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## Ailey Fledglings Show How Far They Can Fly

Is it quibbling to say that the Ailey II dancers look way too professional to be members of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's

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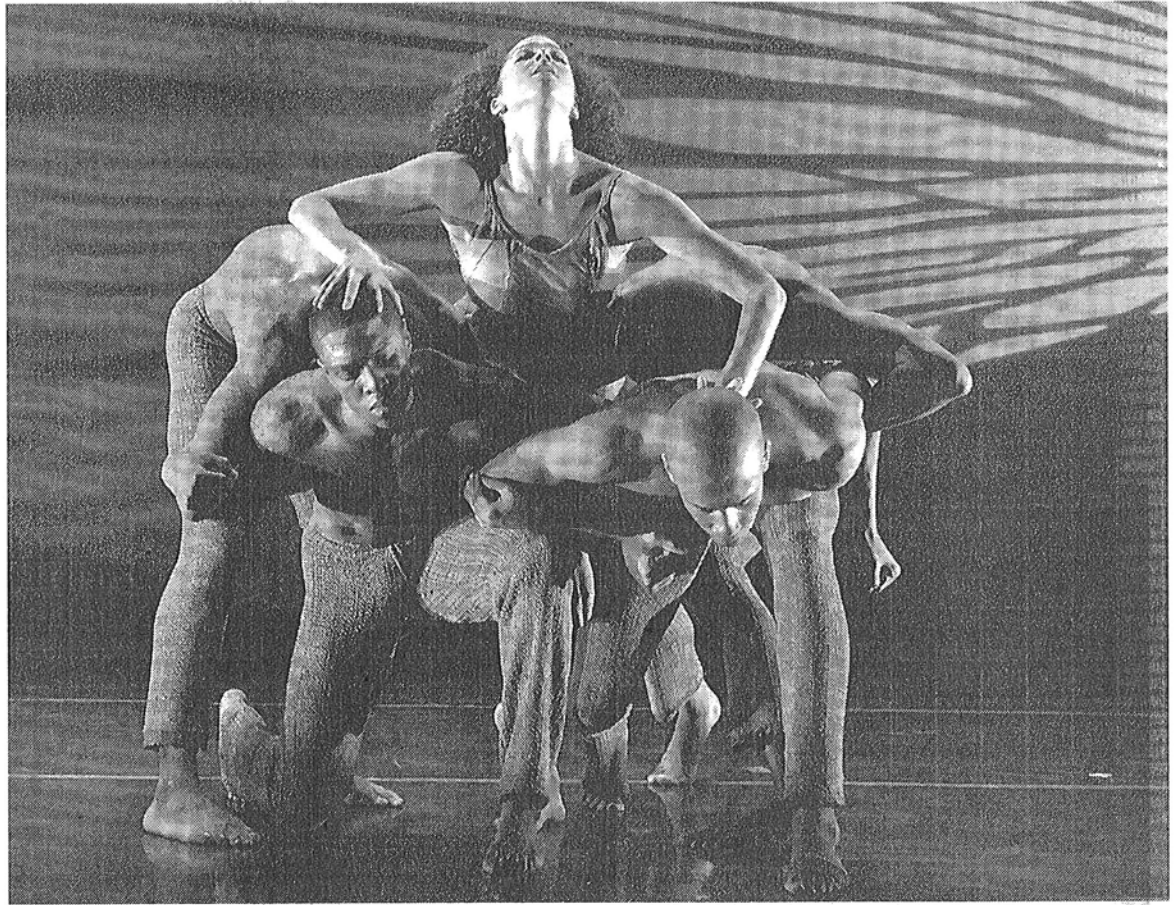
**DANCE REVIEW**

junior troupe? Or to be participating in an event, the Joyce Theater's "1 2 3 Festival," that showcases dancers at the start of their careers? Or that the emotional and physical intensity of the four works they performed on Wednesday night was almost too much? (Quite a few fans in New York City must have been hoarse the next day, to judge by the hoots and hollers that greeted each piece.)

It is possible to miss earlier Ailey II dancers' raw hunger to perform and still have a good time at the Joyce festival, which also features Taylor II and ABT II. And if the choreography's cumulative effect was exhausting, one of the great pleasures of the evening was to see how Troy Powell, who danced with both Ailey companies and is now the associate artistic director of Ailey II, has blossomed as a choreographer. There are about four separate dances in his "Eternal Knot," to music by Philip Glass and Robert Schumann, but they are all good and interconnected.

Mr. Powell has a sure eye for the theatrical effect of ranks of dancers who disperse and reform continuously. There are passages of lush, inventive partnering in duets with fleeting emotional accents. Mr. Powell adroitly weaves in repeated early mo-

*Ailey II performs on Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue, at 19th Street, Chelsea; (212) 242-0800 or joyce.org.*



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Dominique O. Rosales and other members of the Ailey II dancers in Stephane Boko's "Fragile."

tifs. Anchoring it all is the soloist Yannick Lebrun, a dancer of immense power and fluidity whose expressive arms seemed at times to be reaching into viscous air.

Stephane Boko opens his "Fragile," to music by X Alfonso and Nina Simone's heartbreaking rendition of "He Needs Me," with an image that embodies all that follows. A shadowy line of four men and a woman who writhes at the center, her explosion of hair also seeming to writhe, suffer some terrible, unspecified pain. The mood eventually lifts with the late arrival of a

### Ailey II Joyce Theater

second woman, who might be either a tough interloper or a simple free spirit.

The heart of "Fragile" is a mysterious duet danced to the Simone song in which the man moves, unacknowledged, behind his woman's resolutely turned back. If it is never entirely clear what is going on, Mr. Boko seems to know, and that is enough.

Chang Yong Sung's "Re-

quiem," to music by Clint Mansell, is a dance for two inexplicably angry men (Ephraim M. Sykes and Josh Johnson). The program closes with Christopher L. Huggins's "When Dawn Comes . . .," a group piece with music by Jeff Story and the group Rachel's. By then, a certain emotional fatigue has set in, and too many men have undulated handsomely.

The Ailey men look capable of a greater emotional range. The entire company, directed by Sylvia Waters, looks terrific. Clearly, the future is theirs.