# NORTHROPMOVES 2011 12 DANCE

## ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Orpheum Theatre Robert Battle, Artistic Director Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director

Tue, May 1, 7:30 pm
Home Rennie Harris
Takademe Robert Battle
The Hunt Robert Battle
Journey Joyce Trisler
Revelations Alvin Ailey

Wed, May 2, 7:30 pm
Arden Court Paul Taylor
Minus 16 Ohad Naharin
Revelations Alvin Ailey



**DIRECTOR'S**LETTER



Photo by Mike Mudge

Dear Friends of Northrop!

Welcome to the Northrop Dance presentation of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at the Orpheum Theatre. Tonight is the final performance of the 2011-12 Northrop Dance season, and I am thrilled to welcome new Artistic Director Robert Battle and the entire Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater back to Minneapolis.

It has been seven years since the company has last been to Minnesota, and 31 years since they were first presented on the Northrop stage. Since that time, the company has become one of the world's leading artistic forces and a symbol of excellence in modern dance.

There are many wonderful organizations and funders that I would like to thank for their participation in tonight's performance, including the National Endowment for the Arts; Target, our official Access Sponsor; Genevieve and Antone Melton-Meaux; U of M Department of Equity and Diversity; U of M Office of Multicultural Engagement; Minneapolis/St. Paul Chapter of the Links, Inc.; Minneapolis Public Schools Office of Family Engagement; Ryan White Program, Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department; African American Aids Taskforce; The Aliveness Project; Kulture Klub Collaborative; McFarlane Media/Insight News; Twin Cities RISE!; Project SUCCESS; G.I.R.L. Initiative; and Hennepin Theatre Trust. These and many others all worked to make this evening a success.

Every performance of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is a moment to celebrate, and I thank all of our partners and Friends of Northrop for your continued support in bringing world-class performing arts to Minneapolis.

Sincerely yours, Ben Johnson

Director of Northrop Concerts and Lectures University of Minnesota

P.S. Be sure to check out our 2012-13 Northrop Dance season announcement featuring world-class artists from throughout the world, as well as the launch of the new Women of Substance at St. Catherine University series (a collaboration with The O'Shaughnessy), McKnight Solo Program, and the Accordo chamber music series.

Northrop will also welcome back Paris-based choreographer Johan Amselem for a three-week residency in June as part of our inaugural McKnight International Choreographer Fellowship. Johan will work with many Minnesota artists, and show a work-in-progress for his new piece. Visit the Northrop website for more details on all upcoming programming. **northrop.umn.edu** 

## BEYOND THE STAGE Northrop Community Impact



Jeff Hnilicka hosting an open mic before a performance of Nicholas Leichter Dance in May 2011. Photo © Northrop.

The much anticipated visit of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, one of the world's most beloved modern dance companies, has provided Northrop abundant opportunity to connect with a variety of Twin Cities arts patrons. Two performances and two very different evenings of repertoire offer something for everyone. A student matinee also provides 2,600 young patrons an opportunity to experience Alvin Ailey for the first time. This exceptional body of work in concert with the passion and artistry of the company have given Northrop a unique chance to engage a number of underserved communities. One key partner in this venture is Minneapolis-based Kulture Klub Collaborative.

Best described by Executive Director Jeff Hnilicka, "Kulture Klub Collaborative utilizes art and artistic practice to provide enriching multidisciplinary opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness

while allowing artists to grow individually and transform community. We connect with youth ages 16-21 at the Youth Opportunity Center in downtown Minneapolis." Alvin Ailey is a perfect project for Kulture Klub because in Hnilicka's opinion, "Alvin Ailey dance company has so much of what we look for in compelling ArtViews [a program that brings youth to performing arts presentations and films]—a rich cultural history and vibrant contemporary relevance."

Alvin Ailey isn't the first Northrop presentation that Kulture Klub Collaborative has been involved in. Last year, teens participated in an open mic night and dance party surrounding the performance of Nicholas Leichter Dance. The collaborations have been very successful, as Hnilicka points out, "We love partnering with Northrop because it exposes our youth to a whole new realm of dance. Bringing youth to performances that reflect their stories, their identities, and their communities creates deep impact."

This performance of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater also marks the beginning of a long-term collaboration between Northrop and the G.I.R.L. (Girls In Real Life) Initiative. G.I.R.L. Initiative is a program in the St. Paul public school district serving girls ages 12-15, enabling them to understand the critical transition from junior high to high school while building self-confidence, academic confidence, and respect for others. G.I.R.L. Initiative will use this performance of Alvin Ailey to facilitate dialogue around the many issues explored in the company's repertoire that relate to G.I.R.L. curriculum. According to Dawn York, Executive Director of G.I.R.L. Initiative, "This type of performance experience has proven effective in fostering trust between the girls and thereby increasing their generalized trust of others while creating a source of pride, which increases their sense of connection to the community."

Stay tuned next season to find out more about our work with G.I.R.L. Initiative and the exciting new "Women of Substance at St. Catherine University" series residency program.

## ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Alvin Ailey, Founder Judith Jamison, Artistic Director Emerita

#### Robert Battle, Artistic Director

Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director

#### **COMPANY MEMBERS**

Guillermo Asca Kirven James Boyd Hope Boykin Sean A. Carmon Sarah Daley Ghrai DeVore Antonio Douthit Belen Estrada Renaldo Gardner Vernard J. Gilmore Jacqueline Green
Daniel Harder
Demetia Hopkins
Michael Jackson, Jr.
Megan Jakel
Yannick Lebrun
Alicia Graf Mack
Michael Francis McBride
Rachael McLaren
Aisha Mitchell

Akua Noni Parker Briana Reed Samuel Lee Roberts Renee Robinson Kelly Robotham Kanji Segawa Glenn Allen Sims Linda Celeste Sims Jermaine Terry Marcus Jarrell Willis

Matthew Rushing, Guest Artist

#### Sharon Gersten Luckman, Executive Director

Major funding for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is provided by the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, American Express, Bank of America, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Diageo, FedEx Corporation, Ford Foundation, The Hearst Foundations, J.P. Morgan, Prudential Financial, Inc., The Shubert Foundation, The Starr Foundation, Target, and Wells Fargo.

#### Official Vehicle Partner of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater



The 2011-12 Northrop Dance Season is funded, in part, by the Minnesota State Arts Board through the arts and cultural heritage fund as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the Legacy Amendment vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008. This project is supported by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Artists and programs subject to change. The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.











