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ENTERTAINMENT

Famed dance troupe to perform

S•H•O•W•T•I•M•E

Dance: The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will come to the Hult Center's Silva Concert Hall this Sunday, April 21. Showtime is 7 p.m. Tickets are sold out.



As one of the most revered American modern dance troupes, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has earned itself a formidable reputation as the standard bearer of American dance. That reputation is far from being rooted in any elitist, aesthetic style as one might expect, but rather on a refreshing readability.

It's their American trait of accessibility that has critics heaping praises on the dance company in words that provide a litany of the American dance aesthetic: "unabashed vigor," "rich in heart and fervor," and "glorious physical freedom."

"What this 28-member modern company is about is excitement. Energy. And most important, entertainment," raved *The Seattle Times*.

In the words of critic Clive Barnes, "The world has never seen a more powerful expression of sheer joy."

A 32-year-old institution named for its founder, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater features athletic performances that draw on a creatively bold dance form that combines classical ballet, jazz and ethnic stylizations unique to black and contemporary American cultural expression.

Alvin Ailey's works are known to be poignant, powerful celebrations of love, of wonderment and of the essence of life itself. His works draw on his memories of the black churches and Texas honky tonk bars he knew as a child, to searing social protest dances and spirited celebrations of the music of Duke Ellington.

"We are thrilled to have one of the most loved and popular dance troupes grace us with a performance," said Patricia Cusick, assistant director of marketing with the Hult Center. "This is their first visit to Eugene in about 10 years, and we're happy they're making a stop here."

The dance program at the

Hult Center includes three Ailey pieces: "Reflections in D," a sensuous solo set to the music of Duke Ellington; "Revelations," his 1960 classic performed to traditional spirituals and gospel music; and "Streams," a series of dances reflecting the meditative music of modern composer Miloslav Kabelac.

The fourth, "The Stack-Up," is a brutal, yet lyrical look at disparate cultures clashing in big-city streets, choreographed to a driving rock score.

Ailey discovered dance at age 12 on a junior high school class field trip to a performance of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

'What this 28-member modern company is about is excitement. Energy. And most important, entertainment.'

-The Seattle Times

He started out in Los Angeles as a choreographer and dancer working in the film industry. In 1954, he moved to New York to work on Broadway and study with the city's outstanding dancers, including Martha Graham.

Four years later in 1958, Ailey launched the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at the Young Men's Hebrew Association, an organization responsible for the support of many modern dance artists who later achieved acclaim.

After founding his own company from among some of New York's best dancers, Ailey set about creating a repertoire that would grow to 79 ballets over the years. Since its inception, the company has performed for an estimated 15 million people in 46 countries.

The company was originally all-black, and as it has become multiracial, its primary thrust remains a synthesis of classical ballet and American jazz dance.

Before his death two years ago, Ailey received nearly 100 awards, including the Kennedy

Center Lifetime Achievement Award and the gold medal at the International Dance Festival in Paris.

Ailey's ability to express his social concerns through the art of dance was also recognized by the U.S. State Department, which sponsored the company's tour to the Far East, Southeast Asia and Australia in 1962.

The company's current artistic director, Judith Jamison, said "It is the humanity of the company" that audiences from Detroit to Moscow respond to with understanding and cheering.

Continuing in her mentor's footsteps, Jamison is also forging new pathways for the future of the Ailey Dance Theater. She intends to continue the humanism that characterized Ailey's choreography.

Her long association with the company as a brilliant dancer, and more recently as a choreographer and guest artistic associate, have made Jamison the inevitable choice to assume the troupe's leadership.

In 1988, she started her own company, The Jamison Project, and brought some of the dancers from her company with her when she assumed directorship of Ailey's company.

What sets this dance company apart is not just its commitment to dance, but to social responsibility as well. Beginning in 1984 with the Ailey Dance Camps in Kansas City, and more recently in Boston and Baltimore, these schools serve at-risk, inner-city children.

The children's communities learn what a dance company does behind the scenes by watching the unloading of the vans and the setting up of the backstage support system for each performance. Seeing this extensive support system of technology and elbow grease adds to the act of performance for these children and their parents.

In Eugene, the company's outreach will include a master class led by Ailey dancer Marilyn Banks for students and faculty of the University dance department. It will take place on Sunday from 12 to 1:30 p.m.

By Ming Rodrigues

Emerald Entertainment Reporter

Saxophonist on bill for tonight

SONG AND DANCE

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

Frank Morgan, a saxophonist, will perform with his quartet at 8 p.m. in the Hult Center's Silva Concert Hall. Morgan had not been performing for 35 years because of a drug and alcohol addiction, but came back onto the scene five years ago. Tickets, which will sell for \$15 and \$12.50, can be purchased by calling the box office at 687-5000.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

Walkin' Jim Stolz and Dakota Sid Clifford will present a multi-media celebration of wilderness at 8 p.m. in Room 100 Willamette Hall. Aside from the evening show, they will also perform a children's show at 3 p.m. in the same location. Tickets for the children's show are \$3 children and \$4 adults. For the evening show, tickets are \$5 students and \$6 general.

A storytelling performance, featuring Eugene storyteller and artist Linda Erz, will take place from 7 to 8:45 p.m. at the Unitarian Church.

477 E. 40th Ave. The storytelling event will show women and girls overcoming weaknesses, and is aptly titled "Feisty Females in Folklore." The cost is \$5 per person or \$15 per family.

The Bulgarian State Female Vocal Choir, a Bulgarian folk music troupe, will perform at 8 p.m. in the Hult Center's Silva Concert Hall. The Choir will perform in traditional ethnic garb. Tickets, which sell for \$15 and \$12.50, can be purchased by calling the box office at 687-5000.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23

The Willamette Street Theatre, 1045 Willamette St., will be hosting an actor's benefit in honor of William Shakespeare's 427th birthday. The event will start at 7:30 p.m., and will feature dance, music, food and live theatricals from some of Shakespeare's plays. All who plan to attend are encouraged to come in costume from a favorite Shakespeare play. Tickets, which are available at the door, will sell for \$5 general and \$4 students and seniors.