



Alvin Ailey marks a decade of leadership under artistic director Robert Battle

By: Dave Carlin

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NEW YORK -- The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater returns to Lincoln Center on Wednesday for six performances. A diverse program has been put together to cap a decade of leadership under artistic director Robert Battle. He talked to CBS2's Dave Carlin on Wednesday about his 10 years with Ailey, and what he sees for its future. "In a Sentimental Mood" is the title of the world premiere, starring Ghrai DeVore-Stokes and Chalvar Monteiro. It was created by Ailey resident choreographer Jamar Roberts. A theme for his work, and several others in this Lincoln Center season, is love. "It is wonderful to be reminded of love, and not just knew love, but love that is tried and true," Battle said.

Few things are truer and steadier than Battle's leadership at Ailey for 10 years now. The artistic director is celebrated with an all-Battle program of his signature work, recognizing him as he keeps growing the organization by innovating and nurturing talent. "I'm always thinking about the future, but not in a way to distract me to the present... trust that what you have to say is needed... and that to me is what helps me move forward," Battle said. Battle says he made sure inspiration and collaboration could blossom by creating new spaces for it.

"The choreography lab is one of those things," he said. "A way of giving opportunity to choreographers to have time and space... to just have time to explore." Ailey will keep streaming online, putting dancers in unexpected places with anyone anywhere invited to enjoy it. "Accessibility is what we're all about, but this gave us a new way to be accessible reaching millions of people," Battle said. "It became in some ways leaning into that quote by Alvin Ailey, that dance 'comes from the people, and should always be given back to the people.'"

An Ailey gift that will always keep giving is "Revelations." "'Revelations' is more relevant now than ever. Alvin Ailey's masterpiece, created in 1960, sweetest spirituals expressed as a trials and tribulations of African-Americans in this country, through spirituals, through the storytelling." Battle says "Revelations" is about hope, adding its uplifting message is one we need now more than ever.