## TUE, MAY 1 **HOME (2011)**

Choreography by Rennie Harris Assistant Choreographer: Nina Flagg Music by Dennis Ferrer, Raphael Xavier Costumes by Jon Taylor Lighting by Stephen Arnold

Daniel Harder, Briana Reed, Ghrai DeVore, Aisha Mitchell, Sarah Daley, Jacqueline Green, Demetia Hopkins, Rachael McLaren, Samuel Lee Roberts, Sean A. Carmon, Yannick Lebrun, Marcus Jarrell Willis, Renaldo Gardner, Jermaine Terry

Bristol-Myers Squibb is proud to support this new work which was inspired by the "Fight HIV Your Way" initiative.

Lorenzo Rennie Harris was born and raised in an African-American community in North Philadelphia. In 1992, he founded Rennie Harris Puremovement, a hip-hop dance theater company dedicated to preserving and disseminating hip-hop culture. Voted one of the most influential people in the last one hundred years of Philadelphia history, Harris has received several accolades, including the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, the Governor's Arts Award, a United States Artist Fellowship, and an honorary doctorate from Bates College. The London Times wrote of Harris that he is "the Basquiat of the U.S. contemporary dance scene." Most recently, Rennie Harris Puremovement was chosen by DanceMotion U.S.A. as one of four companies to serve as citizen diplomats, and they will tour Egypt, Israel, Palestinian territories, and Jordan in 2012. This season, Ailey's repertory features both Harris' Love Stories (a collaboration with Judith Jamison and Robert Battle) and Home.

"Underground Is My Home" written and performed by Dennis Ferrer. Published by Sfere Music (BMI) Administered by Bug. Courtesy of BPM King's Street Sounds/Nite Groove by arrangement with Bug. All rights reserved. Used by permission. "I See...Do You" composed by Raphael Xavier. Performed by Raphael Xavier, with D. Sabela Grimes.

#### (INTERMISSION)



## TUE, MAY 1 **TAKADEME (1999)**

Choreography by Robert Battle
Music by Sheila Chandra
Costumes by Missoni
Costume recreated by Jon Taylor
Lighting by Burke Wilmore

Samuel Lee Roberts

Generous support for this company premiere was provided by The Pamela D. Zilly & John H. Schaefer New Works Endowment Fund and the Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey through the generosity of the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation and individual donors.

"Speaking in Tongues II" performed by Sheila Chandra. Courtesy of Real World Records Ltd.

(PAUSE)

## TUE, MAY 1 **THE HUNT (2001)**

Choreography by Robert Battle
Assistant to the choreographer: Erika Pujikic
Music by Les Tambours du Bronx
Costumes by Mia McSwain
Lighting by Burke Wilmore

Renaldo Gardner, Guillermo Asca, Sean A. Carmon, Michael Jackson, Jr., Michael Francis McBride, Kanji Segawa

Generous support for this company premiere was provided by The Pamela D. Zilly & John H. Schaefer New Works Endowment Fund and Linda Stocknoff.

"Jungle Jazz" by L. Blomme, performed by Les Tambours du Bronx. "Les Boulets Se Rebiffent" by A. Dipace, J.Y. Lefloch, Y. Nisgand, B. Pingon, and J.M. Tramoy, performed by Les Tambours du Bronx. "Black Bull" by L. Le Mapihan, performed by Les Tambours du Bronx. Music from the recording *Silence* (1999). Used with permission by Right Bank Music, Inc.

#### (INTERMISSION)



## TUE, MAY 1 **JOURNEY (1958)**

Choreography by Joyce Trisler Restaged by Diane Grumet Music by Charles Ives Costumes by Malcolm McCormick Lighting by Nicola Cernovitch

Sarah Daley

Generous support for this new production was provided by
The Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey - Sara & Bill Morgan New Works Endowment Fund
and The Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn & Nicolas Rohatyn New Works Endowment Fund.

This work has also been made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Joyce Trisler joined the Lester Horton Dance Theatre at the age of 15, where she met and performed with Alvin Ailey. Following her move to New York, she spent five years as a leading dancer with Doris Humphrey's Juilliard Dance Theatre before performing with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater until 1964. Trisler staged numerous operas and Broadway shows, including Joseph Papps' New York Shakespeare Festival productions. In 1974, she formed the Joyce Trisler Danscompany and created several acclaimed works, including Dance for Six, Rite of Spring, and Four Temperaments. Shortly after her untimely death in 1979, Alvin Ailey created his tribute ballet Memoria and dedicated it to "the joy... the beauty...the creativity...and the wild spirit of my friend Joyce Trisler."

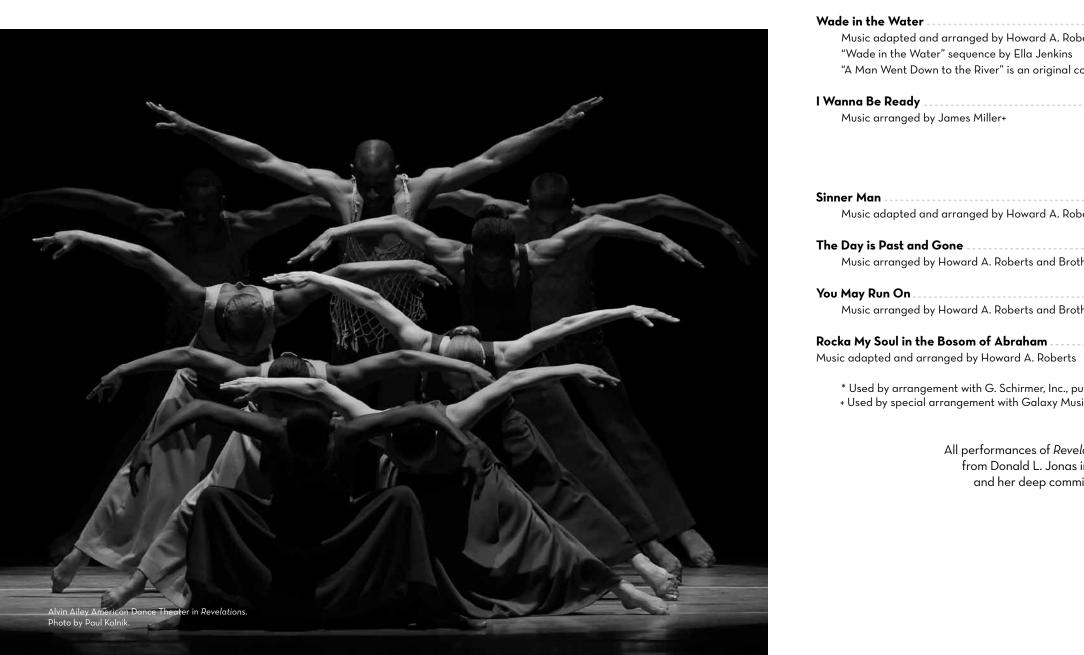
"The Unanswered Question" by Charles Ives. Used by permission of Peer International Corporation.

