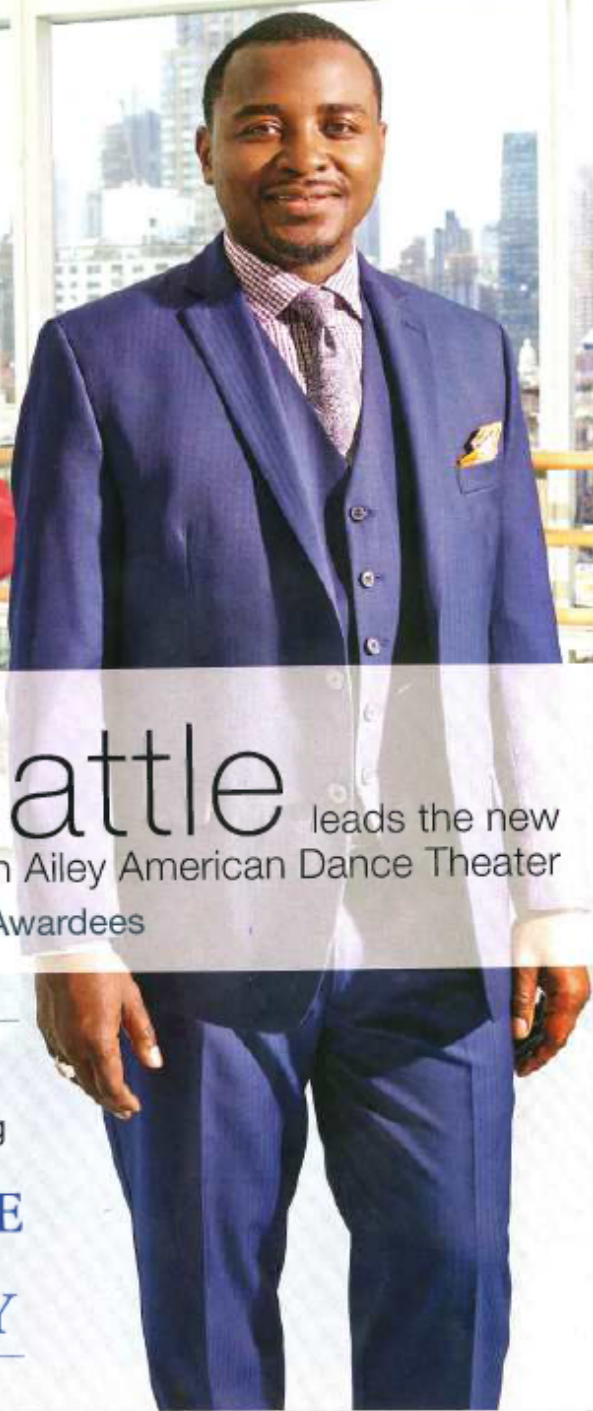
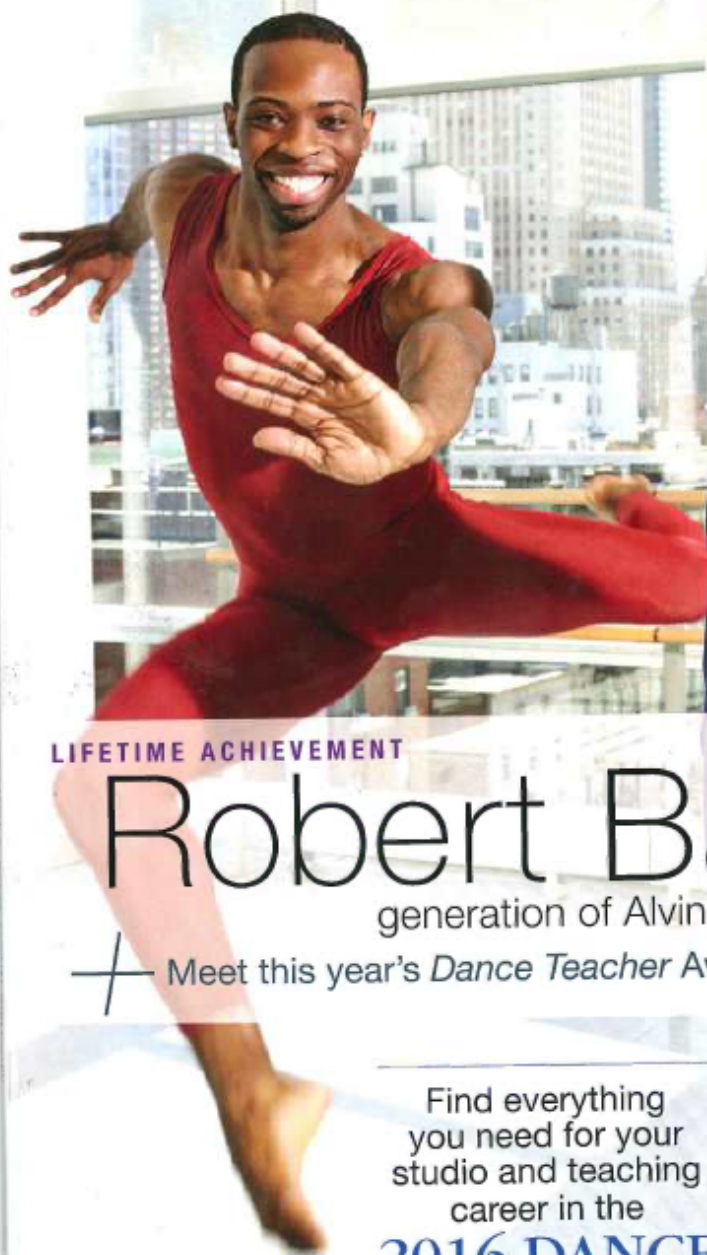


