

December 3, 2010

HEARD SCENE

Old, New At Ailey Kickoff

BY PRIYA RAO

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater featured the old and the new at its opening night Wednesday. Its signature performance, "Revelations," marked its 50th anniversary and coincided with the premiere of "The Hunt," choreographed by incoming artistic director Robert Battle.

"I felt like I was sitting in the middle of the music," said Alfre Woodard. "I had to keep breathing, so I wasn't jumping up and down."

"People loved it," added board chairwoman Joan Weill, who was honored at the post-performance gala, which raised \$2.7 million. She sported earrings from her husband to mark the event.

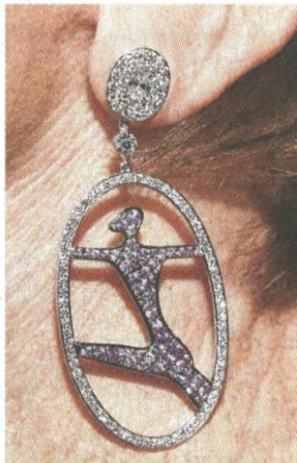
"It's a male and female on each ear if you look closely," said Sanford Weill. "It's sapphires to match her dress. I hope it carries me through Christmas."

While the earrings got a fair share of attention, the night belonged to outgoing artistic director Judith Jamison, who received exuberant accolades. "I love her so much and I'm sad," said Pauletta Washington. "But, this is a chance for her to express her self in different ways."

"Nobody is going to replace Judith," said Citigroup chairman Dick Parsons, who wasn't so thrilled with "The Hunt," an all-male work. "My wife really enjoyed it, but it's not my taste."



Above, outgoing artistic director Judith Jamison with her successor, Robert Battle on opening night. Below, Joan Weill wore earrings to honor the event.



Amy Sussman for The Wall Street Journal (2)

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ONLINE TODAY: See photos from the troupe's rehearsal of 'The Hunt' at WSJ.com/Metropolis.