

P R E S S R E L E A S E

MISTY COPELAND TO RETIRE FROM AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE IN A STAR-STUDED FALL GALA CELEBRATION AT THE DAVID H. KOCH THEATER ON OCTOBER 22, 2025

Copeland to Perform as ABT Honors Her Historic Career and Cultural Legacy

Event Leadership (in formation)

Honorary Grand Chairs: Caroline Kennedy and Oprah Winfrey

Grand Chairs: Valentino Carlotti, Susan Fales-Hill, Arielle Patrick, and Darren Walker

Lead Underwriter: Ford Foundation

Sponsor: Brown Brothers Harriman

NEW YORK, NY — June 9, 2025 — [American Ballet Theatre Principal Dancer Misty Copeland](#), trailblazing ballerina and cultural icon, will take her final bow with the Company in a once-in-a-lifetime celebration at ABT’s Fall Gala on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center.

This highly anticipated evening marks Copeland’s return to the stage after a five-year hiatus, offering audiences a rare and final opportunity to witness her artistry live with ABT. The program will feature special performances by Copeland herself and dancers from American Ballet Theatre, alongside appearances by an extraordinary group of luminaries from the worlds of dance, entertainment, and the arts.

In 2015, Copeland made history as the first Black female Principal Dancer in ABT’s 85-year history. From her notable portrayals of Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake* and Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* to the title role in *Firebird*, Copeland has inspired generations with her powerful presence and technical brilliance.

“I could never have imagined the life ballet would give me.” said Misty Copeland. “To dance on the world’s greatest stages, with artists I admire so deeply, has been one of the greatest gifts of my life. My time with ABT has shaped me not just as a dancer, but as a person, and given me the platform to reach back and make space for others. This moment isn’t a farewell, it’s a celebration of everything we’ve built together, and a step toward all the work that’s still ahead.”

(more)

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The evening will include a curated selection of works from Copeland’s celebrated repertoire, reflecting key moments in her career, alongside video tributes and surprise performances from her most cherished collaborators and admirers.

“Misty is a once-in-a-generation artist whose brilliance transcends the stage,” said Susan Jaffe, Artistic Director of American Ballet Theatre. “Her legacy at ABT is profound—not only through the roles she’s redefined but also through the lives she’s inspired. Misty’s advocacy for inclusion, equity, and education ensures her impact will resonate far beyond this moment.”

Beyond the stage, Copeland is a *New York Times* best-selling author, film producer, and founder of The Misty Copeland Foundation, which advances diversity and access in dance education through its signature BE BOLD program. Her work continues to influence how the arts engage with representation, community, and opportunity.

American Ballet Theatre gratefully acknowledges Fall Gala Lead Underwriter, Ford Foundation, and Fall Gala Sponsor, Brown Brothers Harriman. Their generous support helps ensure that this historic evening celebrates Copeland’s legacy with the scale, artistry, and access it deserves.

For program and gala details for American Ballet Theatre’s Fall Gala honoring Misty Copeland, please visit <http://www.abt.org/fall-gala>.

ABOUT AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

American Ballet Theatre is one of the greatest dance companies in the world. Revered as a national treasure since its founding season in 1940, its mission is to create, present, preserve, and extend the great repertoire of classical dancing for the widest possible audience. Headquartered in New York City, ABT is the only cultural institution of its size and stature to extensively tour, enchanting audiences for eight decades in 50 U.S. states, 45 countries, and over 480 cities worldwide. ABT’s repertoire includes full-length classics from the nineteenth century, the finest works from the early twentieth century, and acclaimed contemporary masterpieces. In 2006, by an act of Congress, ABT was designated America's National Ballet Company®.

For more information, please visit www.abt.org.

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