

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

CONTACT:

Lisle Peterson (510) 643-6714
lisle@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Christina Kellogg (510) 642-9121
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

**RETURNS TO BERKELEY WITH BAY AREA PREMIERES BY ALONZO KING, ROBERT
BATTLE AND DWIGHT RHODEN; THE REPRISE OF *TREADING*, *THE WINTER IN LISBON*
AND *HYMN*; AND A PROGRAM OF AILEY CLASSICS, INCLUDING *REVELATIONS*
MARCH 9–14 AT CAL PERFORMANCES**

**Annual residency includes three *SchoolTime* performances in Zellerbach Hall:
Ailey II performs March 3 at 10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.;
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre performs March 11 at 11:00 a.m.**

BERKELEY, February 4, 2004 – New works, revivals, and revered classics fill three distinct programs when **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** (AAADT) returns to Zellerbach Hall **March 9–14** for its annual Cal Performances residency. Known the world over for its supreme skill, energy and diverse choreographic expression—“a company that clearly believes that dance is a gift to be shared with the audience” (*The New York Times*)—**Judith Jamison’s** incomparable dancers showcase new pieces by Bay Area choreographer **Alonzo King, Robert Battle, and Dwight Rhoden**, as well as a new production of *Hymn*, Jamison’s acclaimed homage to Alvin Ailey, presented this season in honor of the work’s 10th anniversary. The Berkeley programs also feature the return of *Treading* and *The Winter in Lisbon*; excerpts from eight Ailey classics; and the company’s signature work *Revelations*.

The Ailey company will give three *SchoolTime* performances for Bay Area students in Zellerbach Hall. On **Wednesday, March 3 at 10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.**, two programs feature members of **Ailey II**, a select ensemble of dancers who have completed advanced training at the Ailey School and present their own community outreach and performance seasons. Throughout its 30-year history, more than 50 Ailey II dancers have been invited to join AAADT, and the performances on March 3 offer a unique look at how gifted young men and women develop their talents to prepare for a life on the stage. The **Thursday, March 11 at 11:00 a.m.** program features members of AAADT performing excerpts of current repertory and

-MORE-

Ailey's timeless classic, *Revelations*. These AAADT *Schooltime* performances are part of Cal Performances' 18th season of events for K-12 schoolchildren.

PROGRAMS

Program A of AAADT's Cal Performances engagement, Tuesday, March 9 at 8:00 p.m., opens with the Bay Area premiere of *Heart Song*, a work created by **Alonzo King** to the sounds of original Moroccan music (a blend of vocals, violin, percussion, and the traditional string instruments the *oud* and *gembri*). Though the ballet does not present a single theme or narrative line, King is hesitant to categorize this work as "abstract," clarifying that "everything is about something. Even in algebra the symbols refer to something...I think that the reference in *Heart Song* is humanity—the human condition, in all that that encompasses." Another highlight of Program A is the local premiere of *Juba*, choreographed by **Robert Battle**, his first work for AAADT. *Juba* is "frenetic and electrifying, a terse, powerful explosion of transformative energy" performed "with fabulously high-octane stamina by the Ailey dancers," wrote *The New York Times* of the world premiere last December. Set to an original score of strings and percussion by John Mackey, *Juba* addresses themes of folk dance and ritual, speaking to the human need "to move, to dance, to reach a higher place...to reach a kind of spirituality that makes people leap out of their seats, [the kind that] you see in a lot of places, from black churches to nightclubs—dancing until you're almost in a trance," Battle says of his ballet, which takes its name from an African American dance tradition dating back to the period of slavery. Program A also includes *Treading* (originally created in 1979 by **Elisa Monte**, and restaged by the choreographer in 2002), a sensual duet danced to Steve Reich's evocative *Eighteen Musicians*. The program concludes with *Revelations*, founder Alvin Ailey's uplifting masterpiece about the African American spiritual experience. Program A repeats Friday, March 12 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 14 at 3:00 p.m.

On Wednesday, March 10 at 8:00 p.m. **Program B** features a thrilling evening of "Ailey Classics." AAADT will perform excerpts from eight of Alvin Ailey's most renowned works—*Memoria* (1974), *Night Creature* (1974), *Phases* (1980), *Opus McShann* (1988), *A Song for You* (1972), *For 'Bird' With Love* (1984), *Hidden Rites* (1973), and *Cry* (1971). The

program concludes with the full-length *Revelations* (1960). Program B repeats Saturday, March 13 at 2:00 p.m.

Program C opens Thursday, March 11 at 8:00 p.m. with the Bay Area premiere of *Bounty Verses*, choreographed by former Ailey dancer **Dwight Rhoden**. Set in four movements for 13 dancers, the score utilizes bits of music from genres ranging from classical to jazz to rock, striving to accentuate the dynamics of composition, focusing on the structures of compositions as sonically diverse as those of Bach, Kurt Cobain and Steve Reich. “[The ballet] changes constantly, and is a plethora of rhythms and melodies,” the choreographer says. “It’s a constant shift in pace and mood, much like one might feel reading a poem or literary work, or listening to a symphony.” The program continues with a new production of AAADT Artistic Director **Judith Jamison’s** *Hymn*, presented this year in honor of the work’s 10th anniversary. A decade ago, Jamison collaborated with playwright and author Anna Deavere Smith, who created a libretto based on interviews with company members about founder Alvin Ailey, and interspersed the spoken text with electronic music by Robert Ruggieri to create the score for the ballet. This season, a new generation of Ailey dancers interprets Jamison’s *Hymn*, bringing their own spirit to the celebration of the man and the legacy that is Ailey. The program concludes with *The Winter in Lisbon*, a 1992 work by **Billy Wilson** restaged by AAADT Associate Artistic Director **Masazumi Chaya** in 2002. A tribute to the music of Dizzy Gillespie, the Ailey dancers shine in a suite of dances that range from a sultry love duet to a vivacious group finale, all against the backdrop of infectious Latin rhythms and rich color. Program C repeats Saturday, March 13 at 8:00 p.m.

