



Requiem: Fire in the Air of the Earth

A.I.M by Kyle Abraham

Kyle Abraham, in collaboration with A.I.M / *Choreography*

Jlin and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart / *Music*

Dan Scully / *Lighting & Scenic Design*

Giles Deacon / *Costume Design*

Friday Evening, January 7, 2022 at 8:00
Saturday Evening, January 8, 2022 at 8:00
Power Center
Ann Arbor

Co-commissioned by UMS, the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center, Stanford Live, Celebrity Series of Boston, and Kampnagel Internationale Kulturfabrik GmbH (Hamburg, Germany.)

Seventh and Eighth Performances of the 143rd Annual Season

This weekend's performances of *Requiem: Fire in the Air of the Earth* is supported by the Charles A. Sink Endowment Fund and Michigan Medicine.

Special thanks to Christian Matijas Mecca and the U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Amy Fracker and the Riverside Arts Center; and Dr. Mayowa Lisa Reynolds, Victoria Shaw, and the Detroit School of the Arts for their participation in events surrounding this weekend's performances.

Media partnership provided by WEMU 89.1 FM, WDET 101.9 FM, and Ann Arbor's 107one.

A.I.M by Kyle Abraham appears by arrangement with Lotus Arts Management.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

CREATIVE TEAM

Choreography / Kyle Abraham** in collaboration with A.I.M
Music / Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Requiem in d minor*;

Jlin, untitled commissioned score

Lighting & Scenic Design / Dan Scully

Costume Design / Giles Deacon

Performers / Tamisha A. Guy*, Dorchel Haqq, Logan Hernandez, Keerati
Jinakunwiphat, Claude "CJ" Johnson, Catherine Kirk, Jae Neal, Donovan Reed,
Martell Ruffin, Gianna Theodore

**Princess Grace Award Recipient*

***Princess Grace Statue Award*

Requiem: Fire in the Air of the Earth was supported by New Music USA, made possible by annual program support and/or endowment gifts from Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Howard Gilman Foundation, Helen F. Whitaker Fund, and The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.

Requiem: Fire in the Air of the Earth was created in part during a "bubble" residency at Kaatsbaan Cultural Park and LUMBERYARD, made possible by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This evening's performance is approximately one hour in duration and is performed without intermission.

REQUIEM: FIRE IN THE AIR OF THE EARTH

In 2018, I began to explore the possibility of creating an evening-length dance work to Mozart's *Requiem*. After making several works that focused on the unjust murders of black and brown bodies (*Pavement*, 2012; *When The Wolves Came In*, 2014; *The Watershed*, 2014; *Absent Matter*, 2015; *Untitled America*, 2016; etc), I knew early on that this was to be a work of rebirth and reincarnation.

I was not prepared for the parallels that I began to see between this work and the world around me.

While we hope for a repose from the earth-shattering pandemics we face at the present moment, the world is looking for its own rebirth or for a new positive light, and life, to come out of these dark times.

This work isn't about the pandemic, while being about the pandemic.
This work isn't about race, in the same ways that it *is* about race.

Nothing of the present day has affected what this work *is* or was to be prior to the events of 2020.

That being said, I do feel it's worth noting that the conversations and actions around racial inequality during the past two years are in no way new for people of color.

The impulses and inspirations of this work are of course rooted in diasporic dialogue and a physical discourse of Black Futurism.

Moreover, this is a work of support, of science fiction, and of an unabashed consideration and acknowledgement of our possibilities.

—Kyle Abraham

ARTISTS

Founded in 2006 by choreographer Kyle Abraham, **A.I.M by Kyle Abraham** is a Black-led contemporary dance company that provides multifaceted performances, educational programming, and community-based workshops. The mission of A.I.M by Kyle Abraham is to create a body of dance-based work that is galvanized by Black culture and history. The work, informed by and made in conjunction with artists across a range of disciplines, entwines a sensual and provocative vocabulary with a strong emphasis on music, text, video, and visual art. While grounded in choreographer Kyle Abraham's artistic vision, A.I.M draws inspiration from a multitude of sources and movement styles.

