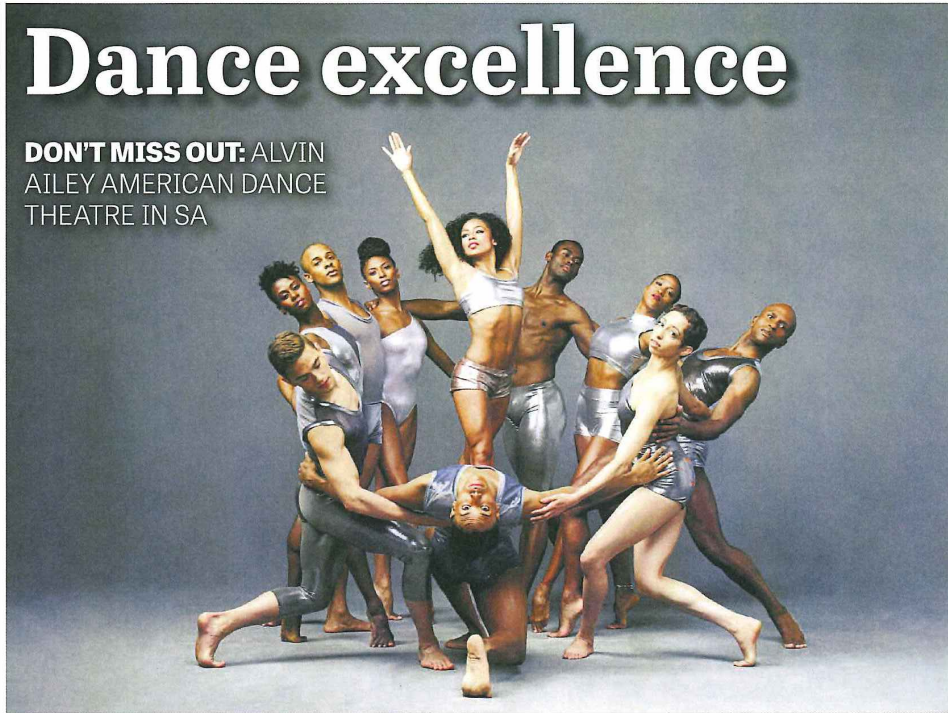


Dance excellence

DON'T MISS OUT: ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE IN SA



AGILITY. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Picture: Andrew Eccles

» An absolute must-see.

Leon van Nierop

As you enter the theatre, you can already feel the electricity in the air. In the audience are many students and participants in dance groups, professional dancers, dance teachers and dance aficionados eagerly awaiting a performance by one of the world's leading and most revered dance companies: The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

Here you witness perfection, excellence in movement, discipline, rhythm, coordination and agility.

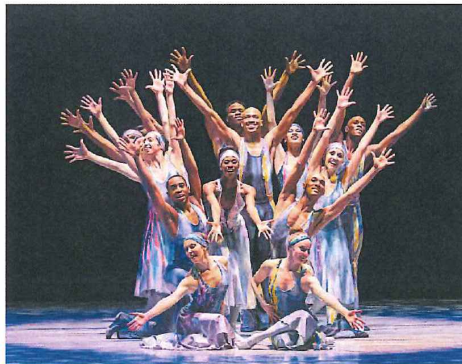
From the moment the artistic director Robert Battle addresses the audience, the scene is set for four musical dance pieces that will take your breath away.

Battle is the third person to head the respected company, established in 1958, after being selected by Judith Jamison in 2011 – a rare feat indeed. And the audience was ready to observe some new stimulating pieces, as well as revisit some older favourites.

Alvin Ailey and his group make a welcome return to the South African stage almost two decades after 1997 when the cultural boycott was lifted.

According to the press notes these performances will be complemented by extensive educational activities in schools, communities and townships.

The company gives a flawless and, at times, genial performance,



DANCE COMPANY. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in Alvin Ailey's *Night Creature*. Pictures: Paul Kolnik

info

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre

★★★★★

- **Cast:** Yannick Lebrun, Collin Heyward, Ghrai DeVore
- **Director:** Robert Battle
- **Venue:** Teatro, Montecasino, until September 13

starting with the overpowering and stimulating *Grace*, choreographed by Ronald K. Brown with dancers moving in complete unison, while also exploring and displaying a unique individual character in movement and tone.

One of the highlights was the second piece, seemingly an audience favourite, *Takademe*, with the enchanting, infectious

rhythms of Sheila Chandra's score. But of course, the highlight is the sleek, swift and agile movements and interpretation by Yannick Lebrun. His almost impossibly flexible, double-jointed movements, pace and rhythm leaves one breathless.

The carefully coordinated dance routines reached a highlight with *Revelations* with spectacular costumes and lithe, rhythmic, infectious movements, as well as an inspiring score which had the audience on their feet.

This piece dates from sixties and is described as Alvin Ailey's signature masterpiece reflecting his heritage in which he uses African-American religious spiritual music that explores grief, but also joy and exuberance.

Gautengers seldom have the privilege to experience such an exceptional dance programme



GRACE. Demetia Hopkins-Greene in Ronald K Brown's *Grace*.

1960

'Revelations' dates from this year and is described as Alvin Ailey's signature masterpiece reflecting his heritage in which he uses African-American religious spiritual music that explores grief, joy and exuberance

by a group of people that have received worldwide acclaim.

It is highly recommended as one of the most inspiring, stimulating and rousing tributes to the genius of choreographers, dancers and composers ever seen in this country. It is an absolute must-see.