

# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

## *Toccata*

Excerpt from *Come and get the Beauty of it Hot*

(1960)

(Ailey Company Premiere – 1964; New Production – 2015)

*Choreography:* Talley Beatty

*Restaged by* Masazumi Chaya

*Music:* Music by Lalo Schiffrin; Performed by Dizzy Gillespie and his Orchestra

*Costumes:* Matthew Cameron

*Original lighting by* Nicola Cernovitch

*Lighting redesigned by* Chenault Spence

*Toccata* is a vibrant episode from 1960's *Come and Get the Beauty of it Hot*, created by Talley Beatty. The ballet is described as "set in streets of New York" and incorporates nuances of classic and other dance styles in a jazz idiom. Set to music by Grammy Award-Winning Argentine composer Lalo Schiffrin, the piece contains a sequence of ensembles, duets and trios that are danced in an almost declamatory manner as the dancers project their movements toward the audience capturing the passion and tension of the city streets. Mr. Beatty was heralded as "one of American dance's most brilliant talents" by *The New York Times* and lauded for his knack for combing the technical and emotional aspects of dance. In total, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed eight works by Mr. Beatty: *Toccata*, *Congo Tango Palace*, *The Road of the Phoebe Snow*, *Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot*, *The Black Belt*, *The Stack-Up*, *Blueshift* and *Mourner's Bench*. *Toccata* is being restaged 20 years after the passing of Talley Beatty, and 25 years after its last performance by The Company.

"...cool, hot jazz dance spinning elegantly and exactly across the stage."

*The New York Times*, Jennifer Dunning – Dec. 10, 1989

"The program opened with Talley Beatty's resiliently springy *Toccata*, which acts as a trampoline for superior dancers..."

*The New York Post*, Clive Barnes – Apr. 16, 1970

**Talley Beatty** (1918-1995), of Chicago became a principal dancer with the Katherine Dunham Company at age 16. After touring with the Dunham Company for five years and appearing in film and Broadway shows such as *Cabin in the Sky*, *Pins and Needles*, and *Blue Holiday*, Mr. Beatty formed his own company and toured throughout Europe, the US and Canada. As part of his choreographing for Broadway, he was nominated for a 1977 Tony Award as Best Choreographer for *Your Arm's Too Short to Box with God*. Dance companies around the world have mounted his ballets, including Dance Theatre of Harlem, Bat-Sheva Company, Koln Opera Ballet Company, Boston Ballet, Stockholm Dance Theatre and Ballet Hispanico. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed a number of his major works, including *The Road of the Phoebe Snow* (1959), *Come and Get the Beauty of it Hot* (1960), *The Stack-Up* (1983) and *Blueshift* (1984).



**Lalo Schiffrin** (born June 21, 1932) is an Argentine pianist, composer, arranger and conductor most closely associated with the jazz music genre. He is best known for his film and TV scores, such as the "Theme from *Mission: Impossible*". Schiffrin has received four Grammy Awards and six Oscar nominations.

\*Photo credit: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Talley Beatty's *Toccata*. Photo by Jack Mitchell

MUSIC CREDIT: "Toccata" by Lalo Schiffrin. Performed by Dizzy Gillespie and his Orchestra from the album *Gillespiana*.