(PAUSE)



## TUE, MAY 1 **REVELATIONS** (1960)

Choreography by Alvin Ailey Music: Traditional Décor and costumes by Ves Harper Costumes for "Rocka My Soul" redesigned by Barbara Forbes Lighting by Nicola Cernovitch



#### **PILGRIM OF SORROW**

I Been 'Buked The Company Music arranged by Hall Johnson\* Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel Daniel Harder, Hope Boykin, Aisha Mitchell Music arranged by James Miller+ Fix Me, Jesus Briana Reed, Jermaine Terry Music arranged by Hall Johnson\* TAKE ME TO THE WATER Processional/Honor, Honor Kanji Segawa, Megan Jakel, Sean A. Carmon, Daniel Harder Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts Wade in the Water Demetia Hopkins, Renaldo Gardner, Renee Robinson Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts "Wade in the Water" sequence by Ella Jenkins "A Man Went Down to the River" is an original composition by Ella Jenkins I Wanna Be Ready Guillermo Asca Music arranged by James Miller+ MOVE, MEMBERS, MOVE Marcus Jarrell Willis, Yannick Lebrun, Michael Francis McBride Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts **The Day is Past and Gone**The Company Music arranged by Howard A. Roberts and Brother John Sellers You May Run On ..... The Company Music arranged by Howard A. Roberts and Brother John Sellers Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham ..... The Company

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- + Used by special arrangement with Galaxy Music Corporation, New York City.

All performances of Revelations are permanently endowed by a generous gift from Donald L. Jonas in celebration of the birthday of his wife Barbara and her deep commitment to Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

#### WED, MAY 2

## **ARDEN COURT** (1981)

Choreography by Paul Taylor
Music by William Boyce
Restaged by Cathy McCann Buck
Set and costumes by Gene Moore
Lighting by Jennifer Tipton
(First performed by the Paul Taylor Dance Company in 1981)

Linda Celeste Sims, Glenn Allen Sims, Antonio Douthit, Kirven James Boyd, Rachael McLaren, Alicia Graf Mack, Michael Francis McBride, Samuel Lee Roberts, Jermaine Terry

Generous support for this company premiere was provided by Harlan B. Levine, M.D. and Natasha I. Leibel, M.D. and The Ellen Jewett & Richard L. Kauffman New Works Endowment Fund.

Original production by the Paul Taylor Dance Company was made possible by contributions from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mobil Foundation, Inc., and the New York State Council on the Arts.

Dance maker **Paul Taylor** is the last living member of the pantheon that created America's indigenous art of modern dance. He continues to win acclaim for the vibrancy, relevance and power of his new works as well as his classics, while offering cogent observations on life's complexities and society's thorniest issues. His ever-growing collection of works, now numbering 135, is performed by the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Taylor 2, and dance companies throughout the world. The Paul Taylor Dance Company has performed continuously around the globe since Taylor established it in 1954.

Excerpts from *Symphonies Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8* by William Boyce, edited by Max Goberman, by arrangement with Doblinger U.S.A. for the publisher and copyright owner.

#### (INTERMISSION)



## WED, MAY 2 MINUS 16 (1999)

Choreography by Ohad Naharin Restaged by Danielle Agami Music by Various Artists Costumes by Ohad Naharin Lighting by Avi Yona Bueno (Bambi)

Rachael McLaren, Ghrai DeVore, Demetia Hopkins, Megan Jakel, Sarah Daley, Linda Celeste Sims, Aisha Mitchell, Jacqueline Green, Briana Reed, Belen Estrada, Antonio Douthit, Michael Jackson, Jr., Marcus Jarrell Willis, Kirven James Boyd, Samuel Lee Roberts, Yannick Lebrun, Kanji Segawa, Daniel Harder, Guillermo Asca, Sean A. Carmon

Leadership support for this company premiere was provided by American Express.

Generous support was also provided by NJPAC Alternate Routes.

Minus 16 is based on excerpts from Mabul (1992), Anaphaza (1993), Zachacha (1998), and Three (2005). The duet set to "Stabat Mater" by Vivaldi was originally created for Mari Kajiwara.

**Ohad Naharin** is one of the world's preeminent contemporary choreographers and has been the recipient of several major awards. Born in 1952 in Kibbutz Mizra, Naharin trained at Batsheva Dance Company, The School of American Ballet, The Juilliard School, and Maurice Béjart's Ballet du XXe Siècle in Brussels, among others. After living in New York from 1978-1990, he returned to Israel in 1990 when he was appointed Artistic Director of Batsheva Dance Company. Naharin has since choreographed over 20 works exclusively for Batsheva, and he has restaged many of those works for companies around the world. He has also pioneered "Gaga," a movement language that emphasizes exploration of sensation with improvisational techniques. Naharin dedicates the Ailey performances of *Minus 16* to his late wife Mari Kajiwara (1951-2001), who was a dancer with the Ailey company from 1970-1984.

"It Must Be True" performed by The John Buzon Trio. Written by Gus Arnheim, Harry Barris and Gordon Clifford. Used by permission with EMI Mills Music Inc. "Hava Nagila" @1963, ren. 1991 Surf Beat Music. All rights reserved. Written and arranged by Dick Dale under license from Surf Beat Music (ASCAP). "Echad Mi Yode'a" Lyrics and Music Traditional. Arranged by The Tractor's Revenge (Green, Belleli, Leibovitch). Published by The Tractor's Revenge (Green, Belleli, Leibovitch). "Stabat Mater" by Vivaldi performed by James Bowman and Academy of Ancient Music. "Over The Rainbow" by E.Y. 'YIP' Harburg and Harold Arlen. Used by permission of EMI Feist Catalog Inc. One Hundred Percent (100%) ASCAP. "Hooray For Hollywood" performed by Don Swan and his orchestra. Written by John Mercer and Richard Whiting. Used by permission with Warner/Chappell Music. "Sway" by Pablo Beltran Ruiz, Luis Demetrio, Traconis Molina, and Norman Gimbel; Words West LLC d/b/a Butterfield Music (BMI). All rights reserved.

