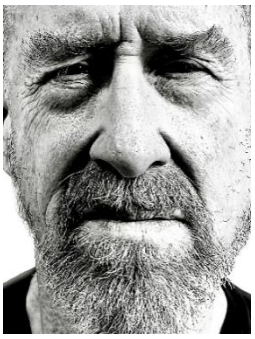
ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated

(1987; 2026 Company Premiere)

Choreography by William Forsythe
Stage, Lighting and Costume Design by William Forsythe
Staged by Jodi Gates
Original Score by Thom Willemsby arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes
Sound Design Supervisor: Benjamin Young
Lighting Supervisor: Brandon Stirling Baker

As the first modern dance-based company to perform this piece, Ailey brings new perspective to a landmark of late twentieth-century ballet. Propelled by Thom Willems' driving score, the work crackles with immediacy, energy, and risk, balancing rigorous structure with a unique visceral spontaneity.



William Forsythe. Photo by Julian Gabriel Richter

William Forsythe

William Forsythe (1949) has been active in the field of choreography for over 50 years. His work is acknowledged for reorienting the practice of ballet from its identification with classical repertoire to a dynamic 21st century art form. Forsythe danced with the Joffrey Ballet and later the Stuttgart Ballet, where he was appointed Resident Choreographer in 1976. In 1984, he began a 20-year tenure as director of the Ballet Frankfurt after which he founded and directed The Forsythe Company until 2015. Forsythe's deep interest in the fundamental principles of the organization of choreography has led him to produce a wide range of projects including installations, films, and web-based knowledge creation. His work for the stage resides in the repertoires of ensembles worldwide, and his installations are presented internationally in exhibitions and museums. Forsythe has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale and Der FAUST German Theatre Award, both for lifetime achievement. In November 2024, he was awarded the Kyoto Prize. *Courtesy of Forsythe Productions.*

Thom Willems

Dutch composer Thom Willems (b.1955, Arnhem) has collaborated with choreographer William Forsythe on over 60 ballet scores. He studied at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague: composition with Louis Andriessen and electronic music with Jan Boerman and Dick Raaijmakers. Willems started working with Forsythe when he became director of the ballet of the Frankfurt Opera in 1984. His scores are characterized by subtle soundscapes, insistent rhythms and urban sonorities, forming an intrinsic part of the architecture of the ballets.



Thom Willems. Photo by Jodokus Driessen

In 1987 Willems achieved international success with In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated, commissioned by Rudolf Nureyev for Paris Opéra Ballet with dancers including the rising star Sylvie Guillem. His music in connection with William Forsythe's work, is featured in the repertoire of virtually every major ballet company in the world including the New York City Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Paris Opera Ballet, Corpo di ballo del Teatro alla Scala Milano, Semperoper Ballett Dresden, Nederlands Dans Theater and the English National Ballet among many others: in total 68 companies in 26 countries. *Reprinted by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes.*

The company premiere of In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated was made possible by The Red Moose Charitable Fund and Pamela D. Zilly & John H. Schaefer Endowment Fund.