



February 6, 2012
By Katherine Malone

Have you ever heard of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater?

Giveaway: Tickets to the Fox!

I am so excited to kick off this week -- I have such fun things to share with you! First up is an awesome **GIVEAWAY**, just for you!

This dance group is a historic troupe hailing straight from the hip streets of New York City. Y'all know I may be a Betty, but my blood runs deep with Northern Jersey blood, so I was immediately intrigued, especially since I do love a good musical performance. Here's a brief history:

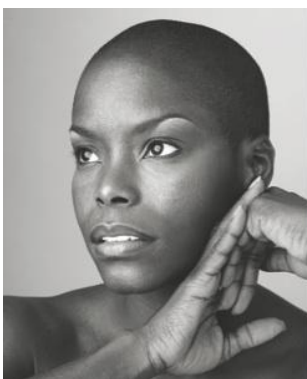
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater grew from a now-fabled performance in March 1958 at the 92nd Street Y in New York City. Led by Alvin Ailey and a group of young African-American modern dancers, that performance changed forever the perception of American dance. The Ailey company has gone on to perform 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.



When I heard this historic group was coming here to town to perform at our own historic Fox Theater, I was really excited to be able to check them out!

I had the unique opportunity to interview one of the Company members to find out a little more about what makes up this awesome group. **Hope Boykin** is a three-time recipient of the American Dance Festival's Young Tuition Scholarship, and she was a student and intern at The Ailey School. Hope joined the Company in 2000, and it looks like she has had the career of a lifetime over there.

Let's learn a little more ... and thanks to Hope for answering my questions!



What did you learn as a student at the Ailey school that you have put into practice since as a member of the Company?

Well, from the point of view of a dancer, I have learned the great importance of embracing as much technique as I can. As a student in the school, I was exposed to so many different styles and techniques of dance; which allowed for a greater understanding and appreciation for what I would have to embrace as a member of the hardest working repertory company I know. But, if I were to share the most important lesson, I would have to say, having a relationship with the students in the school, and to set a good and true example is the most important lesson. I was treated with truth, love, and respect, and I try to give this back to the students. I was encouraged and motivated and some of the company members would often say, "...keep 'Hope' alive..." which made all the difference to me while I studied at the Ailey School.

What was your favorite performance as both a dancer and an audience member, Ailey or beyond? What made those performances stand out in your memory?

As an audience member, I recall, seeing a performance while I was a student in the school that I will never forget. Matthew Rushing was already a good friend of mine, and had gotten me a seat for that evening's performance. Memoria, one of my favorite works of Mr. Ailey's, was on the program, and I remember, the performance had already begun, as noticed Matthew running out to join me, warm-up clothes on and big hood over his head so he wouldn't be recognized. I

couldn't imagine what he was doing in the audience. It turned out that one of the dancers performing in Memoria had a sudden injury, and Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director, would be stepping in at the last minute. I never thought I would have the chance to see him perform, and I was great. I'll never forget it.

As a company member, I remember my first performance. There were so many dancers in the wings showing their support; the love was immeasurable.

What would you say to a audience member that might be a newcomer to the dance world (cough like me cough)?

This is an easy question. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is the best company to come to see if you have never seen dance before. My colleagues are the most proficient, artist/athletes that you will ever see on a stage. I am even amazed when I have the opportunity to watch from the audience, or even on the side of the stage in the wings, at the magic that is made.

What can they expect at the performance, and what might help them follow along or enjoy the show even more?

The biggest expectation the audience should have is to be changed in some way. There is nothing that I would want to explain, except to say to be prepared to see the company with fresh eyes, if you are a veteran Ailey-Goer, and for the soon to be veteran Ailey-Goer, expect to be moved.

Have you visited Atlanta before?

Yes, Atlanta is one of our home stops on tour. There are only few cities that are mandatory stops for me and Atlanta is at the top of my list.

Do you have downtime while you are on tour to sample the local cuisine and attractions? If so, what will be on your to-do list for Atlanta?

I have several friends in the Atlanta area so I have most of my free minutes already scheduled with catching up, seeing how their kids have grown, and of course a short visit to Lenox Mall (LOL).

Hooray, thanks Hope! Hearing her answers made me that much more excited to go and see the show.

Ok, now that you are up close and personal with the group that is the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, let's move on to the premiere event -- [a set of tickets to the Company's opening night show at the Fox Theater!!](#)

Details: A pair of tickets to the opening night of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater

Where: The Fabulous Fox Theater

When: Thursday, February 16 at 7:30 PM

How to Enter: You get one entry per response!

1. Leave a comment telling me who you would bring to the show if you won!
2. Follow me on Pinterest and leave a comment telling me you did so
3. Follow me on Twitter and leave a comment telling me you did so

The giveaway will end Friday, February 10 at 10AM.

Good luck everyone! I can't wait to see one of you fabulous readers at the show!

