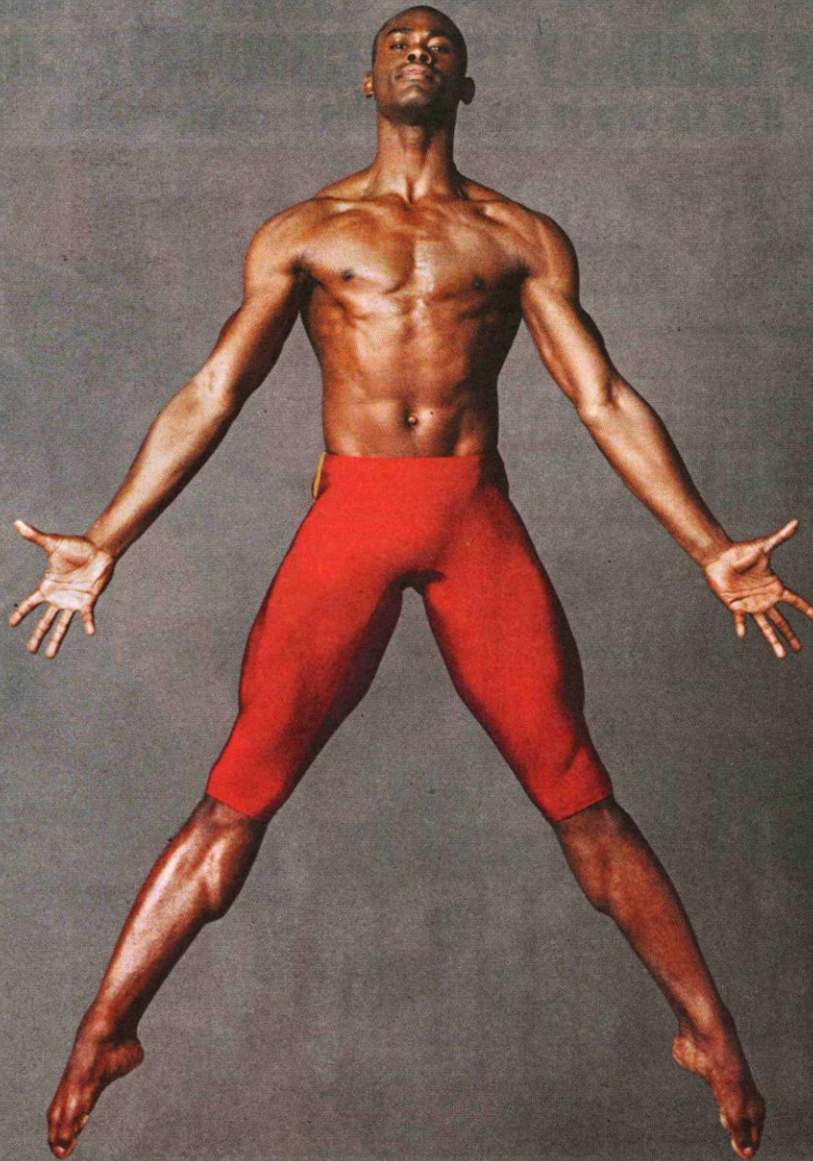


September 5, 2010

Jamar Roberts of Alvin Ailey will perform his troupe's signature piece.



we're dancing at the
White House!

ANDREW ECCLES

(Continued)

Ashley Boudier, here in Jerome Robbins' "The Four Seasons," will represent New York City Ballet.



PAUL KOLNIK

Paul Taylor Dance Company's Michael Trusnovic (l.) and Robert Kleinendorst



JAMES KEIVOM/DAILY NEWS

The New Yorkers invited to perform are ready to hoof it to Pennsylvania Ave.

BY GINA SALAMONE

Jamar Roberts has danced in 48 states, 71 countries and on six continents. But that doesn't mean he's not nervous to perform at the White House Tuesday.

"This is the most prestigious place," admits the 28-year-old Manhattanite, who belongs to the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Roberts is lucky enough to take part in the White House Dance Series, hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama herself. It's the first event celebrating dance since President Obama took office, and will feature American forms from ballet and Broadway to modern dance and hip hop.

