



Celebration of choreographer Ronald K. Brown at center of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's "Dancing Spirit" run in Brooklyn

By: Dave Carlin

June 6, 2023



This segment aired on 6/6/23: <https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/newyork/news/celebration-of-choreographer-ronald-k-brown-at-center-of-alvin-ailey-american-dance-theaters-dancing-spirit-run-in-brooklyn/> (3:19 minutes)

NEW YORK -- Starting Tuesday night, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater begins a summer season that will be filled with pride and rejuvenation. One of the company's most beloved choreographers is back from a serious medical setback. "Dancing Spirit" is the title of a famed work, a choreographer tribute to Ailey living legend Judith Jamison.

The updated staging comes a few weeks after Jamison turned 80, and it helps opens the season of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at Brooklyn Academy of Music. It is a heartfelt return for "Dancing Spirit" choreographer Ronald K. Brown, who was born and raised in Bedford-Stuyvesant. "It's great to have the company here in Brooklyn. It feels like home for me," Brown said. In April 2021, a blood clot in Brown's brain left him unable to move much of his left side. He had to rely on his determination that first landed him on a professional stage as a teenager and then propelled him to create his own dance company, Evidence.

Now at age 56, determination and hard work has helped him bounce back. "Gaining more and more mobility every day. Dance feeds my recovery," Brown said. "A stroke doesn't care about your age, right? I was a healthy guy."

He is not doing it alone. Arcell Cabuag is Brown's longtime partner in both life and art. They met at the Ailey School and now they work and live together. "The challenges that we've had the last couple of years, we just take it day by day. And I told Ron when we were in the hospital after he had the procedure, after he got a stroke, I was like, 'You told me how to dance. I'm going to teach you how to walk,'" Cabuag said.

"To have Ron, to have Arcell, their bond goes beyond the steps, as we like to say," artistic director Robert Battle said.

CBS2 sat down with Battle, who said being around the couple is joy and described the work as spectacular.

"When you get a chance to witness this company, something of beauty that feeds the soul, I suggest you set aside some time to do just that," Battle said.

You can catch Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House through June 11. Ailey is back at BAM for the first time since 2010. Two programs are being offered -- a Brooklyn-themed one and a second all-Ailey one, which includes the Ailey masterpiece "Revelations."

This segment is also available [YouTube](#) and [Yahoo](#).