

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
APRIL 16, 2007

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PREMIERE DANCE ENSEMBLE AILEY® II AT REICHHOLD CENTER

Ailey II is an exceptional dance company that merges the spirit and energy of the country's best young talent with the zeal and creative vision of today's most outstanding emerging choreographers. Ailey II performs at Reichhold Center for the Arts on Saturday, May 12, 2007 at 8 p.m.

Started in 1974 by dance pioneer Alvin Ailey, Ailey II excels under the leadership of Artistic Director Sylvia Waters and Associate Artistic Director Troy Powell.

Waters and Powell take their 16-member company to communities across the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. Ailey II completes a 45-city tour each year, as well as a New York City season at Joyce Theatre.

"Ailey II can be counted on to deliver high-energy dancing made even more electric by the push of youthful ambition," said *The New York Times*.

One of the high-energy dances is choreographer Robert Battle's "The Hunt," a six-man ensemble that is part athletic, part ritual and wholly exhilarating. In one dance phrase, three men squat while covering their mouths with the right hand, showing surprise as the other three dancers fly in the air behind them, legs stretched in an east-west position, hands high above the head.

Noted choreographer Scott Rink's contributes "Bitter Suite." Set to James Bond music played by jazz group Sex Mob, "Bitter Suite" features the plight of four couples, the men dressed in tuxedos and the women in their best little black dresses. Through the simplest of movements; a flick of the hand or a downward casting eye, the couples express their feelings while on the verge of breaking up.

The intimacies between a man and woman also come to life in Jessica Lang's "Splendid Isolation II," specifically adapted for Ailey II. At center is the couple, the woman surrounded by the man's embrace, as the other dancers perform on the perimeter.

Ailey II's dance collection also includes: "Blues Suite," Ailey's ode to the bawdy bar scenes remembered from his childhood. The majestic beauty of Ailey's "Revelations," guided by spiritual music, celebrates the African-American experience.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre Director Judith Jamison and Powell are among a list of respected choreographers to have done specially commissioned works for Ailey II.

The Ailey II experience is a rite of passage through Alvin Ailey's network. Ailey II began as the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, when Ailey initiated a workshop composed of the most promising scholarship students from The Ailey School. The original members of the Company were handpicked by Ailey from among that group.

From Ailey II, members move on to various stages. More than 50 members of Ailey II have joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Other Ailey II alumni joined dance companies, including Philadanco and Parsons Dance Company. The cast of "The Color Purple" on Broadway has three Ailey II alumni.

Ailey II's visit to Reichhold Center is sponsored by First Bank, First Insurance, Marriott Frenchman's Reef Resort, Tropical Shipping, Theodore Tunick Insurance Company and the Virgin Islands Council for the Arts.

Tickets are available at Modern Music, Parrot Fish, UVI Bookstore, V.I. Bridal & Tuxedo, Urban Threadz, and the Reichhold Center Box Office at 693-1559.