DanceTeacher®
magazine

DanceTeacher®

WWW.DANCE-TEACHER.COM

JULY 2016



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Robert Battle

leads the new generation of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

+ Meet this year's *Dance Teacher* Awardees

Find everything
you need for your
studio and teaching
career in the
**2016 DANCE
ANNUAL
DIRECTORY**

July
2016

40



DT NOTES

23 NEWS

Tremaine Dance Conventions celebrates 35 years
Plus: RIP, Fabian Barnes;
NDEO's jazz dance conference;
and more.

36 FACE TO FACE

A Conversation with
Choreographer Stefanie
Batten Bland
by Rachel Rizzuto

38 TEACHERS' TOOLS

Up Close with
Bryn Cohn
by Rachel Caldwell

FEATURES

40 ROBERT BATTLE

of Alvin Ailey American
Dance Theater talks about
the influence of his teachers.
by Karen Hildebrand

44 THE DANCE TEACHER AWARDS

Congratulations to Joanne
Chapman, Kathleen Isaac,
Claudio Muñoz and
Pamela VanGilder.
*by Rachel Caldwell, Rachel Rizzuto
and Nancy Wozny*

50 TECHNIQUE

Tamii Sakurai teaches tap.
by Rachel Caldwell

54 FASHION

The styles you want to wear.
by Alyssa Marks

78 2016 DANCE ANNUAL DIRECTORY

A guide to products and
services for your studio and
teaching career
*compiled by Caitlin Dutton and
Lauren Renck*

DEPARTMENTS

56 MUSIC

Keith Clifton
Music for ballet
by Alyssa Marks

58 HEALTH

Stand Strong
Exercises to cure wobbly ankles
and stabilize lower legs
by Andrea Marks

62 HISTORY

Alvin Ailey
Bringing the African-American
cultural experience to the
concert stage
by Rachel Caldwell

66 THEORY & PRACTICE

The Unseen Dancer
Motivating students who
aren't front and center
by Julie Diana

70 HIGHER ED

4 Myths About Ballet
Degrees, Busted
A college ballet degree can aid—
not ax—a performance career.
by Kat Richter

74 BUSINESS

How I Spent My
Summer Vacation
3 ways to make your break count
by Rachel Rizzuto

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 14 EDITOR'S NOTE
- 18 CHAT ROOM
- 34 ASK THE EXPERTS
- 103 AD INDEX
- 103 CLASSIFIEDS
- 104 FINAL POSE

On The Cover

DANCE TEACHER HONORS ROBERT BATTLE FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT	40
FOUR AWARD-WINNING EDUCATORS	44
2016 DANCE ANNUAL DIRECTORY	78

Robert Battle with Lloyd A. Boyd III of Ailey II
Photos by Jim Lafferty
Grooming by Alexandra Brock



Role Models

There were many things we could have discussed with Robert Battle, whom we honor this month with the *Dance Teacher Lifetime Achievement Award*. For instance, there is the charming tale about the boy who wore leg braces and grew up to lead Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. (There's a children's book out about this: *My Story, My Dance: Robert Battle's Journey to Alvin Ailey* by Lesa Cline-Ransome, illustrated by James E. Ransome, with foreword by Robert Battle.) There is also his artistic vision, both in terms of the AAADT rep and his own choreography. (*The New York Times* and *Dance Magazine* both have plenty to say about that.) But when Battle started telling anecdotes about his formative teachers, he confirmed our selection of him in a particularly gratifying way.

