

Published: 02.27.2009

## It's golden

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will celebrate the company's 50th anniversary with three signature pieces**

**By Gerald M. Gay**

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's stops through Tucson and Mesa as part of its 50th-anniversary tour will be a welcome trip home for dancer Clifton Brown. • Brown is a native of Goodyear. He trained in schools in the Phoenix area in his youth and would come to Tucson once a year for a jazz dance festival held at the University of Arizona. • "My close family doesn't live there anymore," Brown said in a recent phone interview on a company stop through Fort Worth, Texas. "But I still know people in the area."

Brown, 29, is considered by critics to be one of Ailey's most talented dancers. He joined the company in 1999, after training with Ballet Arizona and the Ailey School, and has since been hailed as a "millennial virtuoso with limitless technical prowess" by the Los Angeles Times and "the next greatest dance star in America" by Parade magazine.

In 2007, The New York Times said Brown stood out "for his quietly powerful" technique and the "lyrical grace and translucent inwardness of his performances."



Clifton Brown, leaping in the larger photo, and members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater troupe will perform tonight at Centennial Hall.

**PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER**

More Photos (4):



It is a responsibility. As you get older, you don't forget that, but it doesn't frazzle you as much. You get used to it."

What is the most important thing you have learned being in Ailey?

### If you go

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

- Presented by: UA-presents.
- When: 8 p.m. today.
- Where: Centennial Hall, 1020 E. University Blvd.
- Tickets: \$27-\$72 through the Centennial Hall box office, 621-3341.

"Have you seen him?" Ailey artistic director Judith Jamison asked the New York City edition of Metro newspapers in 2007. "Standing still, he's poetic."

He, along with the rest of the Ailey crew, will celebrate the company's golden anniversary with three signature pieces in Tucson: "Blues Suite" (1958), "Suite Otis" (1971) and "Revelations" (1960).

When did you first know you wanted to dance with Ailey?

"When I was 12 years old, I saw a video of the company that I had checked out from the library. I hadn't seen anything like it before, all these wonderful dancers in one place at one time. I was amazed. I watched it over and over. I thought that this was something I wanted to do eventually."

How important has the company been to dance in your opinion?

"The Ailey organization is such an important entity. It is dance and that is what we do, but it is also very much about helping the community through dance. It is about reaching people who aren't necessarily into dance or the arts, but who are open to new experiences. Alvin was very much about helping people. He loved dance and reaching out to others."

Do you still get nervous performing signature Ailey works like "Revelations"?

"Of course, there is always that aspect when you are performing works that are so established and so revered and important. It has been entrusted to you. The first few times I performed ('Revelations'), when I was younger, it was a surreal experience because I had seen it done so many times.

"To take something good from every experience that you have. We have performed for so many people and gone to so many places. There are always circumstances that can be difficult, certain demands that must be met. But in my experience, they have always been doable. You just can't let yourself get bogged down. Always remember what was positive about the situation and take that with you to your next experience so things get better and better."

Judith Jamison has announced she will retire as artistic director of Ailey in 2011. How has she changed the company, and what do you think of her departure?

"She has been immensely important. The company has come such a long way in certain aspects. It is extremely different from what it was. We have our beautiful permanent home and have been building the organization one block at a time.

"Change is inevitable. Nothing is forever. I hope we can look forward to whoever Judith passes the torch onto. To have our feet firmly planted in the past while looking toward the future."

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