



# LOVE IN THE AIR

**D**ancer and choreographer Jamal Story learned the art of aerial dance on a Cher tour in 2002 and now regularly serves as dance captain for the singer's private performances. The experience, along with watching aerial acrobatics in other shows, got him thinking. "I wanted to investigate a way to introduce a human component and not just make it arbitrary and beautiful," he says, "[but] to present something in the air in the context of a story." So, Story — yes, that's his given name — created an aerial pas de deux inspired by the tale of Echo and Narcissus. **DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE** founder Ann Williams saw it and wanted more. Story had performed with her company while earning a degree in dance and communications at Southern Methodist University. Telling him she wanted "to take dance to a new level," Williams, with some financial muscle from TACA, commissioned a bigger piece.

Debuting February 19 to 21 at the Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre, the new work enacts three more myths of rocky love — Zeus and Hera, Orpheus and Eurydice, Hades and Persephone — in addition to Echo and Narcissus. As yet unnamed, the performance will incorporate three types of apparatuses: a hammock, two aerial silks and a trapeze. "The biggest challenge is staying with my initial vision," Story says, "which is to showcase the aerial work in a context. As choreographers and dancers, we get so married to our sense of nuance and arcane aspects of what we're doing ... but audience members want to be moved and see a story. They want to come away having an opinion." *dbdt.com*

—Holly Haber

Dancers  
Claude  
Alexander  
III, top, and  
Alyssa  
Harrington