Since A.I.M's founding, artistic director Kyle Abraham has made more than 15 original works for and with the company. In 2018, A.I.M began commissioning new works and performing existing works by outside choreographers to expand its repertoire and offer a breadth of dance work to both the dancers and audiences. The repertory now includes works by Trisha Brown, Andrea Miller, Bebe Miller, Doug Varone, and A.I.M dancer and early-career choreographer Keerati Jinakunwiphat.

A.I.M's audience base is as diverse as A.I.M's movement vocabulary, which ranges from hip-hop to formal ballet technique. As Abraham says, "I'm interested in a really wide range of folks from the brother who owns the corner store to the woman who has never even heard of a corner store. I want those people to interact, and I want them to be sitting next to each other sensing the other person's experience. And then, I want them to stick around for the post-performance discussion and hear the other person's perspective and learn more

about each other. That's what is most exciting for me."

For more information, to get involved, or purchase your A.I.M merchandise, please visit <http://aimbykyleabraham.org>. Follow A.I.M on Instagram @aimbykyleabraham and Kyle Abraham at @kyle_abraham_original_recipe.

2018 Princess Grace Statue Award Recipient, 2017–18 Joyce Creative Residency Artist, 2016 Doris Duke Award Recipient, and 2015 City Center Choreographer in Residence, **Kyle Abraham** (*choreographer; pronouns: he/him*) is a 2013 MacArthur Fellow who began his dance training at the Civic Light Opera Academy and the Creative and Performing Arts High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He continued his dance studies in New York, receiving a BFA from SUNY Purchase, an MFA from NYU Tisch School of the Arts, and an honorary doctorate in fine arts from Washington Jefferson College. He has served as a visiting professor in residence at UCLA's World Arts Cultures in Dance program from 2016 to 2021. In 2021, he was named the Claude and Alfred Mann Endowed Professorship in Dance at The University of Southern California Gloria Kaufman School of Dance. Abraham currently sits on the advisory board for *Dance Magazine* and the artist advisory board for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. In 2020, he was selected to be *Dance Magazine's* first-ever guest editor.

Rebecca Bengal of *Vogue* wrote, "What Abraham brings...is an avant-garde aesthetic, an original and politically minded downtown sensibility that doesn't distinguish between genres but freely draws on a vocabulary that is as much Merce and Martha as it is Eadweard

Muybridge and Michael Jackson.”

In addition to performing and developing new works for his company A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, he has been commissioned by a variety of dance companies. Most recently, Abraham received two international commissions from the Royal Ballet. His work, *Optional Family*, a *divertissement* premiered in May 2021 as part of their 21st Century Choreographers program. He was also commissioned to be the first Black choreographer to create a one-act ballet for the Royal Ballet, set to premiere in spring 2022.

Additionally, Abraham premiered *When We Fell* in 2021, his third creation for New York City Ballet (NYCB), which *The New York Times* reviewed as “among the most beautiful dance films of the pandemic.” Previously, Abraham collaborated with NYCB Principal Dancer Taylor Stanley on *Ces noms que nous portons*, a Lincoln Center and NYCB commissioned solo; choreographed *Unto The End, We Meet*, commissioned by the National Ballet of Cuba, and choreographed the music video for Sufjan Stevens’ *Sugar*. He premiered *to be seen*, a new solo for American Ballet Theatre Principal Dancer Calvin Royal III, for the 2020 virtual Fall for Dance Festival. *The New York Times* raved on “how skilled he has become at mingling the ballet vernacular with other forms, from hip-hop to West African movement” and his unique talent for “finding the person within the dancer and the bodies within a body.”

In fall 2019, he choreographed *Ash*, a solo work for ABT Principal Dancer Misty Copeland; *Only The Lonely*, a newly commissioned work for Paul Taylor American Modern Dance; and *The Bystander*, a new commission for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago to rave

reviews. He premiered the Bessie-nominated *The Runaway* for NYCB’s 2018 Fall Fashion Gala, which was recognized as one of the “Best Dance of 2018” by *The New York Times*. In 2016, Abraham premiered *Untitled America*, a three-part commissioned work for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; toured *The Serpent and The Smoke*, a pas de deux for himself and acclaimed Bessie Award-winning and former New York City Ballet principal dancer Wendy Whelan as part of *Restless Creature*; and choreographed for the feature-length film, *The Book of Henry*, for acclaimed director Colin Trevorrow. In 2011, *OUT Magazine* labeled him as the “best and brightest creative talent to emerge in New York City in the age of Obama.”

