

IMPORTANT MEDIA RELEASE

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THE HISTORY OF BLACK DANCE IN AMERICA

Santa Monica, February 23, 24, 25

Central Avenue Dance Ensemble to present a retrospective of African and African-American inspired social dances from the 1800s to today



SANTA MONICA, CA –[The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble](#), in honor of Black History Month, is producing a 2-hour multimedia dance performance entitled [The History of Black Dance in America](#). Directed by choreographer, performer, and historian Ron Parker, the show will be a retrospective of African and African-American inspired social dances that have been popularly danced in the United States from the 1800s to today. Historical dances included will be Zulu,

Work Songs, Cakewalk, Buck Dance, Black Bottom, Charleston, Lindy Hop, Foxtrot, and the African inspired Latin-American dances. Post-Swing era dances include “fad dances” such as Detroit Ballroom and Chicago Style Step.

The goal of the History of Black Dance in America is to educate the public about these dances in an exciting and entertaining way. While most of these dances are recognized as an integral part of American culture, many Americans do not know of their history. For example, the Cakewalk began as a plantation dance danced by slaves to mimic high society Whites. The dance was so amusing that plantation owners held competitions, and the winning slaves would receive cake as their prize, hence the name, “Cakewalk.” This story and more will be told through live performances and narrated video, starting with the plantation dances of the slavery era through today.

The History of Black Dance in America is returning for a 2nd year after performing to a sold-out audience in 2011. This year’s performances will be at the historic Santa Monica Bay Women’s Club, 1210 4th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Performances are on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 23, 24 and 25, 2012, at 7:30 pm. General admission is \$22.50, Preferred Seating \$27.50, VIP Seating \$45, Seniors and Students \$17.50. Tickets may be purchased online at www.historyofblackdance.org or at the door.

Proceeds from the performance will benefit The Santa Monica Women’s Club.

For a video preview of The History of Black Dance in America, please visit the following links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCgbPceEVSw>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ukCMoZhB3I>

Who/What:

The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble, directed by Ron Parker, presents "The History of Black Dance in America," a retrospective of African and African-American inspired social dances from the 1800s to today.

Why:

To entertain and educate about the history and cultural relevance of African-American inspired social dances popularly danced in the United States. Also, to honor Black History Month.

When:

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 23, 24 and 25, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

Where:

Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club
1210 4th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Tickets:

General Admission - \$22.50

Seniors Over 60 & Students (with ID) - \$17.50

Preferred Seating - \$27.50

VIP Seating - \$45

Tickets may be purchased online at www.historyofblackdance.org or at the door.

ABOUT THE CENTRAL AVENUE DANCE ENSEMBLE:

The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble (CADE) takes its name from the historic Central Avenue, which from approximately 1920 to 1955 was the heart of the Los Angeles African-American community. With its active Rhythm and Blues and Jazz music scenes, Central Avenue was commonly considered the west coast equivalent of Harlem.

Founded in 2003 by master choreographer, dancer, and band-leader Chester Whitmore, CADE's mission is to perpetuate and promote American vernacular dances of the 20th Century.

The company currently consists of the following team members: Salvador Corona, Atiya El-Amin, Adunni McPherson, Ron Parker, Reginald Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez, Chester Whitmore and Erica Zuniga.

This dynamic troupe has entertained at numerous local events including A Tribute to Katherine Dunham, A Tribute to Norma Miller (also performed in Minneapolis, MN), and the African American Music Festival at UCLA. Television appearances include Disney's That's So Raven, HBO's Golden Globe, SAG and Emmy award winning Lackawana

Blues and Oprah Winfrey's production of Their Eyes Were Watching God starring Halle Berry.

CADE also teaches affordable dance workshops and organizes social dances open to the Los Angeles community. For almost 2 years, CADE sponsored monthly Big Band Swing Dances on Normandie Ave., the first to be held in that part of Los Angeles for decades. In 2011, they presented a series of dance workshops in South Central Los Angeles entitled "Diversify Your Dance," providing members of that community the opportunity to learn dances they had only seen on television or watched their grandparents dance. CADE also takes advantage of the diversity in its group to remind people that Latinos are part of the Central Avenue legacy, and that their history is tied together.

For more information visit www.centralavedance.com

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HISTORY OF BLACK DANCE IN AMERICA MEDIA CONTACT:

For additional information, interviews, special show arrangements, at-event liaison.

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