(INTERMISSION)

#### WED. MAY 2

## REVELATIONS (1960)

Choreography by Alvin Ailey Music: Traditional Décor and costumes by Ves Harper Costumes for "Rocka My Soul" redesigned by Barbara Forbes Lighting by Nicola Cernovitch



#### **PILGRIM OF SORROW**

I Been 'Buked The Company Music arranged by Hall Johnson\* Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel Kanji Segawa, Kelly Robotham, Akua Noni Parker Music arranged by James Miller+ -Linda Celeste Sims, Glenn Allen Sims Fix Me, Jesus Music arranged by Hall Johnson\* TAKE ME TO THE WATER Processional/Honor, Honor Daniel Harder, Ghrai DeVore, Marcus Jarrell Willis, Jermaine Terry Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts

Wade in the Water Belen Estrada, Antonio Douthit, Briana Reed Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts

"Wade in the Water" sequence by Ella Jenkins

"A Man Went Down to the River" is an original composition by Ella Jenkins

I Wanna Be Ready Yannick Lebrun

Music arranged by James Miller+

#### MOVE, MEMBERS, MOVE

Samuel Lee Roberts, Jermaine Terry, Michael Francis McBride Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts

The Day is Past and Gone The Company Music arranged by Howard A. Roberts and Brother John Sellers

You May Run On.....The Company Music arranged by Howard A. Roberts and Brother John Sellers

Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham ...... The Company

Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts

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### **ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER**

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater grew from a now-fabled performance in March 1958 at the 92nd Street Y in New York City. Led by Alvin Ailey and a group of young African-American modern dancers, that performance changed forever the perception of American dance. The Ailey company has gone on to perform for an estimated 23 million people at theaters in 48 states and 71 countries on six continents — as well as millions more through television broadcasts. In 2008, a U.S. Congressional resolution designated the company as "a vital American cultural ambassador to the world" that celebrates the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance heritage. When Ailey began creating dances, he drew upon his "blood memories" of Texas, the blues, spirituals, and gospel as inspiration, which resulted in the creation of his most popular and critically acclaimed work, *Revelations*. Although he created 79 ballets over his lifetime, Ailey maintained that his company was not exclusively a repository for his own work. Today, the company continues Ailey's mission by presenting important works of the past and commissioning new ones. In all, more than 200 works by over 80 choreographers have been part of the Ailey company's repertory. Before his untimely death in 1989, Alvin Ailey named Judith Jamison as his successor, and over the next 21 years, she brought the company to unprecedented success. Jamison, in turn, personally selected Robert Battle to succeed her in 2011. In announcing his appointment as Artistic Director, she stated, "Combining an intimate knowledge of the Ailey company with an independent perspective, Robert Battle is without question the creative force of the future."

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater gratefully acknowledges

The Joan & Sandy Weill Global Ambassador Fund,
which provides vital support for Ailey's national ad international tours.



### ROBERT BATTLE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Robert Battle became Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in July 2011, making him only the third person to head the company since it was founded in 1958. Battle has a long-standing association with the Ailey organization. A frequent choreographer and artist-in-residence at Ailey since 1999, he has set many of his works on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Ailey II, and at The Ailey School. The company's current repertory includes his ballets The Hunt, In/Side, Love Stories (a collaboration with Judith Jamison and Rennie Harris), and Takademe. Battle's journey to the top of the modern dance world began in the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami, Florida. He showed artistic talent early and studied dance at a high school arts magnet program before moving on to Miami's New World School of the Arts, under the direction of Daniel Lewis and Gerri Houlihan, and finally to the dance program at The Juilliard School, under the direction of Benjamin Harkarvy, where he met his mentor Carolyn Adams. Battle danced with the Parsons Dance Company from 1994 to 2001, and also set his choreography on that company starting in 1998. He then founded his own Battleworks Dance Company, which made its premiere in 2002 in Düsseldorf, Germany as the U.S. representative to the World Dance Alliance's Global Assembly. Battleworks subsequently performed extensively at venues including The Joyce Theater, Dance Theater Workshop, American Dance Festival, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. He has also created new works and restaged his ballets for such companies as Introdans, River North Chicago Dance Company, and Ballet Memphis. He has regularly conducted residencies at universities throughout the United States and gives master classes around the globe. Battle was honored as one of the "Masters of African-American Choreography" by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2005, and he received the prestigious Statue Award from the Princess Grace Foundation-USA in 2007. In July 2010, he was a guest speaker at the United Nations Leaders Programme in Turin, Italy.

#### MASAZUMI CHAYA ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Masazumi Chaya was born in Fukuoka, Japan, where he began his classical ballet training. Upon moving to New York in December 1970, he studied modern dance and performed with the Richard Englund Repertory Company. Chaya joined Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1972 and performed with the company for 15 years. In 1988, he became the company's Rehearsal Director after serving as Assistant Rehearsal Director for two years. A master teacher, both on tour with the company and in his native Japan, he served as choreographic assistant

to Alvin Ailey and John Butler. In 1991, Chaya was named Associate Artistic Director of the company. He continues to provide invaluable creative assistance in all facets of its operations. In 2002, Chaya coordinated the company's appearance at the Rockefeller Center Christmas treelighting ceremony, broadcast on NBC. Chaya has restaged numerous ballets, including Alvin Ailey's Flowers for the State Ballet of Missouri (1990) and The River for the Royal Swedish Ballet (1993), Ballet Florida (1995), National Ballet of Prague (1995), Pennsylvania Ballet (1996), and Colorado Ballet (1998). He has also restaged The Mooche, The Stack-Up, Episodes, Bad Blood, Hidden Rites, Urban Folk Dance, and Witness for the company. At the beginning of his tenure as Associate Artistic Director, Chaya restaged Ailey's For "Bird" - With Love for a "Dance in America" program entitled Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: Steps Ahead. In 2000, he restaged Ailey's Night Creature for the Rome Opera House and The River for La Scala Ballet. In 2003, he restaged The River for North Carolina Dance Theatre and for Julio Bocca's Ballet Argentina. Most recently, Chaya restaged Blues Suite, Mary Lou's Mass, Three Black Kings, Forgotten Time, Hymn, and Streams for the company. As a performer, Chaya appeared on Japanese television in both dramatic and musical productions. He wishes to recognize the artistic contribution and spirit of his late friend and fellow artist, Michihiko Oka.

#### ALVIN AILEY FOUNDER

Alvin Ailey was born on January 5, 1931 in Rogers, Texas. His experiences of life in the rural South would later inspire some of his most memorable works. At age 12, he moved with his mother to Los Angeles, where he was introduced to dance by performances of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and the Katherine Dunham Dance Company. His formal dance training began with an introduction to Lester Horton's classes by his friend, Carmen de Lavallade. Horton, the founder of one of the first racially-integrated dance companies in the United States, became a mentor for Ailey as he embarked on his professional career. After Horton's death in 1953, Ailey became director of the Lester Horton Dance Theater and began to choreograph his own works. In 1954, he was invited to dance in the Broadway musical House of Flowers. Ailey studied dance with Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Hanya Holm, and Karel Shook and also took acting classes with Stella Adler. In 1958, he founded Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater to carry out his vision of a company dedicated to enriching the American modern dance heritage and preserving the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience. He established the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center (now The Ailey School) in 1969 and formed the Alvin

Ailey Repertory Ensemble (now Ailey II) in 1974. Ailey was a pioneer of programs promoting arts in education, particularly those benefiting underserved communities. Throughout his lifetime, he was awarded numerous honorary doctoral degrees, NAACP's Spingarn Award, the United Nations Peace Medal, the Dance Magazine Award, the Capezio Award, and the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award. In 1988, he received the Kennedy Center Honor in recognition of his extraordinary contribution to American culture. When Ailey died on December 1, 1989, The New York Times said of him, "you didn't need to have known [him] personally to have been touched by his humanity, enthusiasm and exuberance and his courageous stand for multi-racial brotherhood."

