

**IMPORTANT MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**Contact:** Livia Squires, Squires Public Relations  
Cell 310-273-4340 [livia@squirespr.com](mailto:livia@squirespr.com)

**THE HISTORY OF BLACK DANCE IN AMERICA**  
**Los Angeles, February 23, 24, 25, 2012**

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



LOS ANGELES, 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 Ron Parker and choreographed by master choreographer, dancer, and band leader [Chester Whitmore](#), 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 Work Songs, Cakewalk, Buck Dance, Charleston, Lindy Hop, Foxtrot, and the African inspired Latin-American dances. Post-Swing era dances include “fad dances” such as Salsa, Tango, Detroit Ballroom and Chicago Style Step.

The goal of the History of Black Dance in America is to educate the public on the history of these dances in an exciting and entertaining way. While many of these dances are widely 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.”

The History of Black Dance in America will be performed on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 23, 24 & 25, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at the historic Santa Monica Bay Women's Club, 1210 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. 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](http://www.historyofblackdance.org) or at the door.



**Who/What:**

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

**Why:**

To entertain and educate on the history and cultural relevance of African-American inspired social dances that have been 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 Women's Club  
1210 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

**Tickets:**

General Admission - \$22.50  
Seniors Over 60 & Students (with ID) - \$17.50  
Preferred Seating (Rows 4-9) - \$27.50  
VIP Seating (Balcony and Rows 1-3) - \$45

Tickets may be purchased online at [www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org](http://www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org) or at the door.

**ABOUT THE CENTRAL AVENUE DANCE ENSEMBLE:**

The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble is a 8-member performance group created by master choreographer, dancer, and band-leader Chester Whitmore. The group's mission is to perpetuate and promote American vernacular dances of the 20th Century. These dances include: American street dances such as Leonard Reed's Shim Sham Shimmy, the Shorty George, the Charleston (1920s) and the Lindy Hop (1920s - 40s), in addition to dances derived from them, such as the Chicago Bop (1960s) and Steppin' (1990s). The group aims show the connections between dance forms from generation to generation and their connection to music and cabaret; to show how American vernacular dances were influenced by African dance and were shaped by spirituality and slavery (liturgical dance) as well as were molded by rhythm and music (tap dance and Salsa).

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

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. For more information visit [www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org](http://www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org)

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**HISTORY OF BLACK DANCE IN AMERICA MEDIA CONTACT:**

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

**Livia Squires**

**Squires Public Relations**

**Cell 310-243-4340 [livia@squirespr.com](mailto:livia@squirespr.com)**