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, celebrating its 45th anniversary this 2003/04 season, grew from a legendary performance in March 1958 at the 92nd Street Young Men’s Hebrew Association in New York. Led by Alvin Ailey and a group of young, black modern dancers, that 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 uplifting 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 19 million people in 48 states and in 68 countries on six continents, including two recent historic visits to South Africa. AAADT—which 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—has a reputation as an international ambassador of American culture, and captures the unique essence of African American cultural expression while enriching the American modern dance heritage.

In 2002 the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation broke ground for the construction of its new building, scheduled to open in the fall of 2004 on the corner of Ninth Avenue and 55th Street in Manhattan. With a series of studios, a black box theater and office space for administrative and educational outreach purposes, it will be the largest facility in the United States dedicated exclusively to dance. And 2004 marks the 3rd season of Berkeley/Oakland AileyCamp at Cal Performances. Presented in association with the Berkeley and Oakland Unified School districts, AileyCamp combines dance instruction with personal development and creative communication classes in order to help cultivate self-esteem, self-discipline, and critical thinking skills in youths ages 11 – 14.

Judith Jamison, Artistic Director of AAADT since 1989, was a member of the company from 1965 to 1980. An extraordinary talent who began dancing at the age of seven, Jamison studied with some of the greatest 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 went on to tour with the Ailey company for 15 years. Inspired by her commanding stage presence, Alvin 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, and she starred in the Broadway hit musical *Sophisticated Ladies*, before appearing 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 penetrate the country since the lifting of apartheid's cultural ban, the company's impact was immediate and deep, and the company returned again in late 1998. Jamison has also been a guiding force in helping 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.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the Cal Performances presentation of **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Tuesday, March 9–Sunday, March 14** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$32.00, \$42.00** and **\$58.00**. Performance tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; 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.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

#

San Francisco Chronicle, *San Francisco* magazine, and KDFC Classical 102.1 FM are season media sponsors of Cal Performances' 2003/04 performing arts season.

All Cal Performances programs are supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Wells Fargo is the corporate sponsor of Cal Performances' presentation of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Major support for the U.S. tour is provided by Morgan Stanley.

#

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wednesday, March 3 at 10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.
SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE

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

Dance
Ailey II

Program:

Ailey II offers a look at how gifted young people develop their talents to prepare for a life on the stage. This *SchoolTime* performance is presented in association with Dance for Power.

Tickets: \$3.00 per student or adult chaperone, available in advance only through Cal Performances at (510) 642-1082. *SchoolTime* performances are open to students in grades 2 – 12 in Bay Area public and private schools. Supplemental classroom study guides 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.

#

Tuesday-Friday, March 9-12 at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 13 at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 14 at 3:00 p.m.

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

Dance
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Program:

Program A: Tues., Mar. 9 at 8:00 p.m.; Fri., Mar. 12 at 8:00 p.m.; and Sun., Mar. 14 at 3:00 p.m.

Heart Song (2003): music composed and performed by Bouchaib Abdelhadi, Yassir Chadly,

Hafida Ghanim; choreography by Alonzo King (Bay Area premiere)

Treading (1979): music by Steve Reich, *Eighteen Musicians*; choreography by Elisa Monte

Juba (2003): music by John Mackey; choreography by Robert Battle (Bay Area premiere)

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

Program B: Wed., Mar. 10 at 8:00 p.m. and Sat., Mar. 13 at 2:00 p.m.

Chosen from among Ailey Classics

Memoria (1974): music by Keith Jarrett; choreography by Alvin Ailey - excerpt

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

Phases (1980): music by various jazz artists; choreography by Alvin Ailey - excerpt

Opus McShann (1988): music by Jay McShann and Walter Brown; choreography by Alvin Ailey
- excerpt

A Song for You (1972): music by Leon Russell; choreography by Alvin Ailey - excerpt

For 'Bird' With Love (1984): music by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, and Jerome
Kern; choreography by Alvin Ailey - excerpt

Hidden Rites (1973): music by Patrice Sciortino; choreography by Alvin Ailey - excerpt

Cry (1971): music by Alice Coltrane, Laura Nyro, and Chuck Griffin; choreography by Alvin
Ailey - excerpt

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

Program C: Thurs., Mar. 11 at 8:00 p.m. and Sat., Mar. 13 at 8:00 p.m.

Bounty Verses (2003): music by various artists; choreography by Dwight Rhoden (Bay Area premiere)

Hymn (1993): music by Robert Ruggieri; choreographed and directed by Judith Jamison

The Winter in Lisbon (1992): music by Dizzy Gillespie; choreography by Billy Wilson; restaging by Masazumi Chaya

Tickets: \$32.00, \$42.00, and \$58.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.

#

Thursday, March 11 at 11:00 a.m.

SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus

Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

Dance

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Program:

For more than 40 years, the company founded by Alvin Ailey has created dance that stirs the soul and lifts the spirit. Bay Area students experience the Ailey magic, with a peek backstage to the working life of the company, a selection of current repertory, and the power of Ailey's timeless masterpiece, *Revelations*.

Tickets: \$3.00 per student or adult chaperone, available in advance only through Cal Performances at (510) 642-1082. *SchoolTime* performances are open to students in grades 2 – 12 in Bay Area public and private schools. Supplemental classroom study guides 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.

-----30-