#### **JUDITH JAMISON ARTISTIC DIRECTOR EMERITA**

Judith Jamison joined Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1965 and quickly became an international star. Over the next 15 years, Ailey created some of his most enduring roles for her, most notably the tour-deforce solo Cry. During the 1970s and 80s, she appeared as a guest artist with ballet companies all over the world, starred in the hit Broadway musical Sophisticated Ladies, and formed her own company, The Jamison Project. She returned to Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1989 when Ailey asked her to succeed him as Artistic Director. In the 21 years that followed, she brought the company to unprecedented heights including two historic engagements in South Africa and a 50-city global tour to celebrate the company's 50th anniversary. Jamison is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, among them a prime time Emmy Award, an American Choreography Award, the Kennedy Center Honor, a National Medal of Arts, a "Bessie" Award, the Phoenix Award, and the Handel Medallion, She was also listed in "The TIME 100: The World's Most Influential People" and honored by First Lady Michelle Obama at the first White House Dance Series event. As a highly

regarded choreographer, Jamison has created many Harris, 2004), and Among Us (Private Spaces: Public the significance of the Ailey legacy - using dance as a medium for honoring the past, celebrating the present and fearlessly reaching into the future.

#### **MATTHEW RUSHING REHEARSAL DIRECTOR & GUEST ARTIST**

Matthew Rushing was born in Los Angeles, CA. He began his dance training with Kashmir Blake in Inglewood, CA and later continued his training at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. He is the recipient of a Spotlight Award and Dance Magazine Award and was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts. He was a scholarship student at The Ailey School and later became a member of Ailey II, where he danced for a year. During his career, Rushing has performed as a guest artist for galas in Vail, Colorado, as well as in France, Russia, Canada, Austria, and Italy. He has performed for presidents George H. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, as well as at the 2010 White House tribute to Judith Jamison. During his time with the company he has choreographed two ballets: Acceptance In Surrender (2005), a collaboration with Hope Boykin and Abdur Rahim-Jackson, and Uptown (2009), a tribute to the Harlem Renaissance. Rushing joined the company in 1992 and became Rehearsal Director in June 2010.

celebrated works, including Divining (1984), Forgotten Time (1989), Hymn (1993), HERE . . . NOW. (commissioned for the 2002 Cultural Olympiad), Love Stories (with additional choreography by Robert Battle and Rennie Places) (2009). Jamison's autobiography, Dancing Spirit, was edited by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and published in 1993. In 2004, under Jamison's artistic directorship, her idea of "a bigger place," the permanent home for the Ailey company, was realized and named after beloved chairman Joan Weill. Jamison continues to dedicate herself to asserting the prominence of the arts in our culture, and she remains committed to promoting

GUILLERMO ASCA (Rego Park, NY) or "Moe," as he is affectionately known, graduated from LaGuardia High School of the Performing Arts. He was a scholarship student at The Ailey School and danced with Ailey II, Ballet Metropolitano de Caracas, Ballet Hispanico, Dance Compass, Shapiro & Smith, and Footprints Dance Project. In 2010, he performed at the White House tribute to Judith Jamison. Asca joined the company in 1994.

KIRVEN JAMES BOYD (Boston, MA) began his formal dance training at the Boston Arts Academy and joined Boston Youth Moves in 1999 under the direction of Jim Viera and Jeannette Neill. He also trained on scholarship at the Boston Conservatory and as a scholarship student at The Ailey School. Boyd has danced with Battleworks Dance Company, The Parsons Dance Company, and Ailey II. He performed at the White House tribute to Judith Jamison in 2010. Boyd joined the company in 2004.

HOPE BOYKIN (Durham, NC) is a three-time recipient of the American Dance Festival's Young Tuition Scholarship. She attended Howard University and while in Washington, D.C. she performed with Lloyd Whitmore's New World Dance Company. Boykin was a student and intern at The Ailey School. She was assistant to the late Talley Beatty and an original member of Complexions. Boykin was a member of Philadanco and received a New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award. In 2005, Boykin choreographed Acceptance in Surrender in collaboration with Abdur-Rahim Jackson and Matthew Rushing for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Most recently, she choreographed Go In Grace with award-winning singing group Sweet Honey In The Rock for the company's 50th anniversary season. Boykin joined the company in 2000.

SEAN A. CARMON (Beaumont, TX) began his dance training under Bonnie Cokinos with guidance from Lucia Booth and Eva LeBlanc. He was a member of Elisa Monte Dance and is a graduate of the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program in Dance. Carmon was an original cast member of the 2010 revival of La Cage Aux Folles on Broadway and was also a cast member of the Broadway production of The Phantom of the Opera. As an assistant to Christopher L. Huggins, he appeared as a guest artist with the International Dance Association in Italy and with the Cape Dance Company in South Africa. Carmon joined the company in 2011.

SARAH DALEY (South Elgin, IL) began her training at the Faubourg School of Ballet in Illinois under the direction of Watmora Casey and Tatyana Mazur. She is a 2009 graduate of the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program in Dance. Daley has trained at institutions such as The Kirov Academy, National Ballet School of Canada, The San

Francisco Conservatory of Dance, and intensives such as Ballet Camp Illinois and Ballet Adriatico in Italy. She is a recipient of a Youth American Grand Prix Award and an ARTS Foundation Award. She was a member of Ailey II and joined the company in 2011.

GHRAI DeVORE (Washington, D.C.) began her formal dance training at the Chicago Multicultural Dance Center and was a scholarship student at The Ailey School. She has completed summer programs at the Kirov Academy, Ballet Chicago, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, American Ballet Theatre, and Alonzo King's Lines Ballet. DeVore was a member of Deeply Rooted Dance Theater 2, Hubbard Street 2, Dance Works Chicago, and Ailey II. She is a recipient of the Danish Queen Ingrid Scholarship of Honor and the Dizzy Feet Foundation Scholarship, and she was a 2010 nominee for the first annual Clive Barnes Award. DeVore joined the company in 2010.

