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ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER
RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES WITH THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
KAROLE ARMITAGE'S *GAMELAN GARDENS*,
THE COMPANY'S BAY AREA PREMIERE OF TWYLA THARP'S *THE GOLDEN SECTION*
THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY PRODUCTION OF *PAS DE DUKE*
AND A PROGRAM OF AILEY CLASSICS INCLUDING *REVELATIONS*
WEDNESDAY – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28 – MARCH 4 AT ZELLERBACH HALL

PLUS A TRIBUTE TO VETERAN DANCER RENEE ROBINSON IS FEATURED

**SCHOOLTIME: 1-HOUR PERFORMANCES FOR BAY AREA STUDENTS THURSDAY AND FRIDAY,
MARCH 1 AND 2 AT 11:00 A.M.**

BERKELEY, January 24, 2006 – The incomparable **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** (AAADT) returns to Zellerbach Hall **Wednesday, February 28 to Sunday, March 4** for its annual Cal Performances residency. One year shy of its 50th anniversary, AAADT's popularity is unmatched by any other dance company any where in the world. The company founded by **Alvin Ailey** and led by **Judith Jamison** is celebrated for its technical skill, boundless energy and artistic sensibility, and has been enjoyed by over 21 million people in more than 68 countries. "In the 2006 season, the dancers are better than ever with marvelous athleticism, vivid personalities and sleek sensuality" (*The New York Times*). Cal Performances audiences will be treated to three distinct programs, including the West Coast premiere of **Karole Armitage's *Gamelan Gardens***; the company's Bay Area premiere of **Twyla Tharp's *The Golden Section***; the 30th anniversary of Ailey's 1976 collaboration with **Duke Ellington** that produced *Pas de Duke*; plus Ailey classics including his masterful *Revelations* (1960). This season also marks dancer **Renee Robinson's** 25th season with the company. The Thursday, March 1 performance celebrates this milestone.

Additionally, AAADT will present two *SchoolTime* performances for Bay Area students in Zellerbach Hall on Thursday and Friday, March 1 and 2 at 11:00 a.m.; excerpts from *Night Creatures* and *Revelations*. Tickets are sold in advance only.

A luncheon in support of Cal Performances' **Oakland/Berkeley AileyCamp** will be held Thursday, March 1 in Zellerbach Hall at 12:00 p.m., following the *SchoolTime* performance; the guest speaker will be **Judith Jamison**. Now entering its sixth year, Cal Performances' AileyCamp provides local middle school students with an intensive, six-week summer learning experience focused on personal development and expression, health and nutrition. Using the structure and discipline of modern, ballet, jazz and African dance training as its foundation, the goal of AileyCamp is to provide a safe venue for underserved children to learn about themselves and the world. For further information about AileyCamp and the luncheon, contact Jennifer Kirk at (510) 643-3060.

PROGRAMS

Program A of AAADT's Cal Performances engagement, performed Wednesday, February 28 at 8:00 p.m.; Saturday March 3 at 2:00 p.m.; and Sunday, March 4 at 3:00 p.m., opens with the company's Bay Area premiere of *The Golden Section* (1983) from Twyla Tharp's full-length ballet *The Catherine Wheel*, set to music by David Byrne with costumes by Santo Loquasto. This segment comprises the final 15 minutes of the full-length ballet, and AAADT's interpretation has been described as "pure dance, golden gods at play" (*The New York Times*). The West Coast premiere of *Gamelan Gardens* (2006), set to Lou Harrison's Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Javanese Gamelan follows. The choreography is by Karole Armitage, who recently returned to the United States after living in Europe. Alvin Ailey's signature work, *Revelations*, completes the program.

