

"In its more than 50-year history, Dance Theatre of Harlem has received international acclaim, performing in 44 states, 250 cities in North America, and 40 countries on 6 continents. (Its) pioneering efforts to integrate stages and spread the art of ballet through programs at home and abroad made it a beacon for Black dancers worldwide." – *Dance Magazine*

## Dance Theatre of Harlem Returns to the Detroit Opera House October 21-22

The Company will engage Detroiters through various community events including "Dancing in the Street" at the Motown Museum October 14, "The Tone Matters" October 15 and a performance for DPSCD students October 20



Dance Theatre of Harlem Company in *Blake Works IV*. Photo by Theik Smith.

DETROIT, September 28, 2023— [Dance Theatre of Harlem](#), a leading dance institution of unparalleled global acclaim, will return to the [Detroit Opera House October 21-22, 2023](#) as the third stop of the Company's 2023-2024 tour. Led by Artistic Director [Robert Garland](#), the Company syncs classical ballet with soundtracks of cultural movements and communities in which its history is rooted.

Dance Theatre of Harlem encompasses a professional touring company, a leading dance school, and a national and international education and community outreach program. Each component of Dance Theatre of Harlem carries a solid commitment towards enriching the lives of young people

and adults around the world through the arts. Founded in 1969 by Arthur Mitchell (the first Black principal dancer of New York City Ballet) and ballet master Karel Shook, Dance Theatre of Harlem is considered “one of ballet’s most exciting undertakings” (*The New York Times*). Shortly after the assassination of The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mitchell was inspired to start a school that would offer children — especially those in Harlem, the community in which he was born — the opportunity to learn about dance and the allied arts.

Now in its sixth decade, Dance Theatre of Harlem has grown into a multi-cultural dance institution with an extraordinary legacy of providing opportunities for creative expression and artistic excellence that continues to set standards in the performing arts. Dance Theatre of Harlem has achieved unprecedented success, bringing innovative and bold new forms of artistic expression to audiences in New York City, across the country and around the world. Continuing to “raise the barre,” Robert Garland takes the reins from Artistic Director Emerita Virginia Johnson, whose legacy includes a four-decade tenure with the Company.

“History, heritage, legacy, majestic lines. Dance Theatre of Harlem is a staple among the world’s preeminent dance companies. Our audiences eagerly await their return,” says Detroit Opera President & CEO Wayne S. Brown. “The October 21-22 performances mark the eighth residency that our organization has presented this great company. Don’t miss it!”

Performances on Saturday, October 21 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, October 22 at 2:30 p.m. will feature ***Allegro Brillante***, an elegant piece by George Balanchine with music by Tchaikovsky that is illustrated with jubilant technique, precision and strength. ***Blake Works IV*** is a “sort of love letter to the possibilities of the ballet barre” (*Fjord Review*), featuring choreography by William Forsythe and music by James Blake. ***When Love***, set to music by Philip Glass with choreography by Helen Pickett, showcasing a duet that embodies the beauty of timeless love. ***Return***, choreographed by Artistic Director Robert Garland for the company’s 30th anniversary with songs performed by James Brown and Aretha Franklin, “a witty fusion of ballet technique and street gait whose irony toward rhythm-and-blues had the audience in stitches.” (*The New York Times*).

“Arthur Mitchell was a force of nature,” says Jon Teeuwissen, Detroit Opera’s Artistic Advisor for Dance. “As a Dance Theatre of Harlem alumnus, I am thrilled to reunite this unique and timelessly relevant company with our Detroit audiences. The company’s Detroit program will exemplify their command of the neoclassical Balanchine lineage coupled with their embrace of the contemporary style.”

Dance Theatre of Harlem’s relationship with Detroit dates back five decades. “Detroit is a very natural and comfortable home for us. There’s something about the way African-Americans have shaped the arts in Detroit that is especially resonant to the way Dance Theatre of Harlem shapes the art form of classical ballet,” Johnson remarked in 2022. Renowned sculptor and long-time Detroit resident Artis Lane designed the original logo for the Dance Theatre of Harlem. The Company’s early visits to Detroit comprised of demonstrations in area elementary and high schools. Dr. David DiChiera first brought Dance Theatre of Harlem to Detroit in 1976. Company Executive Director Anna Glass is originally from the Detroit area and her family still resides in the community. She and Company member Derek Brockington attended Interlochen Arts Academy. Though it’s been five years since Dr. DiChiera passed away, synchronously, Dance Theatre of Harlem’s founder Arthur Mitchell passed away within hours of DiChiera.

The Saturday October 21<sup>st</sup> performance has been themed “Divine Nine Night,” during which area sororities and fraternities will be acknowledged. Attendees are encouraged to wear their colors with pride and enjoy a stunning evening of art and culture.

Tickets for Dance Theatre of Harlem’s performances in Detroit October 21-22 are available online at [www.detroitopera.org](http://www.detroitopera.org) and start at \$30. Orders for groups may be placed by emailing [groupsales@detroitopera.org](mailto:groupsales@detroitopera.org).

### **Additional Activities**

Through performances, community engagement and arts education, Dance Theatre of Harlem upholds its values of access, opportunity and excellence, and carries forth its message of empowerment for all through the arts. Preceding its October 21-22 performances, the Company will engage Detroiters via a number of **community events and classes**.

