

LinksHall

Chicago's Center for Independent Dance
and Performance Arts

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Hi-res digital images available on request

West Indian Folk Dance Company mix modern techniques with folkloric dance at Links Hall August 27 -28, 2010.

Chicago – West Indian Folk Dance Company presents CULTURE! kicking off their 2010 Dance Season with sweeping folkloric pieces and a tribute to Jamaican music legend and social activist, Bob Marley. This is an evening of new works featuring the African roots of West Indian Dance and the reinvention of story and movement by a diverse and socially complex people. Artistic Director Alfred Baker guides this ensemble of dancers and musicians with more than 30 years of professional dance and Artistic Direction under his belt. **CULTURE!** runs August 27 – 29, 2010 – Friday & Saturday at 8pm/ Sunday at 6pm. Tickets are \$20 General Admission/ \$12 Seniors/ Students under age 10 / \$15 each for groups of 10 or more. *Tickets can* be purchased at the door and are available online at www.LinkshHall.org. For more information call 773.281.0824, or purchase tickets online at www.linkshall.org.

Program Description

‘Tomato’

This charming folkloric ballet tells the story of a young boy’s flirtation, through the double entendre that is so characteristic of people of African descent. In the ‘old days’, many island ladies referred playfully to certain body parts as their ‘tomatoes’. With the playful admonition ‘*please Mr., don’t touch me tomatoes*’...the flirtation dance unfolds within a market scene, with young boys flirting with young girls in the market on their way home.

‘Marley & A Million’

Mr. Alfred Baker premieres his new tribute to Bob Marley during Dance Season 2010. This lyrical piece is set to a medley of the rasta icon’s best-loved music, with a fusion of traditional and contemporary choreography designed to spotlight the meaning behind those songs. Featured is a jazzy reggae-type of dance that people from upper-class Jamaica would also partake in, showing the other side of Marley & what his work means to the entire world, underscoring the global relevance of his message.

~More~

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‘Kumina’

This signature piece for WIFDC draws on a traditional W. African dance which was brought to Jamaica and celebrated by the Maroons. Variations of Kumina also surfaced in other communities throughout diaspora wherever Afro-descendants survived and were able to retain some connection to this homegoing, wake, or celebration of life tradition which has two meanings – Spiritual and Celebration.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR BIO

ALFRED BAKER- Born in Montego Bay, Jamaica, Alfred Baker started dancing at the age of six in area tourist resorts. Using his natural ability dancing jitterbug, or ska as it is called in Jamaica, he embarked on a tour of the West Indies at the age of 10. On returning to Jamaica, Baker received his first professional dance training from Mr. Alan Ivanhoe, who was trained by the National Dance Theatre of Jamaica.

After leaving Jamaica for New York, he studied under Madam Ashkin, Neville Black, Mr. Boscoe Holder, and immersed himself in Jazz, Ballet, Dunham, and Graham technique classes. After a decade of touring Europe, Baker returned home to Jamaica a relatively seasoned professional, and recognizing the need to create and maintain an authentic West Indian Dance company in his native hometown of Montego Bay, he took the challenge. In 1971, “Mr. Baker” founded and served as artistic director and choreographer of the Western Jamaica Folk Dance Co. which later evolved into the West Indian Folk Dance Company to be more inclusive of other Caribbean Nationals.

The company operated for seven years, training to become an accredited institution. WIFDC eventually migrated to Chicago as part of a cultural exchange program in 1978, sponsored by the Jamaican government, and has become an integral part of the West Side Chicago community of Austin.

“Mr. Baker” has trained hundreds of dancers who have gone on to professional careers in the arts, and he remains a vital part of the Chicago cultural arts education community -- maintaining his own professional dance company as well as training youth in the Chicago public schools as a lead instructor for After School Matters and the

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Columbia College Community Arts Partnership. Based at Columbus Park on Chicago's West Side, Mr. Bakers' West Indian Folk Dance Co. performs a rigorous schedule each year, most recently opening the Black Dance USA Festival in St. Louis, MO as one of only 3 national dance companies selected to headline that momentous celebration.

August 27- 29, 2010

Culture!

Presented by **West Indian Folk Dance Company**

Artistic Director **Alfred Baker** leads a large ensemble of musicians and dancers in an evening of West Indian folk dance honoring the cultural roots and evolution of African dance.

Friday & Saturday at 8pm / **Sunday** at *6pm • Tickets \$20/\$12 Seniors/ Students under age 10

*Time Correction from Fall 2010 Release

Links Hall is located at 3435 North Sheffield Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60657—convenient to the BROWN, RED & PURPLE line stop at Belmont and RED line Addison stop in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. For more information call 773.281.0824 or visit www.LinksHall.org.

Links Hall encourages artistic innovation and public engagement by maintaining a facility and providing flexible programming for the research, development and presentation of new work in the performing arts.

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