Alvin Ailey’s Philly show is a homecoming for Jeroboam Bozeman

The former Philadelphia dancer was a regular on local stages for three years.

By Ellen Dunkel
Staff Writer

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater based in New York, but when the company performs in Philadelphia, it does so three years, it’s something of a homecoming.

There are always a number of dancers with Philadelphia on their resumes.

When Ailey performs at the Academy of Music, his week, one of those dancers visiting his old stomping grounds in Jeroboam Bozeman form and raised in Brooklyn. He will be performing the role of Jesus and a sinner man in Revelations, by far the company’s most popular work, which Ailey created in 1960.

It doesn’t get boring, Bozeman said, even though it’s on nearly every program.

“I feel like a dancer, because there’s so many different things happening,” Bozeman said. “It’s one of the things that I always look forward to, and then another time and it’s not the same.”

He will also be Alyson Mandé in the revival of Revelations, a piece choreographed in 1980 about Jesus and the sinner man, and which hasn’t been performed in many years.

Bozeman joined the Broadway tour of Alvin Ailey’s Ailey in China for a year right out of high school. When he returned to the States, he moved to Philadelphia at 18.

He was a regular Philadelphia dancer for three years.

“It was an incredible experience. I learned so much with Joann Myers Brown,” Bozeman said. “She has a passion that is unmatched. I know when I came, I was a bit of a rookie. But I felt as though I had an opportunity to really grow as an artist and as a man there.”

Still, Bozeman has his eye on Ailey since his first dance classes in his Brooklyn junior high.

“My passion is dance. I may sound redundantly, but there were Alvin Ailey posters on the door always,” he said.

But even before that, when he was in elementary school, his second principal took him and another eager student to see the company

At the end of the performance, he said the first time he saw Alvin Ailey dance.

“I think it’s just amazing,” Bozeman said. “I will say this loudly — connected to a spiritual realm.”

And believe that, having that confidence, it just opened so many doors, and it was almost like destiny in a way.

After Philadelphia, he moved to Seattle and danced with Donald Byrd, and then with Spectrum Dance Theater.

When he moved back to New York, he acquired a position with Ailey, which some may see as a dream come true for a dancer with his experience.

Bozeman didn’t see it that way.

“I auditioned twice before actually getting into the company,” he said, adding that he’d never been part of the Ailey organization or participated in its certificate program or summer workshops.

I was kind of an outsider to the Ailey organization. So far, I’ve been, it was an introduction for the Ailey organization to see me as an artist. In my mind, it was always the bigger picture.

Bozeman has been dancing with Ailey for 10 years. It’s an unmixed company, but dancers who have been with the organization so long

one has “tend to get roles that have a lot more responsibility.”

He also works as a model and has appeared in a variety of film, music videos, and in fashion shows with the Peerless Label. He was widely seen as the “Brady Knapp Celly of the Week” in a Bud Light commercial that aired during the 2018 Super Bowl.

It all goes back to Philadelphia, Bozeman said.

“I think Myers Brown has this model. If you dance in Hawaii, you could dance anywhere. And it’s true. I truly believe that.

because of it’s a smaller company, it’s working. It’s moving. There’s so many different components. And it’s quite you.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater presents Revelations at the Academy of Music for three days. He will perform the role of Jesus and a sinner man.

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