

Two Weeks!

September 3, 2010



Yes, it is almost that time for us to get on a plane and head for the UK. However, we must make a stop in Washington, DC on Tuesday to congratulate our Artistic Director, Judith Jamison, who will be honored by First Lady Michelle Obama at the first of a series of White House tributes to the art of dance in America. There will be a master class for students and performances from many great companies as well. I am very excited and honored to be part of this celebration. Plus I found out about it on my birthday (August 26). Isn't that a cool birthday present?

This week we've worked a lot on Ms. Jamison's Hymn. We have been drilling and running it for the new dancers to become more familiar with it as well for us to remember and apply notes or changes. It is a full company piece that is very dynamic, so it is imperative that we are in unison. Hymn is one of my favorite ballets to perform. The music is upbeat and the solos are performed to the recorded monologues of older company members recalling their memories of Alvin Ailey himself, the Company, the future, issues of body image and, individuality.

Along with Hymn, we are refreshing our memories and teaching Festa Barocca by Mauro Bigonzetti, which is another full company piece. We have continued working with Christopher L. Huggins on ANOINTED, which is almost completed. It's very challenging, but I love the athletic movement and each rehearsal I must continue to push myself to build up my stamina. This year is definitely a cardio workout for me, LOL.

We are continuing Ron Brown's Dancing Spirit, one of last year's premieres. I've also been rehearsing a solo that requires a lot of stamina: Cry, the tour-de-force masterpiece choreographed by Alvin Ailey for Judith Jamison in 1971. It's definitely another one of my favorites. I've only performed the third section but this year we are doing all three parts. Each section gets progressively harder and I'm still wondering how I'm going to get through it! But I know when I love to do something, and can connect deeply to my character, I'm amazed at what I can accomplish and overcome. It is important to always push, to continue to grow and get stronger. So I think the theme for me this year is to push. I want to go beyond and surpass what I thought was impossible.

Today after running ANOINTED I suddenly couldn't move my neck. It's amazing how our bodies communicate to us. I had a little neck pain a few days ago but I felt fine and figured it would go away. I did not pamper my neck, so today after I pushed I couldn't turn right or left or lift my head up or down. Luckily it was break time and I signed up to see the physical therapist. I got very little motion back which didn't help the fact that The New York Times was videotaping us rehearsing Cry which is entirely full of head rolls, AGH! So my stiff neck is reminding me that although I have to push, I have to pamper myself as well, soak in the tub, rub and roll out sore tense muscles. My body always communicates with me to let me know I'm dehydrated, aching or spasming. I have to take care of them, take vitamins, get the circulation moving before it's too late and I injure myself. So, Constance, push and pamper!

Well it's bed time, but I can't wait to tell you all about my experience at the White House and the final preparations before we head out for tour. Stay blessed and dance!

With love,
Constance Stamatou