ANTONIO DOUTHIT (St. Louis, MO) began his dance training at age 16 at the Center of Contemporary Arts under the direction of Lee Nolting and at the Alexandra School of Ballet. He also trained at North Carolina School of the Arts, the Joffrey Ballet School, San Francisco Ballet, and the Dance Theatre of Harlem School. Douthit became a member of Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1999 and appeared in featured roles in the ballets South African Suite, Dougla, Concerto in F, Return, and Dwight Rhoden's Twist. He was promoted to soloist in 2003. He also performed with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal. Douthit joined the company in 2004.

BELEN ESTRADA (Lawrence, MA) began her formal dance training at the Boston Arts Academy, where she graduated as valedictorian. She has been mentored by Earl Mosley and danced with Camille A. Brown & Dancers for three years, during which time she performed at The Joyce Theater, Jacob's Pillow, and the Dancers Responding to AIDS levents Dance from the Heart and The Fire Island Dance Festival. Estrada was an apprentice for Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, A Dance Company, and has performed with Lula Washington Dance Theater, Nathan Trice, and Roger C. Jeffrey. She assisted Matthew Rushing with his ballet *Uptown* for the Ailey company in 2009. Estrada joined the company in 2011.

**RENALDO GARDNER** (Gary, IN) began his dance training with Tony Simpson and is a graduate of Talent Unlimited High School. He attended the Emerson School for Visual and Performing Arts and studied with Larry Brewer and Michael Davis. Gardner was a scholarship student at The Ailey School, has trained on scholarship at Ballet Chicago and Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, and had an internship at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance.



In 2008, he received second place in modern dance from the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts and received the Dizzy Feet Scholarship in 2009. He was a member of Ailey II and joined the company in 2011.

VERNARD J. GILMORE (Chicago, IL) began dancing at Curie Performing and Creative Arts High School in Chicago and later studied at the Joseph Holmes Chicago Dance Theatre with Harriet Ross, Marquita Levy, and Emily Stein. He attended Barat College as a dance scholarship recipient and received first place in the allcity NAACP ACT-SO Competition in Dance in 1993. He studied as a scholarship student at The Ailey School and was a member of Ailey II. In 2010, he performed at the White House tribute to Judith Jamison. Gilmore is an active choreographer for the Ailey Dancers Resource Fund and has choreographed for Fire Island Dance Festival 2008 and Jazz Foundation of America Gala 2010; he also produced the Dance of Light Project in January 2010. Gilmore is a certified Zena Rommett Floor-Barre® instructor. He continues to teach workshops and master classes around the world. Gilmore joined the company in 1997.

JACQUELINE GREEN (Baltimore, MD) began her dance training at the Baltimore School for the Arts under the direction of Norma Pera, Deborah Robinson, and Anton Wilson. She is a graduate of the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program in Dance. Green has attended summer programs at Pennsylvania Regional Ballet, Chautauqua Institution, Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts, and Jacob's Pillow. She was the recipient of the Martha Hill's Young Professional Award in 2009 and the Dizzy Feet Scholarship in 2010. Green was a member of Ailey II and joined the company in 2011.

DANIEL HARDER (Bowie, MD) began dancing at Suitland High School's Center for the Visual and Performing Arts in Maryland. He is a recent graduate of the Ailey/ Fordham B.F.A. Program in Dance where he was awarded the Jerome Robbins/Layton Foundation Scholarship and participated in the Holland Dance Festival with the School and as a member of the Francesca Harper Project. After dancing in the European tour of West Side Story, Harder became a member of Ailey II. He joined the company in 2010.

**DEMETIA HOPKINS** (Orange, VA) began her dance training at the Orange School of Performing Arts under the direction of her uncle Ricardo Porter and Heather Powell. She has studied with the National Youth Ballet of Virginia, Virginia School of the Arts, the Summer Dance International Course in Burgos, Spain, The Rock School, and Dance Theatre of Harlem School. Hopkins graduated

with honors from the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program in Dance in 2009. She was recently selected as a recipient of a Leonore Annenberg Fellowship in the Arts. Hopkins was a member of Ailey II and joined the company in 2010.

MICHAEL JACKSON, JR. (New Orleans, LA) began his dance training at age 14 at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C. under the direction of Charles Augins. He became a member of Dance Theatre of Harlem Dancing through Barriers Ensemble in 2005. In 2006, he joined Dallas Black Dance Theatre and in 2008 joined Philadanco, where he also worked as Artistic Director of D3. Jackson joined the company in 2011.

**MEGAN JAKEL** (Waterford, MI) trained in ballet and jazz in her hometown. As a senior in high school, she spent a year dancing with the City Ballet of San Diego. In 2005, Jakel was an apprentice and rehearsal director for the Francesca Harper Project. She graduated with honors in May of 2007 from the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program in Dance. She was a member of Ailey II and joined the company in 2009.

YANNICK LEBRUN (Cayenne, French Guiana) began training in his native country at the Adaclam School under the guidance of Jeanine Verin. In 2004, he moved to New York City to study at The Ailey School as a scholarship student. Lebrun has performed with the Francesca Harper Project Modo Fusion. He was named one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" in 2011. Lebrun was a member of Ailey II and joined the company in 2008.

ALICIA GRAF MACK (Columbia, MD) trained at Ballet Royale Institute of Maryland under Donna Pidel and attended summer intensives at the School of American Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. Prior to dancing with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater from 2005 to 2008, Mack was a principal dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem and a member of Complexions Contemporary Ballet. In addition to several galas and festivals, she has been a guest performer with Alonzo King's LINES Ballet and with André 3000 and Beyoncé at Radio City Music Hall. She is the recipient of the Columbia University Medal of Excellence and Smithsonian Magazine's Young Innovator Award. Mack graduated magna cum laude with honors in history from Columbia University and received an M.A. in nonprofit management from Washington University in St. Louis. She is also a guest writer for several nationally distributed dance publications. Most recently, Mack served as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance at Webster University in St. Louis. Mack rejoined the company in 2011.

MICHAEL FRANCIS McBRIDE (Johnson City, NY) began his training at the Danek School of Performing Arts and later trained at Amber Perkins School of the Arts in Norwich, NY. McBride attended Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts for two consecutive summers and was also assistant to Mosley when he set the piece Saddle UP! on the company in 2007. McBride graduated magna cum laude from the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program in Dance in 2010 after he joined the company in 2009.

**RACHAEL McLAREN** (Manitoba, Canada) began her formal dance training at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. After graduating high school, McLaren joined the Toronto cast of *Mamma Mia!* She moved to New York to study at The Ailey School as a scholarship student and later joined Ailey II. She joined the company in 2008.

