



**Review | Alvin Ailey dancers perform favorites from repertoire
Company performs favorites from repertoire.**

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By Libby Hanssen

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's second program in the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Theatre featured classics from the company's repertoire.

The program began with "Streams," a work choreographed in 1970 by Ailey and restaged by associate artistic director Masazumi Chaya. The dancers emulated water's many variations: a babbling stream, the surge of the tide, the powerful break of waves, the glassy calm of a pond, a fountain's jubilant thrust.

This multi-movement work acknowledged, but often times worked independently of, Miroslav Kabelac's "Eight Inventions" for percussion ensemble, which was at turns clamorous and hypnotic. Ailey's genius was evident in both his inventive partnering, such as the athletic male duet during the Scherzo, and in his ability to gauge a simple gesture's dynamic impact.

Robert Battle, the recently appointed artistic director of the company, choreographed "Takademe." This short, demanding piece, danced by Kanji Segewa, was set to the rhythmic vocal work of Sheila Chandra. This piece was inspired by classical Indian forms; the music was a complicated set of traditional percussive syllables and the movement used the intricate foot work of kathak, a dance form of storytelling. The dancer mimicked the syllables with a clownish approach to the exhaustive tongue twisting.

Another staple of the company was Ulysses Dove's 1987 "Episodes," also restaged by Chaya. This erotically charged work explored the many intricacies of intimate relationships, punctuated by violent gestures. Dramatic sidelights delineated the stage, creating diagonal paths for the dancers. The stark lighting added to the elements of sorrow, longing and anger.

The company's signature work, "Revelations," ended the program, as it ended every program of its Kansas City stay. The deeply rooted drama of the piece, initially created during the heyday of the civil rights movement, still resonates.

The three-part work used a suite of African American spirituals, following a religious awakening from sin to absolution to celebration. The first part evoked man's tremendous burden of sin. The dancers, massed together in a wedge form, reached to the heavens, palms flexed and open. The duet "Fix Me, Jesus" was a mesmerizing display of extension.

The second segment depicted the tradition of baptism and the procession leading to the water. "I Wanna Be Ready" showed the yearning for a clean soul, with a gorgeously writhing solo.

But once the sin was washed away the celebration began. The male trio in "Sinner Man" leapt and spun with divinely inspired exuberance. And the gospel infused "Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham" was the climatic finale, full of the visual chatter of waving fans, spasms of the spirit and the energy of a praise chorus. Whether earth-bound or air-bound, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater displayed an emotive quality matched by their extraordinary technique.