- **“Dancing in the Streets”, Saturday, October 14, Motown Museum, 2648 Berry Gordy Jr. Boulevard, Detroit, 12:00 p.m. (open to the public):** Hitsville and Harlem unite for an all-ages movement workshop featuring music from Motown artists. Attendees will learn steps from Garland's work *Return* that blends ballet and history. The fun, hour-long activity will include a choreographic, creative competition and culminates in an old-school “Soul Train” line. As the Company’s 2022 visit to the Motown Museum was closed to the public (due to the Museum’s closure during its extensive renovation), Garland and company dancers are eager to engage in a live movement experience with Detroiters at this global landmark.
- **Sunday, October 15, Fellowship Chapel, 7707 Outer Drive, Detroit, 9:30 a.m. (open to the public):** Dance Theatre of Harlem dancers will give a moving presentation set to Aretha Franklin’s cover of the Marvin Gaye eponym song “Wholy Holy.”
- **“The Tone Matters”, Sunday, October 15, Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit, 4:00 p.m. (open to the public):** An educational event open to all area dancers, teachers and studio leaders about the legacy of Dance Theatre of Harlem’s history of matching skin-tone tights and shoes. Dance Theatre of Harlem will demonstrate the pancaking of shoes and the Company’s short documentary “Many Hues, One Line” will be presented.
- **Saturday October 14 – Tuesday, October 17, various locations and times:** Classes with Fellowship Chapel’s mentor group, Detroit Windsor Dance Academy, Detroit Black Dance Network and select DPSCD schools. As part of the David DiChiera Music Therapy program, Dance Theatre of Harlem dancers will perform at Henry Ford Hospital October 17 at 12pm. *Media are welcome to attend with advance notice.*
- **DPSCD Cultural Passport program, Friday, October 20, Detroit Opera House, 11:00 a.m.:** A mini-performance by the Company of a mix of full and excerpted pieces will be presented to approximately 2,000 DPSCD elementary school students. *Media are welcome to attend with advance notice.*
- **Ballet Master Class with Dance Theatre of Harlem artists, Saturday, October 21, Detroit Opera House, 11:00 a.m.:** Dancers ages 12 and up can expand their artistic breath learning from the professionals in the Margo V. Choen Center for Dance at the Detroit Opera House. Admission is free with a corresponding ticket stub for the October 21 or October 22 Dance Theatre of Harlem Mainstage Performance, or \$25 without a ticket stub. Pre-registration is required because of space limitations. Register here: <https://detroitopera.org/learn/dance-classes/>.

- **Dance Theatre of Harlem Summer Intensive Audition, TBD:** The DTH School provides quality classical ballet and dance training while ensuring that students of diverse backgrounds feel inspired and supported. Audition for students age 8-24, DTH Summer Intensives provide a challenging exploration of ballet in a diverse and nurturing environment. Students who choose to attend this New York based program will have a unique educational experience that will have them stand taller and expand their artistry. Registration is required.

Additional press materials, photos and video are made available to members of the media [here](#).

### **Sponsor Credits**

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### **About Detroit Opera**

Detroit Opera (formerly Michigan Opera Theatre), one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, aspires to influence the future of opera and dance with a goal of invigorating audiences through new and re-imagined productions, relevant to current times. It is creating an ambitious standard for American opera and dance that emphasizes community, accessibility, artistic risk-taking, and collaboration. Founded in 1971 by the late Dr. David DiChiera, Detroit Opera is led by President and CEO Wayne S. Brown; Yuval Sharon, Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director; Associate Artistic Director Christine Goerke; Music Director Roberto Kalb; and Board Chairman Ethan Davidson. For more information, visit [www.detroitopera.org](http://www.detroitopera.org). Follow the company on Facebook and Instagram (@DetroitOpera), LinkedIn (Detroit Opera), as well as Twitter (@DetOperaHouse).

### **About Dance Theatre of Harlem**

Now a singular presence in the ballet world, the Dance Theatre of Harlem Company tours nationally and internationally, presenting a powerful vision for ballet in the 21st century. The 18-member, multi-ethnic company performs a forward-thinking repertoire that includes treasured classics, neoclassical works by George Balanchine and resident choreographer Robert Garland, as well as innovative contemporary works that use the language of ballet to celebrate Arthur Mitchell's belief that ballet belongs to everyone. Through performances, community engagement and arts education, the Company carries forward Dance Theatre of Harlem's message of empowerment through the arts for all. For more information on upcoming performances, visit [www.dancetheatreofharlem.org](http://www.dancetheatreofharlem.org).

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### **Calendar Listing Information**

**Dance Theatre of Harlem, a leading dance institution of unparalleled global acclaim, will return to the Detroit Opera House stage on October 21-22, 2023.** Now in its sixth decade, the Company continues to push the pinnacle of balletic expression under the leadership of Artistic Director Robert Garland. During its eighth residency at the Detroit Opera House, Dance Theatre of Harlem will perform new works. Detroiters can engage with the Company through precursor events including a **"Dancing in the Street" experience at the Motown Museum October 14 at 12:00 p.m.** For more information, visit [www.detroitopera.org](http://www.detroitopera.org) or [www.dancetheatreofharlem.org](http://www.dancetheatreofharlem.org).