

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre holds a dress rehearsal in New York City ahead of last week's debut of a new work by choreographer Paul Taylor. (AP Photo)

Ailey Dance Theater Pulls Out the Stops

Season opener marks new era

(AP)—You can always count on a few things about the annual Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater gala.

It will be a grand occasion at the New York City Center. The audience will be packed, enthusiastic, beautifully dressed. Much money will be raised, and "Revelations" will be on the program.

Not that it should be any different. But this year's event posed a unique challenge: How to make "Revelations," that crown jewel in the Ailey repertoire, shine even brighter, to mark the ascendance of new artistic director Robert Battle and the dawn of the post-

Judith Jamison era?

Clearly, a special weapon was needed. Live music? That was great, but they've done it before. Dancers spilling into the aisles and balcony? Not bad. But the surefire winner was to bring on the children.

Six children as young as 7 — students of the Ailey school's junior division — were a delightful and moving addition, gazing heavenward with intensity and splaying their hands in the distinctive moves of "I've Been 'Buked," then sashaying across the stage with their elders in "Wade in the Water."

Considering that "Revelations," Ailey's masterpiece, is more than 50 years old and shows no signs of fading, it didn't seem too farfetched to imagine these

kids taking the leads in 15 years or so.

The evening was peppered with guest appearances, the first by singer John Legend, crooning Stevie Wonder's "If It's Magic" as the returning Alicia Graf Mack, even more lithe and statuesque than most Ailey dancers, performed a solo choreographed in 2004 by none other than Jamison, who stepped down last season after more than two decades at the helm.

Jamison's hand-picked successor, Battle, was eager to show off the sense of humor that has become a hallmark of his public appearances, tossing off jokes, hogging the spotlight just a little and making it clear he intends to be a colorful, jovial presence for years to come.

Holiday Stroll on Hawthorne

A southeast Portland neighborhood throws a party with its second annual Hawthorne Holiday Stroll featuring special sales, live music and entertainment, complimentary snacks and hot drinks, neighbor-

hood carolers, and kid friendly festivities.

The Hawthorne Boulevard Business Association sponsors the event on Saturday, Dec. 10 from noon to 7 p.m. Over 100 businesses

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