

UCSD sponsors two performances by legendary Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Feb. 25 and 26

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UCSD SPONSORS TWO PERFORMANCES BY LEGENDARY ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER FEB. 25 AND 26

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, founded nearly 40 years ago by the late dancer/choreographer Alvin Ailey, will perform at 8 p.m. Feb. 25 and 26 in Spreckels Theater, downtown San Diego. The performances are sponsored by the University Events Office at the University of California, San Diego.

The Feb. 25 program will include Suite Otis by George Faison; Cavalcade by Lar Lubovitch, and Revelations by Ailey. The Feb. 26 program will consist of Polish Pieces by Hans van Manen; Cry by Ailey; Shelter by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Revelations by Ailey.

Cry and Revelations are two Ailey standards. Cry is the choreographer's homage to black women, their courage and endurance. Revelations, a suite of dances set to Negro spirituals, is the company's signature piece. It depicts a community that remains united by religious fervor in spite of adversity.

Faison's Suite Otis is a salute to the music of Otis Redding. Of the work, a New York Times dance reviewer commented that it is "great fun and strongly danced," and it also offers "intriguing proof that the dance styles of different times can meet successfully."

Van Manen's Polish Pieces, according to another New York Times reviewer, "recalls the paintings of another Dutchman Piet Mondrian," the dancers in red, yellow and blue leotards. "Polish Pieces is one of the happiest additions that Judith Jamison, as company artistic director, has made to the repertory," writes the Times. "The Ailey production is charged with electricity from the start."

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater grew from a performance by Ailey and a group of young black modern dancers in March of 1958 at the 92nd Street Young Men's Hebrew Association in New York. Over the years, members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater have performed for more than 18 million people in 48 states, and in 67 countries on six continents. Ailey created 79 ballets and in all, more than 150 works by 50 choreographers have been performed by the Ailey company.

"The dance is for everybody," Ailey once said. "The dance came from the people. It should always be given back to the people."

Ailey was born in Rogers, Tex. in 1931 and was inspired by performances of the Katherine Dunham Company, the Ballet Russe and Lester Horton's classes. His vision was to create a company dedicated to the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance heritage and the uniqueness of black cultural expression. Ailey died in 1989.

Judith Jamison was named artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in December of 1989. Jamison's career includes becoming a member of the Ailey company in 1965 and touring with it throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, South America and Africa for 15 years. She starred in the Broadway musical *Sophisticated Ladies* and has performed as guest artist with companies all over the world.

A Chicago Sun Times reviewer said choreographer Jamison's most recent ballet, *Riverside*, "shows every sign of becoming a company classic."

Jamison is a lecturer, master teacher, a past presidential appointee to the National Endowment for the Arts, the recipient of many honorary doctorate degrees and numerous awards for her accomplishments and contributions in the field of performing arts. Her autobiography, *Dancing Spirit*, was published in 1993.

Of Alvin Ailey, Jamison has said: "He's still here as long as the contribution he made to us is still here."

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's last performances in San Diego were sell outs. Tickets for the Feb. 25 and 26 performances are \$36/\$41/\$46, general admission and UCSD faculty, staff, and senior citizens, and \$31/\$36/\$41 for students. Tickets are available at the UCSD Box Office, 534-6467, and at Ticketmaster outlets. For further information, call the UCSD University Events Office at 534-4090.

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