

Ailey students to hold dancing performances, classes at A&M

By Susan Hopkins

Battalion Staff

For dance students of the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, classes are held regularly on stages all over the United States. The 12 dancers of this specialized group will not only learn, but also perform and teach, their artistic skills in Texas A&M University's Rudder Auditorium on Thursday, Jan. 29, and Friday, Jan. 30.

Presented by the MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society, this number two-rated traveling company is related to the famed Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and Ensemble members are from the Ailey School. The group is composed of select young profes-

sionals talented in jazz, ballet and modern dance.

Although their form of education is demanding of both time and energy, the students learn choreography, get a feel for the stage and have a chance to do what they love best -- perform.

Newsweek Magazine says the Ailey dancers blend a classical and

modern technique with the ethnic, dynamic style of the company's founder -- native Texan Alvin Ailey. The magazine said the company's dance movements are "colorful, kinky, quirky and tricky, expressing the foxiness of survival ..."

Cary Wilkins, chairman of OPAS, said the dances are designed by Ailey and his students "to leave a lot to the audience's imagination -- to make the audience think."

The dancers plan to teach master classes Friday at Texas A&M and at Valerie Martin's Gallery of Dance Arts in College Station. A limited number of ticket holders -- adults and children -- will talk with the dancers about their work and schooling, and will receive instruction and advice about the dance profession, Wilkins said.

"Current trend with young professionals is to spread their art to others," Wilkins said. "The best way to do this is on a one-to-one basis through these classes, because they provide audience understanding about performances."

Established in 1974, the Repertory Ensemble constitutes a small selection of the 2,800 students at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center in Manhattan, N.Y. There, several hundred young dancers audition for 100 possible scholarships at the school. Those chosen for scholarship are required to take from 10 to 12 classes in modern, jazz and ballet each week. Students are evaluated constantly on

a personal level, and are counseled on career opportunities in the dance field.

Sylvia Waters, artistic director of the Ensemble and former Ailey dancer, choreographs most of the group's dances and teaches the unique Graham and Horton styles of dance. Waters is a graduate of the Julliard School of Dance.

Tickets for the 8 p.m. performances are available at the Memorial Student Center box office for \$4.75, \$5.75 and \$7.25. The dance classes will be held Friday from 12:30-2 p.m.