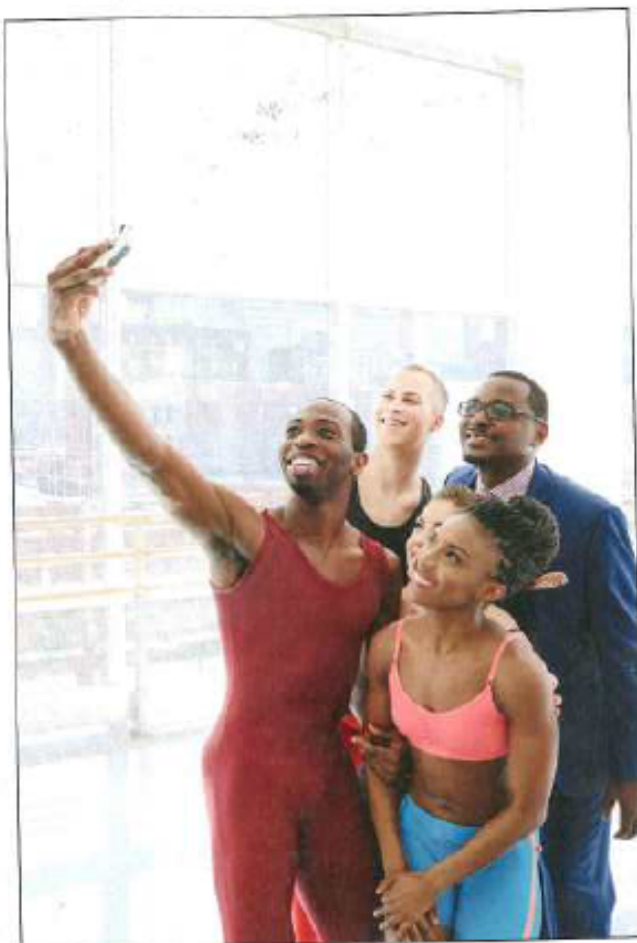
I know you're going to enjoy what he has to say about Carolyn Adams, Gerri Houlihan and Kazuko Hirabayashi, as well as the teaching profession at large: "There's something to me about teaching that is beyond noble," he told me in our phone interview. "It is, I think, the lifeblood of society. Anybody I admire will always talk about a teacher in their lives in some way: Alvin Ailey, Lester Horton and on and on. So this is a very personal thing, this honor, because of that." And the headline of our cover feature, "Rainbow After the Rain" (page 40), comes directly from something Battle says in the story.

We're also proud to announce the four educators who will receive the *Dance Teacher Awards* at our New York *Dance Teacher Summit* at the end of this month. The compelling stories of Joanne Chapman, Kathleen Isaac, Claudio Muñoz and Pamela VanGilder begin on page 44.

In this issue you'll also find the new and updated "Dance Annual Directory," with contact information for the products and services you'll need during the coming year. You can keep it handy in print or refer to it online at DanceMedia.com.

Karen Hildebrand

KAREN HILDEBRAND
EDITOR IN CHIEF



Ailey II dancers Lloyd A. Boyd III, Jacob Lewis, Terri Ayanna Wright and Deldre Rogan get a selfie with Robert Battle at our cover shoot.

DANCE
TEACHER
Summit

STILL TIME TO SIGN UP!

Join us in New York City, July 29-31,
or Long Beach, California, August 5-7,
for our 2016 *Dance Teacher Summit*.

RAINBOW AFTER THE RAIN

Alvin Ailey American Dance
Theater artistic director
Robert Battle talks about the
influence of his teachers.

BY KAREN HILDEBRAND

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM LAFFERTY

Despite the polished presence he projects as he enters the studio in a crisp navy suit and tie, complete with pocket square, Robert Battle is friendly and receptive at the *Dance Teacher* cover shoot. He's just flown back to New York from a stop on the Ailey company North American tour to take a meeting with a major funder. We've been allotted two hours for the cover shoot. It's a tight squeeze, but if Battle feels any anxiety about his demanding schedule, he's not letting on.

Exactly five years since he became artistic director of the venerable Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, this month Battle accepts the *Dance Teacher* Lifetime Achievement Award.

