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Photos: Headshot of Ayisha McMillan Cravotta by Jeff Cravotta. Dance photograph by Andy Snow.

Chicago-area Native and Former Professional Ballerina, Ayisha McMillan Cravotta, to Hold Summer Intensive Audition for North Carolina Dance Theatre School of Dance *Audition February 4 at Ballet Chicago*

Charlotte, N.C. – Chicago-area native and former professional ballerina, Ayisha McMillan Cravotta, is holding auditions for North Carolina Dance Theatre School of Dance's summer intensive program.

Cravotta, principal of North Carolina Dance Theatre School of Dance in Charlotte, N.C., is conducting the auditions on February 4 at Ballet Chicago on North State Street, Suite 1900. Auditions for potential students ages 11-14 will be held from 4:00-5:30 p.m., and auditions for potential students ages 15-21 will be held from 5:30-7:00 p.m.



Hailing from Illinois, Cravotta is excited to return to Chicago to attract serious young dancers to NC Dance Theatre's summer program. "Our program is designed for serious dance students, including those who plan to dance professionally. Most students have studied ballet for at least five to ten years before they are at the level required for our program," Cravotta explains.

"I'm personally interested in recruiting more minority students, allowing our school and our company to better reflect our community and the dance world," said Cravotta. "I believe dance is a powerful vehicle for self discovery, and I hope to foster a love of dance in all of our students."

Cravotta's dance career began at an early age at the Academy of Movement & Music and MOMENTA Dance Company, where she trained in ballet and early American modern dance with Stephanie Clemens. On scholarship from Homer Hans Bryant, founding principal dancer at Dance Theatre of Harlem, Cravotta studied at the Chicago Multi-Cultural Dance Center. She also trained at Maria Tallchief's School of Chicago City Ballet, and under Bolshoi Ballet Director Asaf Messerer and Mikhail Messerer at their Soviet American Ballet School.



Cravotta attended several summer intensive dance programs in preparing for her own career as a professional dancer. She danced professionally for six seasons in the Houston Ballet company, under Director Ben Stevenson. She also spent five seasons with North Carolina Dance Theatre and was the first African American woman to play a principal role in the company's *Nutcracker*. In January 2011 Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, North Carolina Dance Theatre President & Artistic Director, announced Cravotta was joining North Carolina Dance Theatre school as principal.

For more information regarding NC Dance Summer Intensive program visit ncdance.org.

Audition Details:

Date: Saturday, February 4, 2012

Time: 4:00-5:30 PM ages 11-14 and 5:30-7:00 PM ages 15-21

Audition Fee: \$15 per-student

Location: Ballet Chicago, 17 N State Street, Suite 1900

About NC Dance Theatre School of Dance's Summer Intensive

North Carolina Dance Theatre's Summer Intensive program is recognized for its diverse classes, strong training, supportive faculty and beautiful studios. At North Carolina Dance Theatre, students are encouraged to go beyond their technical training, explore new movement and further expand their versatility as dancers. Training six days a week, students ages 11-22 work with renowned resident and guest teachers who are invested in each student's artistic growth.

About NC Dance Theatre School of Dance

North Carolina Dance Theatre School of Dance opened its doors in September 1993. As the only dance school in North Carolina affiliated with a nationally recognized professional dance company, the School offers the highest quality of dance instruction to students of all ages and levels of ability. The School of Dance parallels the professional Company's tradition of excellence by providing a nurturing and structured environment that encourages individuality, creative expression and an appreciation for the art of dance. In June 2010 NC Dance Theatre and the School of Dance moved the *Patricia McBride and Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux Center for Dance*, in uptown Charlotte. The Center features six dance studios, spacious locker rooms and a 200-seat performance venue. For more information visit ncdance.org.

About North Carolina Dance Theatre

North Carolina Dance Theatre is a Charlotte-based ballet company focused on performing, inspiring and educating through artistically excellent programming. Led by internationally acclaimed President and Artistic Director Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, NC Dance Theatre is known for its strong dancers and versatile repertoire, ranging from classical ballet to bold, contemporary works. In June 2010 NC Dance Theatre moved to the Patricia McBride & Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux Center for Dance in Uptown Charlotte. The Center houses the Company's administrative offices, rehearsal space and School of Dance. For more information visit ncdance.org.

North Carolina Dance Theatre is supported, in part, with operating support by the Arts & Science Council. Dance Theatre is also supported by individuals, corporations, and local and national foundations, the North Carolina Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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