

INSIGHTS & entertainment

Donald Byrd/The Group To Perform At Duke University

Modern dance will grace the stage of the Reynolds Industries Theater when Donald Byrd/The Group performs at Duke University on Jan. 29.

The 8 p.m. performance, which will be held in the Bryan Center on West Campus, is sponsored by the Duke University Institute of the Arts' New Direction in Performance series, in cooperation with the National Performance Network, the Julia Wray Memorial Fund and the North Carolina Arts Council.

Donald Byrd/The Group consists of 11 dancers and was formed in 1978 by artistic director and choreographer Donald Byrd. A native of North Carolina, Byrd studied at Tufts and Yale universities, the Cambridge School of Ballet, the London School of Contemporary Dance and The Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. He has created more than 40 works and has done choreography for such groups as the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Dallas Black Dance Theatre and the Cleo Parker Robinson Ensemble. In addition, he has served on the faculty of the California Institute for the Arts and has taught at Wesleyan University, the School of Visual Arts, the Harvard Dance Center, California State University and Ohio University. Currently, he is an associate artist at the Yale School of Drama.

Byrd's works combine a synthesis of dance styles — modern dance, classical ballet and contemporary "street dancing" — that reflect the African American experience. The themes of many of his pieces place emphasis on social concerns, such as issues of isolation, community, culture and gender. For example, his piece "Bristle," which the company will perform, examines the nature of contemporary society and its effect on intimacy and loneliness.

In addition to the performance at Duke, Donald Byrd/The Group will spend a one-week residency in Durham, Jan. 24-29. They will give lectures, demonstrations and conduct classes at North Carolina Central University and other institutions in the community as well as on Duke's campus.

On Jan. 27 at 10 a. m., Donald Byrd/The Group will give a special performance and lead a discussion at Rogers-Herr Middle School. Lee Vrana, director of education for the Durham Arts Council, who coordinated the performance, said students and teachers alike should find the performance inspiring.

"It's important to expose children to the fine arts; the passionate nature of the arts and the self-expression involved with the arts," Vrana said. "Children are often inspired by what they see and performances like this one have a lot of value because they open doors and give children a vision of what they can do and become."

Tickets for Donald Byrd/The Group are \$12 for general admission and \$6 for students and are available by calling Page Box Office at (919) 684-4444.

For more information about the performance or the group's residency schedule, call the Institute of the Arts at (919) 684-6654.



Donald Byrd/The Group will perform "Bristle," at Duke University's Reynolds Industries Theater at 8 p.m. on Saturday, January 29. The event is being sponsored by the Duke University Institute of the Arts. Tickets are \$12 for the general public and \$6 for students.