

# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

## *Memoria* (1979)

IN MEMORY – IN CELEBRATION

Choreography: Alvin Ailey  
Music: Keith Jarrett  
Costumes: A. Christina Giannini  
Lighting: Chenault Spence

In the tumultuous time of 1979 when Mr. Ailey's great, perennial friend from his Lester Horton days, the choreographer Joyce Trisler, died prematurely, he began choreographing *Memoria*. Later, he wrote, "*Memoria* is about Joyce's life, my memories of her, my image of her. Although these are very abstract images, nobody has ever asked me what *Memoria* is about. People everywhere understand it. Making the dance was a very deep and wrenching experience for me."

The ballet is structured in two parts—"In Memory" and "In Celebration"—to the sublime music of Keith Jarrett. *Memoria* marked the first time Mr. Ailey combined Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater with Ailey II and advanced students from The Ailey School.

"...a serious stage drama, with mystery and poetry."  
*The New York Times*, Alastair Macaulay – Dec. 11, 2014



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Alvin Ailey's *Memoria*. Photo by Steve Wilson

Keith Jarrett, pianist, composer and bandleader, is one of the most prolific, innovative, and iconoclastic musicians to emerge from the late 20th century. Jarrett was born May 8, 1945 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. At the age of three he began playing piano. He undertook the study of classical music at age eight, and at 15 he studied formal composition before moving to Boston to study briefly at the Berklee College of Music. As a pianist (though that is by no means the only instrument he plays), he literally changed the conversation in jazz by introducing an entirely new aesthetic regarding solo improvisation in concert. Capable of playing in a wide variety of styles and recorded over 80 albums as a leader in jazz and classical music. He has won the Down Beat Critics Poll, as a pianist, multiple times including consecutively between 2001 and 2008.



Musician Keith Jarrett. Photo by Rose Anne Colavito