

Detroit Opera

"The term LINES alludes to all that is visible in the phenomenal world. Lines are in our fingerprints, the shapes of our bodies, constellations, geometry. It implies genealogical connection, progeny and spoken word. It addresses direction, communication, and design. A line of thought. A boundary or eternity. A melodic line. From vibration or dot to dot it is the visible organization of what we see."—Alonzo King

Detroit Opera to Present Alonzo King LINES Ballet 40th Anniversary Tour October 22-23



Photo Credit: Alonzo King LINES Ballet | RJ Muna

[Detroit Opera](#)'s 2022–23 dance season opens October 22-23 with an inaugural presentation by the [Alonzo King LINES Ballet](#). Celebrating 40 years of evocative dance, master choreographer Alonzo King's unique artistic vision adheres to the classical form—the linear, mathematical and geometrical principles deeply rooted in the East-West continuum. The company will present “**Deep River**,” a deeply soulful, powerful new work that fuses Black spirituals with stunning dance, set to a score by jazz pianist, composer, and MacArthur Fellow Jason Moran and sung by Grammy Award-winning vocalist Lisa Fischer – developed in celebration of its 40th anniversary.*

Alonzo King LINES Ballet is a celebrated contemporary ballet company that has been guided since 1982 by the artistic vision of acclaimed choreographer Alonzo King. Collaborating with noted composers, musicians, writers, and visual artists from around the world, King draws on a diverse set of deeply rooted cultural traditions, imbuing classical ballet with new expressive potential. He has been heralded as a visionary and thought leader on topics that reach far beyond dance, receiving numerous accolades such as [a 2020 Dance Magazine Award](#). LINES Ballet's national and international tours allow the company to share its vision of transformative, revelatory dance through performances worldwide. The organization recently completed a successful, five-week international tour. A sneak peek of [Alonzo King LINES Ballet's "Deep River"](#) can be found online.

LINES Ballet is dedicated to training the next generation of artists through its pre-professional Summer Program, Training Program, and Bachelor of Fine Arts Program with Dominican University of California. LINES also makes dance accessible to Bay Area adults and youth through world-class, affordable classes open to the community and free in-school education programs. The company also produced a new film series, [There Is No Standing Still](#), which *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* included in their respective "Best Dance of 2020" lists.

"We are thrilled to kick off our first full dance season since the pandemic with the Alonzo King LINES Ballet. His fusion of spirituals and dance is punctuated by exquisitely talented dancers who are among the most celebrated names in the world of dance," says Jon Teuwissen, Detroit Opera's Artistic Advisor for dance. "[King's collaboration with Lisa Fischer and Jason Moran](#) results in an envelope-pushing experience. Bending the lines between classical and contemporary ballet, King draws on his strengths, altering the way we look at ballet today."

"We are delighted to welcome the Alonzo King LINES Ballet to the Detroit Opera House as they commemorate their 40th anniversary," said Detroit Opera President and CEO Wayne S. Brown. "We invite everyone to witness "Deep River", a powerful work from such a visionary choreographer."

The *San Francisco Chronicle* proclaims that "Alonzo King is one of the few bona fide visionaries in the ballet world today," and his company is renowned for imbuing classical ballet with new expressive potential. "The dance was at its most powerful, particularly in a shape-shifting solo for Babatunji Johnson to Fischer's stunningly transformed version of 'Lift Every Voice and Sing.' Then Adjii Cissoko, who joined Lines eight years ago from the National Ballet of Canada, partnered with Shuaib Elhassan in a pas de deux that seemed to spiral up from the soil onto the tip of her pointe shoe, not as a fetishization of the foot but as a natural expression of reaching, with one's entire body, for a higher reality."

"As we look back on 40 years of work in the community, in ourselves, the programs, classes, and performances, both live and on film, we recognize that it is the same vision and belief that have carried us to this moment and will continue to carry this organization into the future," says Alonzo King. "We have strived to make obvious that art is the inheritance of every individual, that art activates evolutionary growth, is an intellectual virtue, and the fostering principle for all that is made, done, or known. The intention behind the work is to remind me,

the artists, and the viewers that love is the ocean that we rose from, swim in, and will one day return to, and that love, if listened to and deeply cultured, can bring us to liberation.”

Santa Fe New Mexican states: “...King is reclaiming the landscape so familiar to his forebears. Emotions come wrapped in the sound of a Black woman’s voice; hope is offered by a young African American genius composing at the piano. Dance is awakening peace within oneself.”

He comes from a distinguished line of Albany, Georgia, civil rights activists. His father was a close personal friend of Malcolm X. His uncle, C.B. King, was a courageous lawyer who defended countless activists including Martin Luther King, Jr., and was instrumental in the Albany Movement, the first mass movement in the modern civil rights era aiming to desegregate an entire city in the 1960s. Guided by the values he was brought up with, Alonzo King found his own form of expression, founding his own company which would go on to win accolades around the world. A deep dive on [Alonzo King’s teaching philosophy](#) can be found online.

Company dancer Michael Montgomery will teach a Contemporary Master Class on Saturday, October 22 from 11:00am – 12:30pm at the Detroit Opera House. The class is open to all intermediate to advanced level dancers ages 12 and up. The class is free with your purchased ticket to one of the performances or \$25 without a ticket. Company dancers Adjii Cissoko and Babatunji Johnson recently performed at Greater Grace Temple to acknowledge Bishop Ellis’ 26th pastoral anniversary.

Alonzo King LINES Ballet performances will be held Saturday, October 22 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, October 23 at 2:30 p.m. Run time is approximately 60 minutes with no intermission. Tickets for Alonzo King LINES Ballet are available online at [DetroitOpera.org](#) and start at \$29. Orders for groups may be placed by emailing groupsales@detroitopera.org. Subscriptions for the 2022-23 season can also be purchased online or by calling 313-237-7464.

This marks the first full season of dance presentations and residency activity in three years. Upcoming dance productions at Detroit Opera include: the first appearance in Detroit for Mark Morris Dance Group’s *The Hard Nut* (December 3-4); a reinvention of the timeless masterpiece *Swan Lake by Ballet Preljocaj*, a co-presentation with the University of Michigan’s University Musical Society (February 17-19); *Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater* return to Detroit Opera to transcend barriers and celebrate the African American experience (March 17-19), and Nina Ananiashvili will lead a rare U.S. appearance from the esteemed ballet company *The State Ballet of Georgia* (April 29-30).

ALONZO KING LINES BALLETT

October 22-23, 2022

Detroit Opera House

Detroit, MI

Alonzo King, Artistic Director & Co-Founder
Robert Rosenwasser, Executive Director, Creative Director & Co-Founder
Choreography by Alonzo King

Original Music by Jason Moran and Lisa Fischer
Music by Pharoah Sanders, Maurice Ravel, James Weldon Johnson
Vocals by Lisa Fischer
Lighting Design by Jim French
Costume and Set Design by Robert Rosenwasser
Sound Design by Philip Perkins

**Composer Jason Moran and Vocalist Lisa Fischer will not appear live at these performances.*

The Company

Babatunji Johnson
Adji Cissoko
Madeline DeVries
Theo Duff-Grant
Lorris Eichinger
Shuaib Elhassan
Joshua Francique
James Gowan
Ilaria Guerra
Maya Harr
Marusya Madubuko
Michael Montgomery
Tatum Quiñóne

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