



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater brings 'Revelations,' new works to Atlanta's Fox Theatre

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The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will perform at the famed Fox Theatre Thursday through Sunday. Georgia native Christopher R. Wilson can still remember the first time he saw a performance.

"The first time I saw Ailey, I was 11 years old," Wilson said. "They were right here at the Fox Theatre, and I just remember sitting and being mesmerized."

Wilson recalls the gold costumes the dancers were wearing vividly.

"They were running, jumping, flying, and throwing each other all across the stage," he continued. To an 11-year-old, that looks like a lot of superheroes, right? Especially with what they were wearing. The music is very high-energy. I literally saw superheroes on stage and said, 'I want to be up there.'"

Wilson is now in his eighth year touring with the largest modern dance company in the country. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater was founded in 1958 by Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Alvin Ailey.

Ailey is universally considered one of the most significant, influential, and iconic choreographers of the 20th century, using the Black American cultural experience to shape performances, training, classes, and community programs globally.

"He set such a beautiful blueprint forward for us to ground ourselves in legacy, to ground ourselves in our history, and then to continue to innovate with new stories and new voices," said Alicia Graf Mack, the company's artistic director.

Until recently, the company has only had three artistic directors. Graf Mack is the fourth, and she is now in her inaugural season.

"It's been an amazing full circle homecoming as I've been calling it," Graf Mack continued. "Not only has Ailey fueled my dreams as an adult and as a professional, but it has fulfilled the child in me."

Graf Mack is positioned for this role. She was a dancer with the company between 2005 and 2014.

"She was in the company when I was a student in high school," Wilson said. "I remember coming here my senior year of high school and watching the company. She was on stage, and she happened to be the poster image that year. My mom bought me the poster. I hung it in my bedroom, and it's still there to this day."

"I think about performing at the Fox Theatre every year," Graf Mack said. "You know, in 'Revelations,' you start in the first section with your arms open and eyes to the sky, and the ceiling of the Fox Theatre is just so beautiful. The dancers experience the same energy exchange and that spiritual exchange with the audience. Knowing that embodied feeling as a dancer, that is what I hope to continue to carry forward as the director."



Alvin Ailey choreographed "Revelations" in 1960. It's a signature piece in the company's repertory based on Ailey's religious upbringing in South Texas.

Audiences in Atlanta can expect to see the classic piece, along with new work and new energy, this season.

"Mr. Ailey said he wanted to hold a mirror to our society to show people how beautiful they are," Graf Mack said. "As we travel around the United States for this upcoming tour, that is what we hope to share."

You can see more about the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater's performances at the Fox Theater and buy tickets [here](#).