

## ***Celebrating Juneteenth with The History of Black Dance in America*** BY KIM WEBSTER

Carson CA - June 19, 1865 was the date abolishing slavery in Texas. The Emancipation Proclamation, which was effective January 1 1863, was the official abolishment of slavery but some southern states did not honor this date. Presently 43 states recognize June 19 (Juneteenth) as a holiday. In celebration of Juneteenth 2015 Cal State Dominguez was the venue for the Central Avenue Dance Ensemble's presentation of "The History of Black Dance in America." Colorful costumes and intricate dance movements are used to re-create African origin Zulu dance, Spiritual praise dances, Foxtrot, Charleston, Ballroom, Swing, Big Apple,



Samba, Mambo and many more. There is also a tribute to Sammy Davis Jr as he performed to the song "Mr Bojangles." The name Cakewalk was the result of slaves mimicking their master's dancing. Contests would be held and the winning slaves would receive cake. The term "slow drag" or slow dancing evolved from the way people danced to Blues songs. Many of the notable dance studios for example Arthur Murray incorporated African origin dance moves into their curriculum. "This show is entertaining as well as educational. It teaches people where American social dances came from which is Africa and all

that evolves into what Hip Hop is today," said choreographer Reginald Thornton. Producer/director/choreographer Ron Parker and Artistic Director Chester Whitmore are touring the show to "promote the idea of vernacular jazz dance" and its history. For more info please go to [www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org](http://www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org).