

## Happy Holidays the Ailey Way

November 21, 2012

November and December are two of my favorite months to spend in New York City. Not because of the brisk temperatures, holiday windows, Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center or tons of tourists and shoppers littering the streets, but because it means that Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is in town at New York City Center. And yes – it's that time of year again folks – time to see athletic splendor and dance perfection on stage (and of course, Revelations).

November also marks the third anniversary of F.A.M.E NYC! And to thank all our FAMERS for their support I would like to share with you an interview with Aisha Mitchell, a feature dancer with AAADT, and give you the opportunity to see her and the rest of the phenomenal dancers of Alvin Ailey Dance Theater in December. To enter type, "I Love F.A.M.E NYC!" in the comment section below. The giveaway ends on Cyber Monday at 12:00 a.m. AAADT's performances begin at New York City Center on November 28.



**1. You will be dancing several key roles throughout the season, is there any one in particular you look forward to performing?**

I'm really looking forward to performing Ulysses Dove's Vespers this season. It's a work I've always admired growing up. I think it visually showcases the many facets of being a woman from elegance and poise, to power and strength. It's an incredibly affirming journey to perform that piece with five other women from the company; it's almost as if we're dancing as one.

**2. Revelations resonates with people regardless of ethnicity, age or cultural background and is Alvin Ailey's most seminal work. Could you tell us your thoughts about dancing in this iconic dance masterpiece?**

We perform Revelations a lot. It would be so easy to become numb to doing the same steps over and over. But it's more than just steps, more than just a dance – it's theater – living art that we are creating on the stage. Mr. Ailey's choreography and the way he conceptualized the memories of his upbringing in the Baptist church for the stage is masterful. It speaks to people on a level that they can relate to and that's why the piece is still relevant after all these years. I perform three roles in Revelations, in the sections "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel", "Fix Me Jesus" and "Wade in the Water". These are iconic roles in the dance world. We are so lucky to work with living legends on a regular basis. Often Judith Jamison will come into rehearsal and work with us on mastering the nuances of the "Umbrella woman", a role that she is famous for. And our Associate Artistic Director Masazumi Chaya is in rehearsals daily. He knows most of Mr. Ailey's work, he's like a dance encyclopedia, it's incredible having them around to keep the legacy alive.

**3. You have performed to several genres of music, but what genres, artists or songs personally get your dancer juices flowing?**

I really love all music and my musical education is forever continuing. I play Michael Jackson at the gym, and sometimes my tour roommate and I crank out Dirty South Hip Hop at 8 a.m. to energize our day! Any time we travel to a different city, if there's time, I try to catch some live music at a local spot. It gives touring its own little soundtrack and makes some cities more memorable too.



**4. You are a New Yorker, but which city is your favorite to travel to when performing?**

Hopefully this won't sound too cliché, but I've fallen in love with Paris. I've been there twice now with the company and we've done three to four week runs. It's such a beautiful city, so rich in history and culture. I could really get used to that lifestyle; sipping on a café in the morning with some leisurely reading, performing in historical opera houses and having a glass of Bordeaux to finish the evening. Perfection!

**5. Whether it's going to practice or hanging out with friends, what three beauty items can you not leave home without?**

Definitely lip balm, Nivea hand cream and mascara!