



Posted : Thu, 04 Feb 2010 15:02:23 GMT

Author : Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Costume from Alvin Ailey Joins the Museum's Permanent Collection

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- In a special ceremony tonight at The Kennedy Center, Judith Jamison, artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, will donate her costume from the 1975 ballet, *The Mooche*, to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. The dazzling red dress, designed by Randy Barcelo, was worn by Jamison during the ballet created as part of Alvin Ailey's legendary collaboration with Duke Ellington. The costume will be on view at The Kennedy Center Opera House during the AAADT's performances in Washington, D.C., Feb. 2-7, which marks Jamison's 20th anniversary as artistic director.

"The addition of this dress allows us to pay tribute to the artistry and contribution to American culture by Alvin Ailey and Judith Jamison," said Brent D. Glass, director of the museum. "This donation allows us to tell a more complete story about dance in America and complements existing collections of distinguished dance pioneers as well as Ellington."

Other costumes in the museum's collection include Suzanne Farrell's costume from the ballet *Don Quixote*, the body scarf from pioneering modern dancer Ruth St. Denis, Chita Rivera's *Kiss of the Spider Woman* costume and two costumes worn by Ginger Rogers in the films *Top Hat* and *Follow the Fleet*. The collection also includes the childhood tap shoes of Maurice Hines, dancing shoes from Ann Miller and toe shoes from ballerina Violette Verdy. Longtime American Ballet Theater costume designer May Ishimoto is also represented in the collection with a costume made for ballerina Marianna Tcherkassky.

Recognized as one of the most prominent figures in modern dance, Jamison made her New York debut with the American Ballet Theatre at the age of 21. Her career continued to blossom when she joined AAADT in 1965, where she remained for 15 years. In recognition of Jamison's talent, Ailey often created roles specifically for her, most notably the tour de force solo, *Cry* and *Pas de Duke*, a duet to the music of Ellington. Before Ailey's untimely death in 1989, he invited Jamison to lead AAADT, making her one of a few women in the world to direct a major dance company.

For more than 50 years, AAADT has been celebrating the human spirit through expressions of African American culture and American modern dance. The theater includes 30 dancers from around the world who perform for more than 400,000 people across the globe every year. Collectively, AAADT has performed more than 215 works, creating one of the world's largest modern dance repertoires. For more information, visit www.alvinailey.org.

The National Museum of American History collects, preserves and displays American heritage in the areas of social, political, cultural, scientific and military history. To mark the 50th anniversary of the Greensboro lunch counter sit-in, the museum explores stories of freedom and justice, both in Washington and online. To learn more about the museum, check <http://americanhistory.si.edu>. For Smithsonian information, the public may call (202) 633-1000, (202) 633-5285 (TTY).

SOURCE Smithsonian's National Museum of American History