

Michelle Obama Launches White House Dance Series

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By Pia Catton



First Lady Michelle Obama has launched a new program at the White House paying tribute to the art form of dancing.

Dance is an art form that needs all the friends it can get. And it seems to have found a friend in Michelle Obama.

Today, the First Lady's office announced plans for the White House Dance Series: A Tribute to Judith Jamison. The September 7 event will honor Jamison, the former dancer and outgoing artistic director (after 20 years) of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

It will also feature a program directed by Damian Woetzel, formerly of New York City ballet and currently on the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

Slated to attend are dancers from major New York companies — Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Paul Taylor Dance Company and New York City Ballet — plus Broadway's "Billy Elliot The Musical." Hailing from the D.C. area is the Washington Ballet, and representing the West Coast is the hip-hop group Super Cr3w. Prior to the East Room ceremony, members of these companies will host workshops for students from dance programs around the country.

The First Lady's Office hasn't announced what other events, if any, may be coming up next in the dance series.

Though the Jamison event may not lead to what dance companies need most — funding — it does give them something valuable: recognition.