

## Goings on About Town

By: Brian Seibert

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## CONTEMPORARY DANCE



Masazumi Chaya, a beloved animating spirit of **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre** since 1972, first decided to retire in 1986. But Ailey asked him to stay on as an assistant to the rehearsal director, and so Chaya stayed, and stayed—through Ailey’s death, two changeovers of artistic director, and several generations of dancers. Now, as Chaya finally follows through on his retirement plan, the company honors its associate artistic director with a tribute evening on Dec. 22, part of its five-week season at City Center. Previous celebrations of Chaya—this troupe isn’t stingy in honoring its own—have been especially happy occasions, and this should be the same, with stars of yesteryear returning to the stage. But the entire season, which also features premières by Donald Byrd (“Greenwood”) and Jamar Roberts (“Ode”), is rightly considered a tribute to the genial influence of Chaya. A good part of the company’s longevity is connected to his.—*Brian Seibert*