Program B performances are Friday, March 2 at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 3 at 8:00 p.m. It begins with *The River*, Ailey's 1970 collaboration with Duke Ellington. A lyrical and amusing piece, the dance provides many opportunities for individual dancers to shine. It is followed by another Ellington-based dance, *Pas de Duke* (1976), a punning title for a *pas de deux*, filled with the spirit of friendly rivalry. Ailey originally created this work for Judith Jamison and Mikhail Baryshnikov to celebrate the nation's bicentennial. Associate Artistic Director Masazumi Chaya has restaged it for three couples; in each case, the male is taller than the female, a reversal of the original choreography. Also newly restaged is *Portrait of Billie* (1959) set to four familiar songs including "Gee Baby Ain't I Good to You" and "What a Little

Moonlight Can Do” sung by Billie Holiday with choreography by **John Butler**. The piece, considered Butler’s signature work, traces Holiday from stardom to drug addiction. He created the piece for dancer/actress **Carmen de Lavallade**, and it has been restaged by de Lavallade and Chaya. The program continues with *Love Stories* (2004), **Judith Jamison**’s dynamic collaboration with **Rennie Harris** and **Robert Battle** that encompasses the technique, energy, movement and rhythm of African American social dances. This work intertwines vignettes of Alvin Ailey’s choreography with undertones of social commentary as the three choreographers journey through past, present and future. The dances set to a soundscape by **Darrin Ross** and music by **Stevie Wonder**.

Program C, Thursday March 1 at 8:00 p.m. is a special salute to AAADT’s **Renee Robinson** as she celebrates her 25th season with the company. The performance opens with **Alvin Ailey**’s *Night Creature* (1974). Set to Duke Ellington’s 1955 *Suite for Orchestra*, this is Ailey’s definitive homage to the exuberance of Ellington’s music. Next up is an excerpt from *Sweet Bitter Love*, a poignant duet by Carmen de Lavallade about love’s complexities, choreographed to the music of Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway. “They don’t make love duets like this anymore,” wrote *The New York Times*. “Or rather, it takes a dancer, actor and choreographer of Carmen de Lavallade’s gifts and experience to create a bare-bones image onstage and fill it with unabashed emotion.” **Ronald K. Brown**’s *Grace* returns, originally created for the company’s 1999 season and set to a cycle of songs including Duke Ellington’s “Come Sunday”; American rock by Roy Davis, Jr. and Paul Johnson; and West African pop by Fela Kuti. “The fireball intensity of the dancers in *Grace*...is astounding,” wrote *The New York Times*, “Something to be sensed as well as seen.” Ailey’s *Revelations* concludes the program. Robinson will perform in all of the dances except *Night Creatures*.

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater grew from a legendary performance in March 1958 at the 92nd Street Y in New York. Led by Alvin Ailey and a group of young, black modern dancers, the performance signaled a substantial shift in the evolution and perception of American dance. Ailey, born in Rogers, Texas, in 1931, was inspired as a youngster by his participation in the Baptist Young People’s Union, later incorporating the gospel music in his

dances. It was on a junior high school class trip that he first saw the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and the experience changed his life. He studied and was mentored by Lester Horton, who founded the United States' first racially integrated dance company—a company Ailey ran after Horton's death. Since the founding of AAADT in 1958, the company has entertained an estimated 21 million people worldwide, including two historic visits to South Africa. AAADT has a reputation as an international ambassador of American culture, beautifully embodying the unique essence of African American cultural expression while enriching the American modern dance heritage. The company first performed on the Berkeley campus in 1968 and is presented by Cal Performances in more performances each year than any other venue outside of New York. In the fall of 2005, AAADT made its first tour of the United Kingdom, including a return, sold-out engagement at Sadler's Wells in London.

In the spring of 2004, the company moved into its first permanent home, The Joan Weill Center for Dance in Manhattan. With a series of studios, a black box theater and office space for administrative and educational outreach purposes, it is the largest facility in the United States dedicated exclusively to dance.

JUDITH JAMISON

Judith Jamison, Artistic Director of AAADT since 1989, was a dancer with the company from 1965 to 1980. An extraordinary talent who began dancing at the age of seven, Jamison studied with several acclaimed teachers, including Marion Cuyjet, Antony Tudor, John Hines, Delores Browne and Madame Swoboda. She was discovered by Agnes De Mille and made her New York debut with American Ballet Theatre in de Mille's *The Four Marys*, then toured with Alvin Ailey for 15 years. Inspired by her commanding stage presence, Ailey created some of his most enduring roles for her, most notably the solo *Cry*. She has partnered with many of the world's greatest dancers, including James Truitte, Dudley Williams, Kevin Haigen and Mikhail Baryshnikov. She also starred in the Broadway hit musical *Sophisticated Ladies* and went on to appear as a guest artist with many of the world's leading ballet and modern dance companies.

