

A Dance Classic: Alvin Ailey's troupe returns to Chicago with Gary native

By: Eloise Marie Valadez

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Renaldo Maurice is thrilled to be returning to Chicago with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

"My spirit is really happy and full of joy," said Maurice, who will be seeing family members and friends during his visit.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will perform through March 8 at The Auditorium Theatre.



Maurice, a Gary native, has been dancing with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for more than eight seasons. He said he took last year off to do a variety of other projects.

"I did some other things such as acting, teaching and choreographing. It was good," Maurice said. "But now I'm back. I'm blessed and all is well with me." Maurice added the time off was rewarding and refreshing.

"I've come back with a fresh mindset and a whole new perspective," he said.

The dancer, 28, who formerly studied dance at South Shore Dance Alliance in Gary, began his work with the esteemed Ailey company as a member of the junior troupe Ailey II.



"I'm in a very good place as a mature artist now. I can help the younger members," he said, adding he can offer advice on the dance art and working with the company.

In addition to the company performances, Maurice often teaches master classes during the troupe's engagements in various cities. He's often taught master classes at South Shore Dance Alliance and said he'll be visiting the alliance and former teacher Larry Brewer at some point during this engagement.

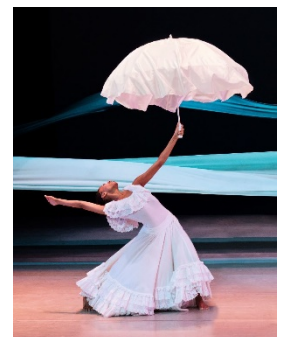
During Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's performances, the troupe will be presenting various company classics as well as Chicago premieres and Midwest premieres.

On the roster will be the Midwest Premiere of Donald Byrd's "Greenwood," Darrell Grand Moultrie's "Ounce of Faith" and Jamar Roberts' "Ode." There will also be Chicago premieres of Ronald K. Brown's "The Call" and Aszure Barton's "Busk." Works by Lar Lubovitch, Judith Jamison and Robert Battle will also be featured.

"Ode' is a really beautiful work," Maurice said, adding it's an ode to "victims of gun violence."

Maurice mentioned the piece by Judith Jamison called "Divining" is also a special work. The dancer said he admires Jamison and how the acclaimed dancer and former artistic director still works so closely with the Ailey troupe.

Every Ailey dance production ends with "Revelations," which is the iconic work choreographer Ailey debuted in 1960. For Maurice, it's always a joy to perform in the acclaimed work.



Maurice said he gets back to the Region about three to four times a year whether or not he's performing here.