Jlin (*composer; pronouns: she/her*) is the recording alias of Jerrilynn Patton, an electronic music producer from Gary, Indiana. Initially associated with Chicago’s footwork scene, her music evolved far beyond that style, exploring unheard rhythms and placing her in a category of her own. Her debut album, 2015’s *Dark Energy*, was filled with twisted, volatile tracks that seemed far more concerned with venting frustration, anger, and depression than providing dancefloor fodder. The album was an immediate, unexpected success, causing her to quit her job as a steel mill worker and pursue music full-time. One of the most acclaimed experimental electronic artists of the 2010s, she has shared the stage or collaborated with artists such as Björk, Ben Frost, and William Basinski. Additionally, she has ventured into contemporary dance, composing the music for Wayne McGregor’s *Autobiography*, which premiered in 2017.

Tamisha A. Guy (*dancer; pronouns: she/her*), a native of Trinidad and Tobago, began her formal dance training at Ballet Tech, under the direction of Eliot Feld. Later she attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School, and SUNY Purchase College as a double major in dance and arts management. She has completed summer programs with Complexions Contemporary Ballet and Springboard Danse Montreal, and has performed works by William Forsythe, Pam Tanowitz, and Mark Morris. In 2013 Guy graduated with honors from SUNY Purchase College and joined the Martha Graham Dance Company shortly after. In 2016 Guy was selected as one of *Dance Magazine's* "Top 25 to Watch" and she also received the 2016 Princess Grace Award. In 2017, she was named one of the "Best Dancers of the Year" by *Dance Europe*. In 2021, she was awarded the 2022 Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Dance which recognizes foreign-born scientists and artists in the US. She joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2014.

Raised in Harlem, **Dorchel Haqq** (*associate artist; pronouns: she/her*) began to ignite and embody history at Dance Theater of Harlem. At Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts then later at the Conservatory of Dance at Purchase College SUNY, Haqq initiated her discovery of the body as a political statement. Through Purchase College, Haqq studied at Korea National School of the Arts and was an Adopt-A-Dancer scholarship recipient. In past collaborations with Johannes Wieland, Stephanie Batten Bland, Maxine Doyle, Loni Landon, Sidra Bell, and Kayla Farrish, Dorchel has developed movement practices, questions, and challenges that bring to life an imaginative world. Haqq is the co-founder of LLAB RATS,

an interdisciplinary arts collective that creates through collaboration in response to social injustice. Haqq explores fantasy and abstracts the echo of transgenerational trauma in her body of culture through film, sound exploration, and object investigations. Haqq's recent choreographic works for Battery Dance Festival, the Conservatory of Dance at Purchase College SUNY, and NY PopsUp illuminate these ideals. Haqq is a Springboard-curated recipient of Jonah Bokaer Arts Foundation AIR Founder's Residency and a 2021 City Artist Corps Grant recipient. Haqq is an adjunct lecturer at Purchase College and joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in the fall of 2020.

Originally from Central Florida, **Logan Hernandez** (*associate artist; pronouns: he/him*) first began exploring movement through the underground scene of hip-hop and street culture when he started breakdancing at the age of 10. In 2012, Hernandez began his formal training with Orlando City Ballet, and continued his training at Osceola County School for The Arts. Over the years, Hernandez has continued to expand his movement research, learning from artists such as Ohad Naharin, Jone San Martin, Scott Jennings, and many others. He recently attended Arts Umbrella Post Secondary Program in Vancouver, British Columbia, where he performed repertoire by Crystal Pite, Sharon Eyal, Tom Weinberger, Nacho Duato, Jiri Kylian, and Marco Goecke. In 2018, he joined MADBOOTS DANCE under the direction of Jonathan Campbell and Austin Diaz. In 2021–22, he will perform with Vim Vigor Dance Company. Hernandez joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2018, and he has accompanied Kyle Abraham as a choreographic assistant for Ballet Nacional de Cuba; as well as for the creation of

Ash, a solo created on American Ballet Theatre's principal dancer Misty Copeland.

