



## Tesfagiorgis, Alvin Ailey Dancer, Living Her Dream

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By Asta Tall

Fana Tesfagiorgis started dancing at the age of four and now she graces the stage as an Alvin Ailey dancer. Fana was raised by her Eritrean father and American mother from Mississippi, in Madison, Wisconsin.

She started her dance career at Ballet Madison and Interlochen Arts Academy High School. Interlochen Arts Academy is an art boarding school located in northern Michigan that focuses on fostering young artists to have successful careers.

She went on to study at the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A program where she also minored in journalism. She's danced professionally with Ailey II, Brian Harlan Brook's Continuum, Alenka Cizmesja's Art DeConstructed, Dance Iquail, Freddie Moore's Footprints and Samuel Pott's Nimbus Dance Works. This is her first year dancing with the Alvin Ailey Company. "As a young student I would hand flyers or do whatever needed to be done," she recalls, in an interview with The Black Star, expounding on her childhood dreams of performing with the Alvin Ailey dance company.



Her love for the Alvin Ailey dance company encompasses both its cultural significance as well as its choreography. Fana loves what the company stands for. "There is a history of Black Americans and Ailey," she says; a remark that harkens to the legacy of its founder Alvin Ailey. Ailey is credited with popularizing modern dance and revolutionizing African-American participation in the realm of concert dance. A legacy that impacts young dancers, like Fana Tesfagiorgis, to this day. It was not just the legacy that drew Fana to Alvin Ailey but the pieces themselves. "I love Ailey Style. It's technical but fluid," she adds, with evident enthusiasm in her tone. "To be able to learn the pieces is a dream."

Fana Tesfagiorgis is a representation that the Alvin Ailey dream and legacy of having a multi-racial dance company is still strong. While we now live in much more accepting times than Ailey did, it's nice to know that girls and boys that don't necessarily fit the stereotypical dancing "mold" can dream of gracing the stage as an Alvin Ailey dancer. Tesfagiorgis is living her dream.

*Photo by: Andrew Eccles*