

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**LINE UP FOR
LINES' LATEST**

One of the best (and oldest) contemporary ballet companies in the U.S., Alonzo King LINES Ballet is famous for its spectacularly supple and strong dancers—not to mention the visually stunning work by founder and director Alonzo King. This month, the company will present a brand-new King ballet as well as 2013 fan favorite *Concerto for Two Violins* during its home season in San Francisco, CA. Get tickets at linesballet.org.

**APR
3-12**

**LINES'
Michael
Montgomery
and
Courtney
Henry**



**THE HOT-
TAMALE
TRAIN'S
NEW
STATION**

Mary Murphy fans, rejoice! Just because



**Mary Murphy and
Tony Meredith**

the ballroom queen won't be on "So You Think You Can Dance" Season 12 doesn't mean she's left TV entirely. PBS has announced Murphy will host "America's Ballroom Challenge," alongside fellow ballroom vet Tony Meredith. During the three-part series, ballroom couples—from the American Smooth, American Rhythm, International Standard and International Latin styles—will compete for the title of "America's Best." For more info, visit pbs.org.

**APR
24**



**Misty Copeland and
Brooklyn Mack in
Swan Lake**



UP FRONT
buzz By Jenny Datzell

**A New
Swan
on the National Stage**
**Misty Copeland performs in The
Washington Ballet's Swan Lake
at The Kennedy Center**

Misty Copeland, the first African American soloist at American Ballet Theatre in more than 20 years, has yet to appear as Odette/Odile on U.S. soil. That changes this month: On April 9 and 12, Copeland will take center stage in The Washington Ballet's first-ever full-length production of *Swan Lake*. Her Prince Siegfried will be TWB's Brooklyn Mack—a rare partnership of two artists of color, performing classical roles historically portrayed by white dancers. *Dance Spirit* caught up with Copeland, Mack and TWB's director, Septime Webre, to talk about the performances.



"*Swan Lake* is regularly presented by some of the best companies in the world—I wanted to make our performance special. One of the last bastions of segregation in America is in ballet casting. I'm aware of the historical significance of Misty in the role, especially dancing with Brooklyn. My goal is to present artists who bring a new dimension to the ballet, and I hope that doing so will make audiences rethink what a ballerina and a prince should look like." —Septime Webre



"I'm excited to give today's youth a new image of who can be cast as the Swan Queen. I prefer dancing Odile—she's not someone I naturally saw myself as. But that's the beauty of acting in ballet. You get to become characters that aren't innately part of you. I'm constantly switching partners at ABT, so dancing with Brooklyn isn't too much of a departure from my norm. His power is effortless, and though he performs with a ton of masculinity, he's also a really caring, nurturing and sensitive partner." —Misty Copeland



"I'm honored and humbled to be a part of this. It's always been part of my mission to inspire others, and I hope this performance reassures kids that they can do anything—we all can do anything, regardless of our color or our social status. Misty is a joy to work with. She's super down-to-earth and she is, of course, tremendously talented. She's technically inspiring, and we have great chemistry." —Brooklyn Mack

(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT) THEO KOSSENAS, COURTESY THE WASHINGTON BALLET; COURTESY TWB; GREGG DELMAN, COURTESY GILDA SQUIRE; COURTESY TWB; (2) JEFFREY DUNN, COURTESY MORENO/LYONS PRODUCTIONS; (3) MILNA, COURTESY ALONZO KING LINES BALLET

Misty Copeland and Brooklyn Mack

Shattering the ballet standard as leads in *Swan Lake* BY CANDICE THOMPSON

In April, The Washington Ballet will present *Swan Lake* in full for the first time in the company's 70-year history. The performance has already made headlines because American Ballet Theatre's Misty Copeland will dance Odette/Odile with The Washington Ballet's Brooklyn Mack as her Prince Siegfried, becoming the first African American duo to lead the classically white ballet at a major U.S. company. Copeland first performed the role with ABT in Australia last summer, but will make her stateside debut in two shows with The Washington Ballet, April 8–12, at the Kennedy Center.



What did you think of these roles growing up?

Misty Copeland: I never imagined myself as Odette/Odile. As I got older and performed *Little Swans*—my first role when I joined ABT's corps—the ballet came to have a special place in my heart. But still, I thought even if I became a principal, this part might not be given to me because no one like me had done it before.

So do you see this as a momentous occasion?

MC: I try to preach against limiting yourself because you don't see yourself represented, but that's what ballet culture has done to minority dancers. When I found out that this was really happening, it was a shock.

Brooklyn Mack: I feel very strongly about exposing minorities and underprivileged youth to the arts. Art is important to everybody. It is vital to humanity. I feel it is my duty to impart that.

What do you hope will happen as a result of your dancing together?

MC: The special thing about doing this in DC is that Septime Webre, Washington Ballet's artistic director, has a relationship with the Boys & Girls Clubs, which is where I took my first ballet class. He has already been out in the community doing the work. So this is not just a gimmick. It will speak directly to these communities and kids. A child might have more confidence to try ballet because they saw us in the media.

Does this mean we don't have to worry so much about race in ballet?

BM: Our partnership will hopefully begin opening the eyes of some people who have prejudices and help them break those barriers.

MC: As much as it's been talked about recently, my hope is that it is just the beginning of the conversation. This is a world that is slow to progress and change.

Have you been able to find chemistry with each other?

BM: Misty is really easy to get along with, so it is easy for us to be on the same page. I knew we had to do this ballet together.

MC: I have known Brooklyn since he was in the ABT Studio Company, and we have done gigs alongside each other, but this was our first time as partners. He is an excellent partner, which takes the pressure off and helps me save energy for variations. But most importantly, there is a mutual understanding and bond that existed before we started dancing. We share the responsibility to have a voice and represent, and that has led to an organic chemistry.

When the curtain closes on *Swan Lake*, what's next?

BM: There are a number of roles I would love to tackle: MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Manon* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, plus more Jiri Kylián and William Forsythe work.

MC: I just want to be better in the roles I have been given. I want to prove to myself that I am growing artistically and technically. I have to start preparing myself for Juliet even though I am in this new *Swan Lake* world. I have one show of *Romeo and Juliet* this summer and though it is a lot of pressure, I am going to try to just enjoy the process. ■