Keerati Jinakunwiphat (*dancer; pronouns: she/her*), originally from Chicago, received her BFA from the Conservatory of Dance at SUNY Purchase and was a recipient of the Adopt-A-Dancer scholarship. She has studied at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, and Springboard Danse Montreal. She has worked with and performed works of artists such as Kyle Abraham, Nicole von Arx, Trisha Brown, Jasmine Ellis, Hannah Garner, Shannon Gillen, Andrea Miller, Kevin Wynn, and Doug Varone. She has assisted Kyle Abraham in new commissioned work for New York City Ballet and Paul Taylor Dance Company. As a freelance choreographer, Jinakunwiphat has presented her own choreographic works at the American Dance Guild Festival, Triskelion Arts, Dixon Place, Battery Dance Festival, Dance Gallery Festival, the Joyce Theater, and New Victory Dance. She has been commissioned to set and create works on the Evanston Dance Ensemble, the Martha Graham School, SUNY Purchase College Conservatory of Dance, A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, Houston Contemporary Dance Company, and New England Ballet Theatre. She has graced the cover of *Dance Magazine* featured as "25 to Watch" for 2021. She joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2016.

Claude "CJ" Johnson (*dancer; pronouns: he/him*) hails from Chicago, where he began his formal dance training at the Chicago Academy for the Arts under the direction of Randy Duncan. He continued his dance training at SUNY Purchase College, where he was awarded the Adopt-A-Dancer scholarship. During Johnson's studies,

he performed works by choreographers Johannes Weiland, Aszure Barton, Doug Varone, Kevin Wynn, Rosalind Newman, Alexandra Beller, and Stuart Loungway. Johnson also attended summer intensives with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago; Doug Varone & Dancers; Movement Invention Project; and Springboard Danse Montreal under the direction of Alexandra Wells, where he performed work by Shannon Gillen and Elia Mrak. He joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2017.

Catherine Kirk (*marketing associate and dancer; pronouns: she/her*) was born on the unceded land of the Kiickaapoi and Wichita peoples, now called Dallas, Texas. She began formally studying dance at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts before graduating from New York University, Tisch School of Dance. A multi-hyphenate, Kirk is also a dance maker, marketing strategist, arts administrator, dance educator, and yoga teacher. She has completed seasonal programs with San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, Movement Invention Project, and Springboard Danse Montreal, where she performed work by Fernando Melo, Ohad Naharin, and Sharon Eyal. Upon graduating, she apprenticed for Sidra Bell Dance NY before collaborating and performing with Danakah Dance, UNA Productions, Burr Johnson, Jasmine Hearn, and Helen Simoneau Danse. She is thrilled to be working as A.I.M's marketing associate and performing with the company. Kirk joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2013.

Jae Neal (*dancer; pronouns: they/them*) was born and raised in Michigan and received their training from Western Michigan University. There, they performed in professional works such as *Strict Love* by Doug Varone, *Temporal Trance* by

Frank Chavez, and Harrison McEldowney's *Dance Sport*. Since relocating to New York, Neal has had the privilege of working with SYREN Modern Dance, Christina Noel Reaves, Catapult Entertainment, Katherine Helen Fisher Dance, and Nathan Trice. Neal joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2011.

Donovan Reed (*dancer; pronouns: he/him*) is from Philadelphia and began his dance training at the age of 16. Soon after, Reed attended college at The University of The Arts, and was awarded his BFA in May 2016. During his time in college, Reed participated as an artist in residence at Die Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Frankfurt, Germany. In addition, he participated in an independent artist program where his training was extended with The Pennsylvania Ballet. Other studies include PHILADANCO!, Eleone Dance Theatre, and The Rock School for Dance Education. He has performed works by choreographers Sidra Bell, Regina Van Berkel, Sharon Eyal, Tommie Waheed-Evans, Beth Gill, Andrea Miller, Tania Isaac, Meredith Rainey, and Helen Simoneau. He joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2018.