AISHA MITCHELL (Syracuse, NY) received her primary dance training at the Onondaga Dance Institute, Dance Centre North, and with Anthony Salatino of Syracuse University. She studied at North Carolina Dance Theatre, Lines Ballet School, The Joffrey Ballet School, and The Ailey School as a scholarship student. Mitchell is a graduate of the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program in Dance and was a member of Ailey II. She was a medalist at the NAACP National ACT-SO competition and recently served as co-choreographer for the Syracuse Opera's Les Pecheurs de Perles. Mitchell joined the company in 2008.

**AKUA NONI PARKER** (Kinston, NC) began her ballet training at the age of three and moved to Wilmington, DE at age twelve to continue her professional training at the Academy of the Dance. In 2000, she joined Dance Theatre of Harlem, where she danced lead roles in Agon, Giselle, and The Four Temperaments. Thereafter she danced with Cincinnati Ballet and Ballet San Jose. Parker has performed around the world and had worked with legendary icons Fredric Franklin and Geoffrey Holder. She joined the company in 2008.

BRIANA REED (St. Petersburg, FL) began her dance training at the Academy of Ballet Arts and The Pinellas County Center for Arts. She then studied at The Ailey School as a scholarship student. In 1997, Reed graduated from The Juilliard School and became a member of Ailey II. In 2010, she performed at the White House tribute to Judith Jamison. She is a licensed Gyrotonic instructor. Reed joined the company in 1998.

**SAMUEL LEE ROBERTS** (Quakertown, PA) began his dance training under the direction of Kathleen Johnston and attended The Juilliard School. He performed in the first international show of Radio City Christmas Spectacular in Mexico City and danced with the New

York cast from 1999-2004. Roberts performed during the award ceremony at the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, danced with Corbin Dances and Keigwin + Company, and was a founding member of Battleworks Dance Company. In May of 2006, Roberts was named Dance Magazine's "On the Rise" Dancer. He also performed several roles in Julie Taymor's film Across the Universe and the original opera Grendel. Roberts joined the company in 2009.

**RENEE ROBINSON** (Washington, D.C.) began her training in classical ballet at the Jones-Haywood School of Ballet. She 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. She performed at the White House State Dinner in 2003 in honor of the President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, and at the White House tribute to Judith Jamison in 2010. Robinson was a member of Ailey II and joined the company in 1981.

**KELLY ROBOTHAM** (New York, NY) is a graduate of New World School of the Arts and trained as a scholarship student at The Ailey School and Dance Theater of Harlem. She is also a graduate of The Juilliard School, where she worked with Robert Battle. In 2009, Robotham was selected from The Juilliard Dance Division to participate in a cultural exchange tour to Costa Rica and soon after became an apprentice with River North Chicago Dance Company. She was a member of Ailey II and joined the company in 2011.

KANJI SEGAWA (Kanagawa, Japan) began his modern dance training with his mother, Erika Akoh, and studied ballet with Kan and Ju Horiuchi at Unique Ballet Theatre in Tokyo. In 1997, Segawa came to the U.S. under the Japanese Government Artist Fellowship to train at The Ailey School. Segawa is a former member of Ailey II from 2000-2002 and Robert Battle's Battleworks Dance Company from 2002-2010. He worked extensively with choreographer Mark Morris from 2004-2011, repeatedly appearing in Morris's various productions, including as a principal dancer in John Adam's Nixon in China at Metropolitan Opera. He has also performed with Jennifer Muller/The Works, Aszure Barton's Aszure and Artists, and Jessica Lang Dance. Segawa joined the company in 2011.

GLENN ALLEN SIMS (Long Branch, NJ) began his classical dance training at the Academy of Dance Arts in Red Bank, NJ. He attended The Juilliard School under the artistic guidance of Benjamin Harkarvy. In 2004, Sims was the youngest person to be inducted into the Long Branch High School's Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame. He has been seen in several network television programs

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including BET Honors, Dancing with the Stars, and The Today Show. In 2010, Sims taught as a master teacher in Ravenna, Italy for "Dance Up Ravenna," sponsored by International Dance Association, and performed in the White House tribute to Judith Jamison. He has performed for the King of Morocco and is a certified Zena Rommett Floor-Barre® instructor. In summer 2011, Sims wrote a featured guest blog for Dance Magazine. Sims joined the company in 1997.

LINDA CELESTE SIMS (Bronx, NY) began her dance training at Ballet Hispanico School of Dance and is a graduate of LaGuardia High School of the Performing Arts. In 1994, Sims was granted an award by the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts. She has been highlighted in the "Best of 2009" list in Dance Magazine and has performed as a guest star on So You Think You Can Dance, Dancing with the Stars, and The Today Show. She has also made guest appearances at the White House tribute to Judith Jamison, Youth America Grand Prix, Vail International Dance Festival, and galas in Budapest and Vienna. Sims joined the company in 1996.

JERMAINE TERRY (Washington, D.C.) began his dance training in Kissimmee, FL at James Dance Center. He graduated cum laude with a B.F.A. in Dance Performance from the University of South Florida, where he received scholarships for excellence in performance and choreography. Terry was a scholarship student at The Ailey School and a member of Ailey II, and he has performed with Buglisi Dance Theater, Arch Dance, Dance Iguail, and Philadanco. He joined the company in 2010.

MARCUS JARRELL WILLIS (Houston, TX) began his formal training at the Johnston Performing Arts Middle School, the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, and Discovery Dance Group in Houston, Texas. At age 16, he moved to New York City and studied at The Ailey School as a scholarship student. Willis is a recipient of a Level 1 ARTS award given by the National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts and has received scholarships to many schools, including The Juilliard School. He was a member of Ailey II and also worked with Pascal Rioult Dance Theater, Dominic Walsh Dance Theater, and Tania Pérez-Salas Compañía de Danza. Willis joined the company in 2008.

The Ailey dancers are supported, in part, by The Judith McDonough Kaminski Dancer Endowment Fund.

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## McKNIGHT ARTIST FELLOWSHIPS For Dancers and Choreographers



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Northrop Concerts and Lectures is the home of the McKnight Artist Fellowships for Dancers and Choreographers, which awards Minnesota dance artists, and the McKnight International Fellowship, which brings one international choreographer to Minnesota every year.

#### Upcoming McKnight events - Don't miss SOLO, which opens the 2012-13 Northrop season!

#### SOLO

Sep 21, 8:00 pm & Sep 22, 8:00 pm Ted Mann Concert Hall

Premiere performances by six outstanding dance artists, recipients of the 2010 and 2011 McKnight Artist Fellowships for Dancers: Amanda Dlouhy, Emilie Plauchè Flink, Nic Lincoln, Leslie O'Neill, Eddie Oroyan, and Amy Behm Thomson. Commissioned choreographers: Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy (MN), Sara Hook (IL), Lawrence Keigwin (NY), Jeanine Durning (NY), Roberto Olivan (Spain), Luis Lara Malvacias (NY).