It's a weighty responsibility to lead what is perhaps the most famous dance company in the world. But Battle says he's held on to the part of him who, as a boy, first saw the classic Ailey work *Revelations* when his school was bussed to a performance. Indeed, in Battle's gap-toothed smile one can see a hint of the youngster whose passion for dance deepened in Gerri Houlihan's class at New World School of the Arts in Miami, Battle's hometown.

"I still call her Miss Houlihan," he says. "What I remember about her class is she made me feel safe. She would never necessarily tell you that you did something wrong. She'd say, 'Almost.' There was something in the lilt of

her voice, something in the grace of her style, in her optimism, that motivated me."

"I didn't need to be convinced that I loved dancing, but I needed encouragement to go beyond what I knew," he says. At first very shy, he began staying after class to have her watch him do the combination one more time. "Then it got to be that she could barely get out of there because I'd be talking to her. I'd go through the entire dance that I was thinking about and everybody's part. And she would listen as if she had nothing else to do." Then he adds with a laugh, "I thought she was there to only teach me."

Later, at Juilliard, he met former Paul Taylor dancer Carolyn Adams, the mentor whom he now considers a trusted friend. "As a teacher, Carolyn had such an incredible way to express sometimes complex ideas," he says. "She gave you more to think about than 'get the leg up.'" He describes a warm-up exercise of lifting an arm and circling it to the back. "She would always say that as soon as you move your arm, it's connected to something in the galaxy. It's connected. So that gave you this sense of tension, without her having to say, 'lengthen your arm.'"

After Juilliard, Battle performed as a member of Parsons Dance for seven years, then formed his own Battleworks Dance Company (disbanded after he accepted the



DanceTeacher Awards

Ailey directorship). His most visible accomplishment as Ailey's artistic director has been to grow the company repertory, "challenging the dancers and the audiences to see the company in new ways," he says. Ailey rep now includes work from Paul Taylor, Ohad Naharin, Wayne McGregor, Aszure Barton and others—including, this year, two premieres of Battle's own work.

He's carried a particular nugget from Carolyn Adams well into his professional life. "She would say, 'You have to see yourself completing the task,'" he says. "So even when something is difficult...When I was making my new work for the company and considering the premiere and considering all the criticism good and bad—all that one has to walk through—I would imagine myself completing the task. And being back in my house in Connecticut and sitting by a fire that I make outside."

From where he sits at the top of the Ailey organization (31 company dancers, plus 12 in Ailey II; staff of 300; and 200 faculty who serve 3,500 students of The Ailey School), Battle has a unique view of the dance community as it moves through the company's vibrant center on 55th Street. If there is one thing today's dancers could use more of, he says, it's an understanding of the origin of their technique.

"As things get so much about style and the melding of all these references, even some of the choreographers don't know the origins, right?" he says. "But the dancer needs to know, so that they're able to move from one thing to another and have some sense of what they're moving from and into. What is the abstraction of Merce Cunningham? What is the use of the back with Martha Graham? And then Paul Taylor, what was his departure?"

He illustrates his point with a story about the late Kazuko Hirabayashi, who was one of his teachers at Juilliard. "At that time the training was rigid. It was Graham, Taylor, baller, Limón. But the dancers were wanting release technique, which was the big thing being done at the time," he says. "So the more bold ones said, 'Kazuko, we want to do release technique.' And she looked at this

class and said, 'Release technique? You have no technique to release.'"

"Yes, it was funny on the one hand, but on the other it relates to what I'm saying. The temptation is to go for the style without the tools and the technique, and that can be a bit thin after a while. Like the painter who can paint a beautiful portrait but chooses to distort and abstract it so that, like Picasso, you see things in a different way. Not because they lack technique. It's because they have a point of view that is informed."

The *Dance Teacher* honor is an occasion for Battle to express his appreciation for great teachers, including his mother, who taught English. "Teachers are the rainbow after the rain for me," he says. "There's something deeper in the exchange that can happen with a great teacher that can be your entire reason for success."

"In fact, I feel that I only choreograph as a way to teach, sometimes," Battle says. "To try to express what I see in a dancer, what challenges them and bring something out in them. That's when I do my best work." **DT**

Karen Hildebrand is DT editor in chief.



Ailey II dancers Deidre Rogan, Terri Ayanna Wright, Lloyd A. Boyd III and Jacob Lewis (not pictured) rehearse.



Carolyn Adams (top) and Kazuko Hirabayashi teaching at The Juilliard School

Photos (from top): by Jim Lafferty; Rachel Pappas; Peter Sorensen for The Juilliard School