

Central Avenue Dance Ensemble

presents

The History of Black Dance in America

About CADE & HBDA

The History of Black Dance in America (HBDA) takes the audience on a journey through the dances of the African Diaspora within America. It is a multi-media feast of technology, dancing and songs appropriate to the time of the dance. The performance begins in Africa, makes it way to the New World and points out indigenous dances that were world-wide crazes from post slavery to the present day.

HBDA takes advantage of the theatrical and dance expertise of Chester Whitmore, one of the United States' Cultural Ambassadors, who toured his version of *The History of Black Dance In America* with his company for 15 years around the world 24 times beginning in the 1980s; and, Ron Parker, Managing Director make up Central Avenue Dance Ensemble's dynamic duo of choreographers.

Their vision and passion have led to this entertaining and historically significant production.



Mission Statement

The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble of Los Angeles, California is a non-profit performing dance organization. This 12-member dance company is dedicated to preserving and promoting the contributions of African American dance and movement that was incorporated in the ballroom and social dances in American popular culture. We aim to show the connections between dance forms from generation to generation and their connection to music; to show how American vernacular dances were directly influenced by African dance and were shaped by spirituality and slavery. We aim to express the infectious healing qualities of dance, to educate audiences and to spread the joy of dance.



A photo from CADE's recently produced "The History of Black Dance in America"

The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble

is a multi-aged performance group under the artistic direction of Chester Whitmore. The company's mission is to perpetuate and promote American vernacular dances of the 20th century educating audiences and spreading the joy of dance. To this end they offer performances, workshops and classes keeping the actual practice of dancing central our American aesthetic.

Organizational History

The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble was founded in Los Angeles in 2003 by a group of volunteer dancers led by internationally known dance instructor, choreographer and historian Chester Whitmore.

Chester Whitmore, one of the United States' Cultural Ambassadors, was named a Living Treasure by the International Association of Blacks in Dance in 2005

Our goal was to educate the community on the Black roots of historical vernacular jazz dances (Black Bottom, Charleston, Lindy Hop, etc...) through social dances, workshops and performances.

Since that time we have performed at a variety of local community events, given a series of monthly live Big Band dances entitled "Swinging in the Hood," and revived Chester Whitmore's "History of Black Dance in America."

CADE produced the "Tribute to Norma Miller" in 2007; helped choreograph and performed in "A Tribute to Katherine Dunham" in 2008

Ron Parker, a founding member and dance historian, took over as director of the group and began preparations for a new "The History of Black Dance in America" and expanded its dance repertoire beyond Vernacular Jazz to include traditional Ballroom and American Rhythm dances like Salsa and Disco honed from our African roots.



Chester Whitmore toured an earlier production of *The History of Black Dance in America* with his company for 15 years circling the world 24 times. He is a musician, cinematographer, dancer and swing dance/history archivist;

The show celebrates America's rich and diverse history and the exciting dances that are an integral part of it. Each of these dances grew out of the African Diaspora making them truly North American indigenous dances. These dances were so pervasive in their time that they leapt from community to community making them internationally known and done in the world's societies. They have left a legacy we cannot dismiss.



Photos from HBDA's African number which opens the show.



Ron Parker,
CADE Managing Director

Has a rich history as a traditional
ballroom and vintage dancer



The History of Black Dance in America is a multi-media feast of music, dance and video.



HBDA traces our steps from the African Diaspora through decade after decade to the present day.



Making this production truly American in a way no other has been.



Chester Whitmore leading Opus One at Century Masters

Chester Whitmore is a world known bandleader and musician who has even played with the Count Basie Orchestra and Lionel Hampton.

He leads his own Big Band called Opus One with an unstoppable flavor reminiscent of Cab Calloway.



Chester Whitmore with the legendary Kenny Burrell

Central Avenue Dance Ensemble has a rich history of lecture / demonstrations as part of its community outreach.

CADE is available to schools, clubs, theatres and colleges for residencies and performances.



A photo from CADE's
HBDA candome/milonga
dance number

Central Avenue Dance Ensemble

c/o Ron Parker

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