

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Grace (1999)
(New Production – 2012)

Choreography: Ronald K. Brown

Assistant to the Choreographer: Arcell Cabuag

Choreographer's Assistant: Arcell Cabuag

Music: Various Artists

Costumes: Omatayo Wunmi Olaiya

Lighting Design: William H. Grant III

(Created for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1999)

Ronald K. Brown's landmark *Grace*, created for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1999, is a rapturous, spiritually-charged work set to **Duke Ellington's** classic "Come Sunday," **Roy Davis'** hit "Gabriel," and the powerful rhythms of **Fela Kuti's** Afro-Pop. Infused with Brown's signature blend of modern dance and West African idioms, the piece follows 12 dancers on a moving journey illustrating Brown's idea of individuals going through everyday life without acknowledging the 'grace' surrounding us all. In 2003 Ronald Brown's company EVIDENCE, A DANCE COMPANY added the stunning work to their repertory. Through this piece, Brown seeks to continue "lifting one's spirit and stirring one's soul."



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Ronald K. Brown's *Grace*. Photo by Paul Kolnik

Robert Battle has said "Brown's choreography uses African dance in a unique and potent way. *Grace* is a brilliant work, and an important part of the Ailey repertory. From the beautiful opening solo set to Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday," there are elements that represent both the religious and secular. The strong tension between these two opposites, and how they sometimes reflect one another, remains gripping right to the very end when the dancers exit upstage in white." Filled with a strong male section, high jumps and a contagious rhythm, the opposites Battle is referring to is not only apparent in the juxtaposition of fast and slow movement, but also in the red and white costumes the dancers wear. In the end, all of the dancers are clothed in white as they travel upstage to "heaven," finally achieving the state of "grace."

"In *Grace* Mr. Brown hints at a journey to a promised land, a path filled with broken trajectories as the dancers advance or retreat in stunningly packed sequences. The dancing is sensational, full of nonstop arm-flinging leaps."

The New York Times

"... this was dancing that made you sweat with excitement just watching it."

St. Paul Pioneer Press

"... amazingly explosive image of a spiritual journey."

The New York Times

"... his work is a masterful, intensely original mix of hip-hop, African and modern dance styles."

Chicago Sun Times



Ronald K. Brown

Brooklyn-born Ronald K. Brown has created and presented dances since 1985, with his NY-based company Evidence, at venues in the U.S., France, Brazil, England, and Cote d'Ivoire. Brown's choreography has been performed by Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Philadanco, Ailey II, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, among others. Brown has worked with and learned from Jennifer Muller/The Works, Mary Anthony Dance Theater/Phoenix, Bessie Schonberg, Ann Carlson and Judith Jamison. He is the recipient of numerous awards including a New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie), National Endowment for the Arts Choreographers Fellowship, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship,

a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, the American Dance Festival Humphrey/Weidman/Limon Award, Black Theater Alliance Award, and fellowships from the Edward and Sally van Lier fund.

In addition, Brown was named Def Dance Jam Workshop Mentor of the Year in 2000. In 2003, he received an AUDELCO (Black Theatre Award) for his choreography Crowns: Portraits of Black Women in Church Hats, originally produced by the McCarter Theater and presented off-Broadway in 2003. In fall 2006, Brown received The United State Artists Rose Fellowship. He was one of only four choreographers of 50 artists to receive the inaugural award. Most recently in 2012, Brown received a Fred and Adele Astaire Award for his outstanding choreography in "The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess".

Grace

Music Credit Information - listed in order as you hear them

Song: **Come Sunday**

Composer: Duke Ellington

Performed by: Jimmy McPhail

Song: **Gabriel**

Composer: Roy Davis, Jr. featuring Peven Everett

Song: **Bless-It**

Composer: Paul Johnson

Song: **The Rock Shock**

Composer: Roy Davis, Jr.

Song: **Shakara**

Composer: Fela Anikulapo Kuti

Song: **Come Sunday**

Composer: Duke Ellington

Performed by: Jennifer Holiday