#### McKnight Fellows in rehearsal for SOLO



Eddie Oroyan rehearsing with commissioned choreographer Roberto Olivan (Spain) outside Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art in Spain.

Photo courtesy of Eddie Oroyan



Leslie O'Neill, working with commissioned choreographer Jeanine Durning in New York.

Photo courtesy of Leslie O'Neill



Amy Behm Thomson rehearsing in costume with commissioned choreographer Luis Lara Malvacias in New York.

Photo courtesy of Luis Lara Malvacias

The McKnight Artist Fellowships for Choreographers and Dancers and the McKnight International Artist Fellowship are funded by The McKnight Foundation and administered by Northrop Concerts and Lectures. For more information visit: northrop.umn.edu/mcknight

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If a guest wishes to transfer from their wheelchair to fixed seats the wheelchair will be taken to the outer lobby to comply with local fire code regulations. At the end of the performance an usher will return the wheelchair to the guest. We do not recommend transferring to fixed seats unless absolutely necessary as this may hinder evacuation in emergency situations.

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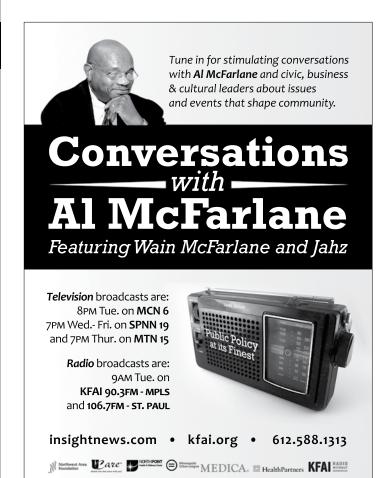
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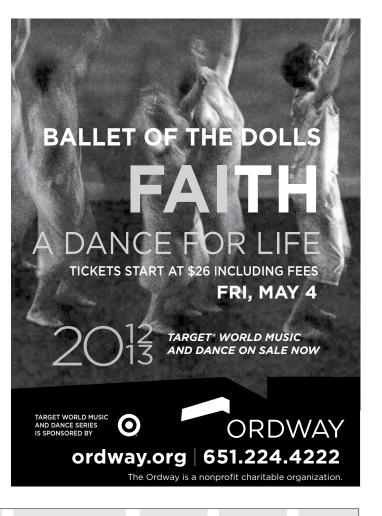
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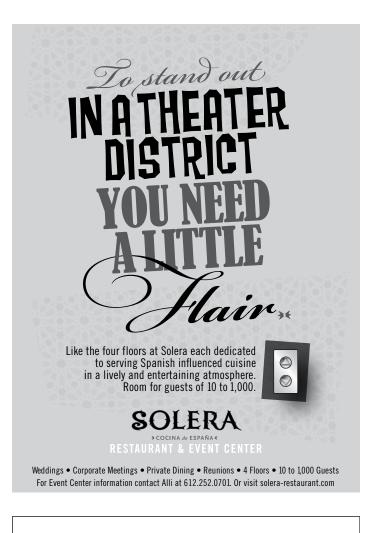












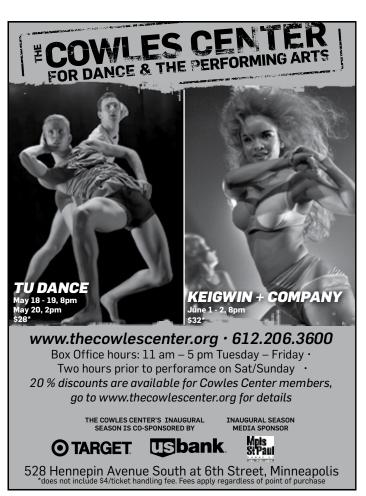


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### John Cowles Jr.



John and Sage Cowles. Photo courtesy of Sage Cowles.

John Cowles Jr.-longtime newspaper executive, philanthropist, and community leader-was instrumental in the creation and support of arts and sports in Minneapolis. His belief that both are essential to a vibrant city led to a lifelong passion for community development that elevated the Twin Cities landscape to national significance. John helped establish the Guthrie Theater, Metrodome, Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts, and the Cowles Conservatory at the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, as well as the Barbra Barker Center for Dance, Weisman Art Museum, and a variety of sports facilities on the University of Minnesota campus.

John was able to see the bigger picture and the impact of such development. "Strengthening the cultural organization and life of the Twin Cities was not only going to make life more interesting and attractive for our families," he said, "but was going to attract business and keep business here in town."

Beyond his life in the newspaper business, John had a diverse career studying agricultural economics, teaching aerobics, and establishing a women's professional fast-pitch softball league. One professional endeavor in particular allowed him to be intimately connected to the arts.

John and his wife Sage always had a special place in their hearts for dance and movement. A former dancer herself, Sage recalls their most meaningful—and epic—Northrop memory. "Bill T. Jones was commissioned by Northrop, the Walker Art Center, and the University of Minnesota Dance Program in 1990. The Dance Program was extremely new at that time and Barbara Barker recognized a wonderful opportunity for her dance students to perform an important new work by a renowned choreographer. The piece, A Promised Land called for 52 dancers to be nude on stage. Bill T. wanted all humankind represented—short, tall, thin, large, young, old, and all colors."

Sage had recently met Bill T. on a dance panel in Minneapolis and was very impressed. "He told me about the 52 dancer piece and, if it ever came together, hoped that I'd consider being in it. The time came for auditions and I thought 'yes, I'd like to go.' As I was getting dressed, John looked at me and said, 'you know, I've never done anything like this before. I'd like to come.'

"After the audition, John and I were both invited to participate. It was one of the most terrifying days of my life. People have asked me if John's mother and father were alive at the time would John have still done the piece. John and I knew that he absolutely would have. We both believed so strongly in Bill T.'s values and his outrage at the injustice he saw in the world."

The modern masterwork A Promised Land premiered April 21, 1990. "Performing on the Northrop stage was absolutely unreal. It was sold out-4,800 seats. Later that spring, John and I were sitting in our office and a phone call came. Bill T. Jones was inviting us to be part of the opening at BAM [Brooklyn Academy of Music] in New York. I couldn't even speak. I wanted to do it so badly. I had no confidence that John wanted to do it. Whoever said yes to BAM would need to perform the piece on tour for two years across the country. We put down the phone and it was hardly a minute before John said, 'I've never done anything like this before in my life. Let's do it.' We look back on that time as one of the great chapters in our lives."

It is this spirit and dedication that will live on for generations to come. As John's family so aptly puts it, "His courage, deliberate style, wisdom, and love of community were some of the special qualities that gave us all joy and will continue to be an influence in our lives."

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Jin Xing Dance Theatre Shanghai Photo © Angelo Palombini

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