In 1997, Judith Jamison led AAADT on its first visit to South Africa, performing, teaching and collaborating with other artists and students in Johannesburg, Pretoria and

Soweto. One of the first artistic ambassadors to enter the country after the lifting of apartheid's cultural ban, the company's impact was immediate and deep, and they returned again in late 1998. Jamison has also been a guiding force in helping to establish the Ailey/Fordham University B.F.A. program, a collaboration with the Ailey School that offers students the opportunity to receive superb dance training and an excellent liberal arts education (the first class graduated in 2002). In 1999, Jamison was the recipient of the prestigious Kennedy Center Award, and in 2002 President Bush presented her with the National Medal of the Arts, the nation's highest artistic honor. Most recently Jamison received the Paul Robeson Award from the Actors' Equity Association in recognition for her outstanding contribution to the performing arts.

RENEE ROBINSON

Celebrating her 25th season with AAADT, **Renee Robinson** was a member of Ailey II before joining the company in 1981. Her training began in classical ballet at the Jones-Haywood School of Ballet. Robinson was the recipient of two Ford Foundation scholarships to the School of American Ballet, and was awarded full scholarships to the Dance Theatre of Harlem School and the Ailey School. In 2003, she performed at the White House State Dinner in honor of the President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki. At the recent celebration for Robinson at City Center in New York, Judith Jamison praised her: "She's our gift."

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** in Zellerbach Hall from **Wednesday, February 28 – Sunday, March 4** are priced at **\$32.00, \$42.00** and **\$56.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.net.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wednesday–Friday, February 28–March 2 at 8:00 p.m. Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley
Saturday, March 3 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m. Bancroft Way at Telegraph,
Berkeley
Sunday, March 4 at 3:00 p.m.

Dance

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Judith Jamison, Artistic Director

Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director

Programs:

Program A: Wed. Feb. 28 at 8:00 p.m.; Sat. Mar. 3 at 2:00 p.m.; and Sun., Mar. 4 at 3:00 p.m.

The Golden Section (1983): music by David Byrne; choreography by Twyla Tharp (Bay Area company premiere)

Gamelan Gardens (2006): music by Lou Harrison; choreography by Karole Armitage (West Coast premiere)

Revelations (1960): traditional spirituals and gospel music; choreography by Alvin Ailey

Program B: Fri. & Sat., Mar. 2 & 3 at 8:00 p.m.

The River (1970): music by Duke Ellington; choreography by Alvin Ailey

Portrait of Billie (1959): familiar songs including “Gee Baby Ain’t I Good to You” and “What a Little Moonlight Can Do” sung by Billie Holiday; choreography by John Butler

Pas de Duke (1976): music by Duke Ellington; choreography by Alvin Ailey

Love Stories (2004): music by Stevie Wonder and Darrin Ross; choreography by Judith Jamison with Robert Battle and Rennie Harris

Program C (Renee Robinson 25th Anniversary Celebration): Thurs., Mar. 1 at 8:00 p.m.

Night Creature (1974): music by Duke Ellington; choreography by Alvin Ailey

Sweet Bitter Love (excerpt) (2000), music by Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway; choreography by Carmen de Lavallade

Grace (1999): music by Duke Ellington; choreography by Ronald K. Brown

Revelations (1960): traditional spirituals and gospel music with choreography by Alvin Ailey

Tickets: \$32.00, \$42.00 and \$56.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door.

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Thursday & Friday, March 1 & 2 at 11:00 a.m.
SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCES

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Program: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will perform excerpts from *Night Creatures* and Ailey's beloved masterpiece *Revelations*.

Tickets: \$4.00 per student or adult chaperone, sold **in advance only** through Cal Performances at (510) 642-1082. *SchoolTime* performances are open to students in grades 2 through 12 in Bay Area public and private schools. Supplemental study guides for the classroom are provided. For more information about the *SchoolTime* program, contact the *SchoolTime* coordinator at Cal Performances by email at eduprograms@calperfs.berkeley.edu, or by phone at (510) 642-0212.

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Thursday, March 1 at 12:00 p.m.
AileyCamp Luncheon

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

Program: AAADT Artistic Director Judith Jamison will speak about the importance of AileyCamp in the community.

Tickets: For further information, please call Jennifer Kirk at (510) 643-3060.