World-renowned dance companies got the invite to entertain in the East Room, and it's no surprise that most of them are based in New York.

One of the boys from "Billy Elliot the Musical" will show off his steps, along with dancers from Alvin Ailey, the Paul Taylor Dance Company and New York City Ballet.

Roberts has the added pressure of performing an excerpt from "Revelations," the signature choreographic work of Alvin Ailey, which tells the story of African-American experiences set to blues and gospel.

When he first found out about the White House visit, he had a feeling his company would be performing their masterpiece.

"But I was hoping that I wouldn't have to perform the section 'Sinner Man' because it's a little bit more technical than some other parts of 'Revelations,'" Roberts says. "And the more technical demands, the greater the risk of screwing up. I finally saw the casting, and in fact, I am doing that. Of course I'm a little nervous. But it'll be fine. It's something that I do all the time."

Roberts is also happy that Judith Jamison, who's been artistic director at Alvin Ailey since Ailey died in 1989, will be the guest of honor at the White House. The 67-year-old New Yorker is being celebrated for her long career as a dancer and choreographer.

"I'm totally flattered," says Jamison.

Judith Jamison, artistic director of Alvin Ailey, will be honored at the White House Tuesday.



JAMES KEIVOM/DAILY NEWS

"I'm a very big fan of the President and our First Lady."

It'll be far from her first trip to the White House. She has not only met the Obamas before, but ex-Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, George Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, and was appointed to the National Council on the Arts by Richard Nixon.

"I'm excited that our First Lady and the First Family understand the importance of the arts," Jamison says. "They're big fans of Ailey. They've made the White House a place where people can go and walk around, and it feels like their home. And Alvin said dance came from the people and should be delivered back to the people."

She's most excited about the workshop for dance students taking place prior to the performances Tuesday.

"Children are going to be participating and I'm loving that," gushes Jamison. "I know Mrs. Obama loves to have young people in the White House."

Among those taking part are the boys who play Billy in "Billy Elliot the Musical." One of them, 14-year-old Dayton Tavares, will also perform before the First Lady at the main event.

"I was dancing around my living room in my apartment, just having fun



Dayton Tavares of "Billy Elliot" is tutu excited to be dancing for the First Lady.

because I couldn't believe it," he says of hearing the news. "It's just a really great opportunity."

But Tavares, who left his native Australia to play Billy on Broadway last year, swears he isn't on edge.

"I'll just try and push harder and put

on a better show because [Mrs. Obama's] there," he says.

Tavares takes the stage to perform "Electricity." "It's one of the main dances in the play where Billy describes how he feels when he dances," he explains. "So it's one of the biggest numbers in the show."

"There will be a bit of singing and a lot of dancing – some acrobatics, a couple of flips and a bit of hip hop," Tavares adds.

The First Lady is a confirmed guest, and there's even a chance the President could show up. "I'll probably get really nervous and embarrassed if I met them, but hopefully I say something," says Tavares.

Michael Trusnovic, 36, and Robert Kleinendorst, 37, are among the members of the Paul Taylor Dance Company taking part.

Trusnovic has been dancing since he was 6, and has been with the Taylor company for 13 years. "Touring the world is a major highlight," he says. "Some of [our audiences] had never seen a blond person before. Being blond, it was shocking to find that out."

Both he and Kleinendorst have been to the White House before for a luncheon.

"I might try to steal some towels," Kleinendorst jokes of his return trip. "The government sets the example as far as the nation goes," he adds. "So for them to make the arts important again is a huge boom to the arts community, especially dance."

Representing New York City Ballet will be Ashley Boudier and Daniel Ulbricht, both 26.

"They say [the President will] be there; I hope he is," says Boudier. "I worked for his campaign. I certainly hope we meet him."

The pair participated in the 2004 Kennedy Center Honors. "Tuesday's performance is in the East Room," Ulbricht says. "It'll be a smaller stage – and a bigger stage at the same time."

He has heard that at least one of the Obama daughters has taken dance classes. His advice: "Have fun, and if you want it, go after it. Their dad is a great example of that."

with Joe Dziemianowicz