

Portland Observer **Entertainment**

Portland to Welcome World-Acclaimed Alvin Ailey Dancers

'Rolls Royce' of American Dance to Perform at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

The Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, one of the pre-eminent modern dance companies of today, will perform two different programs on Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 27 and 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall on Southwest Broadway and Main.

Under the artistic direction of Ailey's legendary dancer Judith Jamison, the company, which last performed in Portland in March 1995, has been called "the Rolls-Royce of American dance" by the Los Angeles Times and is regarded as one of the leading international ambassadors of American culture.

Tickets are now on sale with prices ranging from \$17.50 to \$65, with discounts for students, seniors and groups of eight or more.

Tickets are available through the Performing Arts Center Box Office, all Fred Meyer FASTIXX outlets, online at www.whitebird.org or by calling 503-224-8499 and 1-800-922-8499.

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is comprised of 30 outstanding dancers. The group will perform three Ailey classics on opening night: "Night Creature" (1974), choreographed by Alvin Ailey with music by Duke Ellington; "Cry" (1971), a solo originally choreographed for Judith Jamison with music by Alice Coltrane, Laura Nyro and Chuck Griffen; and the joyous signature work "Revelations" (1960) which captures the exuberant energy of Negro spirituals.

Also on the bill is Ronald K. Brown's 1999 hit "Grace", fusing

modern dance and West African idioms.

The Feb. 28 performance will include Jamison's "Divining" (1984), her first work for the company; Ailey's "Pas de Duke" (1976) with Ellington's music, originally honoring Ms. Jamison and Mikhail Baryshnikov, who also preformed the piece; Ulysses Dove's "Episodes" (1989) with music by Robert Ruggieri, and again Ailey's "Revelations".

The origins of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater date back

to 1958 when Alvin Ailey (1931-1989) and a group of young black modern dancers gave a fabled performance at the 92nd Street Young Men's Hebrew Association in New York City. The production changed forever the perception of American dance.

Ailey's blues spirituals and gospel music resulted in his most popular work "Revelations," although he created 79 works over his lifetime.

The company has now performed more than 170 dances by over 65 choreographers and has performed for 19 million people in 48 states and 68 countries on six continents.

Dancers Bring Culture To Area Students

Portland area students will get an impressive insight into African-American culture when the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Company visits the Rose City.

The group's promoter, White Bird, is partnering with Portland Public Schools to develop and implement a Black History Month curriculum about the cultural contributions of Alvin Ailey, the great African-American choreographer and genius.

The curriculum will be offered to selected elementary and all middle and high schools to focus on Ailey and his lasting contribution to contemporary dance.

The curriculum will consist of a teacher's curriculum guide, supporting lesson plans, a student study guide and accompanying video.

The project will culminate in a free student performance for over 2,700 students by the Ailey company on Wednesday, Feb 28 at 10:30 a.m. at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert.

The company will also offer a master class at Jefferson High School, taught by a lead dancer from the theater group, on Monday, Feb. 26, from 1:40-3:10 p.m.

Ron Wyden, Senior Senator from Oregon, has agreed to serve as Honorary Chair of the Ailey Outreach Project.



Clifton Brown and Briana Reed are members of one of the world-acclaimed Alvin Ailey Dance Theater. They will perform in Portland Feb. 27 and Feb. 28. (PHOTO BY BARRON CLAIRBORNE)

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