

Alvin Ailey ensemble to perform tonight

By LUCY HOOD
Staff Writer

In 1957 the Bolshoi Ballet toured the United States for the first time; the Soviets launched the first Soviet satellite, Sputnik I; *West Side Story* and *The Music Man* were hits on Broadway; the National Guard was sent to Little Rock, Ark., to escort nine black students to a newly desegregated school; Don Bowden became the first American to run the mile in less than four minutes; and Alvin Ailey formed his own dance company.

At the time, Ailey and his modern dance company were not making the headlines as were other events of the time, but the dancers are making headlines today.

The headlines began in 1972 when Alvin Ailey joined the Joffrey Ballet and the New York City Ballet as a resident company of the New York City Center. And the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, performing tonight at 8 in Memorial Hall, was established in 1974.

Alvin Ailey dancers are best known for their energy and their reliance on unison dancing. Two reviews published in the *Village Voice*, one in 1970 and the other in 1972, noted the spirit and life in each performance given by the Alvin Ailey Dancers.

The review from 1972 noted, "I don't know where the dancers in Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theater get their energy... They run with the movement — fierce, but with the ease that comes from sureness of

one's power. They rarely just execute choreography; they deliver it to the audience gift-wrapped."

However, unison, the other characteristic usually attributed to the Alvin Ailey style of modern dance, has not always received such positive criticism. A 1981 review by Joan Ross Acoella of *Dance Magazine* said in reference to a recent Alvin Ailey performance, "Everything is relentlessly, uniformly big."

Tonight, the repertory ensemble is scheduled to perform four pieces beginning with "In Excelsis," which was choreographed by Penny Frank and performed to *Concerto for Violin and Oboe in D minor* by Johann Sebastian Bach. The second piece was choreographed by Alvin Ailey, but no traces of unison will be found in "Cry." The stage will be left to one dancer, Diane Maroney, and the music of Alice Coltrane, Laura Nyro and The Voice of East Harlem.

Following "Cry" will be "The Road of the Phoebe Snow," performed to music by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. Interspersed between the "Prologue" and the "Epilogue," both performed by the company, are solos, duets, trios and quartets. And 10 of the company's 14 members will end the program with a piece titled "Colony" which is choreographed by Bill Gornell and set to the music of Vangelis and Ashra.

An open rehearsal will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. today in Memorial Hall. Tickets are being sold for \$5.50 and \$7.50 at the Union box office. Call 962-1449 for more information.



Alvin Ailey dancers reach for sky...ensemble has shot up since 1974

Fine Arts Festival opens with award-winning poet

By DAVID SCHMIDT
Assistant Arts Editor

American poet Robert Bly, editor of the poetically and politically influential journals *The Fifties*, *The Sixties* and *The Seventies*, launches the second Fine Arts Festival of the '80s with a reading of his poetry at 8 p.m. today in Gerrard Hall. Admission to this preliminary FAF event is free, and a reception will follow.

"It's the opportunity this year for students interested in literature to hear a poet read and talk with him afterward," FAF chairperson Rachael Horowitz said.

"He's very much a favorite of people in this area," she said. "In my mind, he's one of the greatest living poets in the country. Not only is he a poet, but also a translator."

As head of the Sixties Press, Bly influenced modern writing by printing unconventional poetry translated from lesser-known foreign poets. Bly's own volumes of poetry include *Silence in the Snowy Fields* (1962), *Sleepers Joining Hands* (1973) and *The Light Around the Body*, which received the National Book Award for poetry in 1968. His most recent work, *The Man in the Black Coat*, will be published in March.

Although Horowitz said Bly is "a very effective reader," she also emphasized his talents as a performer whom even non-English majors should enjoy. "It's the perfect supplement to the classroom experience."

To fund Bly's visit, Horowitz explained that the FAF pooled its money with the University's English department, which covered one-third of the costs.

"A lot of the fine arts departments cannot afford any longer to bring in outside guests," she said. "If there wasn't a festival, there wouldn't be a professional writer visiting the campus this year."

In addition to Bly, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and poet Annie Dillard will appear for a second preliminary FAF event when she visits Chapel Hill for two weeks next month. Following a reading of her poetry on March 16, Horowitz said Dillard will conduct one or two afternoon seminars. Students interested in her work will have an opportunity to meet her as well, Horowitz said.

Visual arts, however, are the focus of this Fine Arts Festival, a biennial event organized by students in the art, dramatic art, English, music and RTVMP departments. Therefore, the first part of the April 5-17 festival will be devoted to poets in an effort to separate the writers from the performing and visual aspects of the festival, Horowitz said.

"We want to make these 12 days a chance to open your eyes and to take the opportunity to put to use the education you are getting," she said.

The public lectures, performances, exhibitions, readings, workshops and discussions will be free to the public. For more information call the FAF office at 962-4204.

Group plans vigil protesting rms race

The Chapel Hill-Durham branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom will hold its monthly vigil against the arms race today from noon to 1 p.m. in front of the Franklin Street Post Office. This will be the last vigil for signatures col-

lected for the STOP THE ARMS RACE campaign. Petitions will be delivered to the NATO headquarters in Brussels March 8.

For more information concerning the vigil, contact Charlotte Adams, publicity chairman, local WILPF, at 942-3796.

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