Alessandra Ferri. The modern dance line-up follows the movement through generations. It features Martha Graham Dance Company (founded in 1926), Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (founded in 1958) and Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company (founded in 1983). The classical ballet line-up includes "Alessandra Ferri: The Art of the Pas de Deux," a romantic evening Valentine's Day weekend featuring Ferri in a series of duets with other prominent international ballet dancers. It also includes the return of Columbus's BalletMet for a traditional production of MOT's annual presentation of "The Nutcracker."

"This year's dance series is one of legends, including Martha Graham Dance Company, a founding producer of American modern dance, and Alessandra Ferri, internationally-recognized as one of the best ballerinas of all time," said MOT President and CEO Wayne S. Brown. "Along with trailblazing dance companies like Alvin Ailey and Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane, it's an all-star series not to be missed."

MOT Principal Conductor Stephen Lord said the focus on modern dance is an opportunity for audiences to experience the art form from different perspectives.

"Since its origins, modern dance has been an art form that uses movement to challenge convention and explore new ideas," he said. "We are excited to present a program that features a variety of companies that encourages our audiences to explore modern dance from different viewpoints, ranging from Martha Graham at the earliest stages of the art form to the later vision of Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company."

Martha Graham Dance Company is the oldest dance company in the United States and is renowned for its exploration of contemporary social, political, psychological and sexual themes. It will be presented in a continuing partnership with University Musical Society at the Power Center in Ann Arbor.

Local favorite Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater returns for its biennial visit to the Detroit Opera House. The company, recognized by the U.S. Congress as a vital American "Cultural Ambassador to the World," celebrates the African-American cultural experience with a repertoire known for its inspiration and empowerment.

The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company has performed in the region previously in Ann Arbor but will make its Detroit Opera House debut. The company is considered one of the most powerful influences in the dance world. They are known for their provocative and innovative style that uses multi-media effects and cross-artistic collaborations to create unique, street-influenced pieces. They will perform their latest work, "A Letter to My Nephew," a celebration and meditation on the life of Jones' nephew Lance T. Briggs. Briggs was a scholarship student at the San Francisco Ballet School who fell into drugs and prostitution, later becoming paraplegic. The poignant piece features bold theatrical displays and examines Briggs personal struggles alongside today's political landscape.

"I worked with Bill T. Jones many years ago, and his spirit is a shining light in the arts," Lord said.

Ferri is a long-term principal ballet dancer with a career that has spanned nearly four decades. She has performed with some of the best dance companies around the globe, including the Royal Ballet, American Ballet Theatre and La Scala Theatre Ballet. She is one of only 11 ballerinas in the world to have been awarded the title of "prima ballerina assoluta," a rare honor bestowed upon the best dancers of a generation. She also holds a Lawrence Olivier award for her performance in Kenneth MacMillan's "Valley of Shadows."

"Alessandra Ferri: The Art of the Pas de Deux" will include a variety of romantic duets featuring Ferri partnered with international ballet stars to be announced at a later date. The line-up will showcase pieces ranging from classical to contemporary works.

Audience favorite BalletMet returns to the Detroit Opera House with Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" Thanksgiving weekend. The production features the traditional Victorian costumes and colorful sets with a bit of whimsy, accompanied by the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra.

Subscriptions may be purchased at up to 30 percent off single ticket prices. Subscription benefits also include free exchanges and exclusive access to pre-paid parking in the Opera House Parking Center. Single tickets go on sale Aug. 20. To purchase visit [www.MichiganOpera.org](http://www.MichiganOpera.org), call (313) 237-7464 or come in person to the Detroit Opera House (1526 Broadway, Detroit).

The 2018-19 MOT dance series is made possible in part by ongoing sponsor, the Lear Corporation, who has supported MOT's dance program for the past four years.

## DANCE SERIES

**Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company**  
*Presented with University Musical Society*

**Oct. 27, 2018**

The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company makes its Detroit Opera House debut in 2018! The award-winning modern dance company is known for its multi-media effects and cross-artistic collaborations to create unique, street-influenced pieces. The company will present "A Letter to My Nephew," a celebration and meditation on Jones' nephew Lance T. Briggs, an up-and-coming

performer who fell into drugs and prostitution before becoming paraplegic. "Letter" is a poignant work that references a troubled life in show business, the sex trade and the hard job of growing up.

**BalletMet's "The Nutcracker"**

**Nov. 24-25, 2018**

The tradition returns with BalletMet's endearing production of Tchaikovsky's universal favorite. The ballet tells the story of the young Clara and her beloved Nutcracker-turned-prince as they journey together for a magical evening on Christmas Eve to The Land of Sweets. Featuring traditional Victorian costumes, dazzling sets and more than 122 characters on stage, BalletMet's production creates an enchanting atmosphere to captivate children and adults alike.

**"Alessandra Ferri: The Art of the Pas de Deux"**

**Feb. 16, 2019**

International ballet star, Alessandra Ferri performs a variety of romantic duets with a roster of some of the world's leading dancers. The program will explore the poetry and romantic intensity of dance in a mixed program celebrating the art of the pas de deux.

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**

**March 15-17, 2019**

A local favorite, Alvin Ailey returns once again to the Detroit Opera House with a repertoire known for its inspiration and empowerment. Considered cultural ambassadors to the world, the company celebrates the African-American cultural experience in the American modern dance tradition.

**Martha Graham Dance Company**

**April 26-27, 2019**

*Presented with University Musical Society at the Power Center, Ann Arbor*

Founded in 1926, the Martha Graham Dance Company is known for being the oldest American dance company, critically-acclaimed as one of the best in the world. The modern dance company experiments with movement to explore contemporary social, political, psychological and sexual themes. Not to be missed.

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**About Michigan Opera Theatre**

Michigan Opera Theatre (Wayne S. Brown, President and CEO; Stephen Lord, Principal Conductor, Dr. David DiChiera, Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus), one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, is committed to presenting opera and dance of the highest artistic caliber. Founded in 1971, the company's mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. Visit the website at [www.michiganopera.org](http://www.michiganopera.org).