Martell Ruffin (*dancer; pronouns: he/him*) is from Chicago and began his formal dance training at the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago in 2009. He attended Chicago High School for the Arts under then-director Lisa Johnson-Willingham, former dancer of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Ruffin has been awarded dance scholarships to intensives at Joffrey Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Complexions, and received first place in the all-city NAACP ACT-SO Competition in 2011. Ruffin trained at The Ailey School as a scholarship student and has performed works by Lisa Johnson-Willingham, Earl Mosley, George Faison, Darrell Grand

Moultrie, Matthew Rushing, Jae Man Joo, Robert Battle, and Alvin Ailey. He has also been seen in the "poison girl" Christian Dior commercial for women's fragrance and an Urban outfitters commercial for music artist Samantha Urbani. Ruffin has completed his two years with Ailey II and is now a contributing choreographer and performer for *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)*, an opera based on Robert Mapplethorpe. He joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2020.

Raised in West Palm Beach, Florida, **Gianna Theodore** (*dancer; pronouns: she/her*) began her dance training at Ballet East Studio under the direction of Susan Lyle and Chelsea Nasby. She is a graduate of A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts, and a three-time YoungArts Merit Scholar/Honorable Mention. She graduated with a BFA in dance from the Ailey/Fordham BFA program class of 2020. Throughout the course of her training, she has performed works by Robert Battle, Chuck Wilt, and Bradley Shelver. She attended Springboard Danse Montreal, where she performed work created by RUBBERBANDance and Parts & Labour Danse. She has ventured through many cultures and styles of dance, such as house and African, which has helped land her lead roles in music videos. She has also performed professionally with artists such as Ebony Williams, Mark Caserta, Maleek Washington, and Jennifer Archibald. She recently performed during a residency with Helen Simoneau Danse. She joined A.I.M by Kyle Abraham in 2019.

Giles Deacon (*costume designer; pronouns: he/him*) is a London-based fashion designer, creative director, and illustrator. Upon graduating from Central St. Martins School of Art, he worked in Paris and Milan for the Gucci Group. After launching his

eponymous label in A/W2004, Deacon went on to win “Best New Designer” at the British Fashion Awards before receiving “British Designer of the Year” two years later. Since 2016 the label has specialized in couture and continues to receive international acclaim and included in important exhibitions and collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum. As a prolific illustrator, Deacon has designed prints and artworks as well as outside commissions and has published work in *Vogue*, *Love*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *The New York Times*, and *Vanity Fair*.

Dan Scully (*lighting and scenic designer; pronouns: he/him*) is a New York-based lighting and projection designer, and has been the resident lighting designer for A.I.M by Kyle Abraham since its founding, including for the full-length evening works *Pavement*, *Live! The Realist M.C.*, and the Bessie Award-winning *The Radio Show*.

Recent dance work includes designs for New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, BODYTRAFFIC, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and Misty Copeland. Theater and concert credits include *Rocky* (Broadway), *Jedermann* (Salzburger Festspeile), *The Orchestra Rocks!* (Carnegie Hall), and *Peter and The Wolf* (John Lithgow/Carnegie Hall). Regional credits include Trinity Rep., GEVA, Asolo Rep., Cleveland Playhouse, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, and Two River Theater Company. He received his MFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

UMS ARCHIVES

This weekend’s performances mark the second UMS appearance by A.I.M by Kyle Abraham, following the Company’s UMS debut in March 2015 in performances of *The Watershed* and *When the Wolves Came In* at the Power Center.

A.I.M by Kyle Abraham

Artistic Director / Kyle Abraham

Executive Director / Sydnie Liggett-Dennis

A.I.M Board of Directors

Stephen Simcock (*chair*), Kyle Abraham (*artistic director, ex-officio*), Cheryl Bergenfeld, Chris Calkins, Adrienne Edwards, Suzanne Hall, Glenn Ligon, Bebe Neuwirth, Carrie Schneider, Gilda Squire, Julia Strickland

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Company Manager / Amber Lee Parker

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Gabriel Esparza

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A.I.M is a proud supporter of Dancers Responding to AIDS, which helps ensure that those most in need receive the care and comfort they would otherwise do without. Founded in 1991 by former Paul Taylor Dance Company members Denise Roberts Hurlin and Hernando Cortez, DRA relies on the extraordinary compassion and efforts of the performing arts community to fund a safety net of social services for those in need. Together, we can make a difference for those less fortunate than us.

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