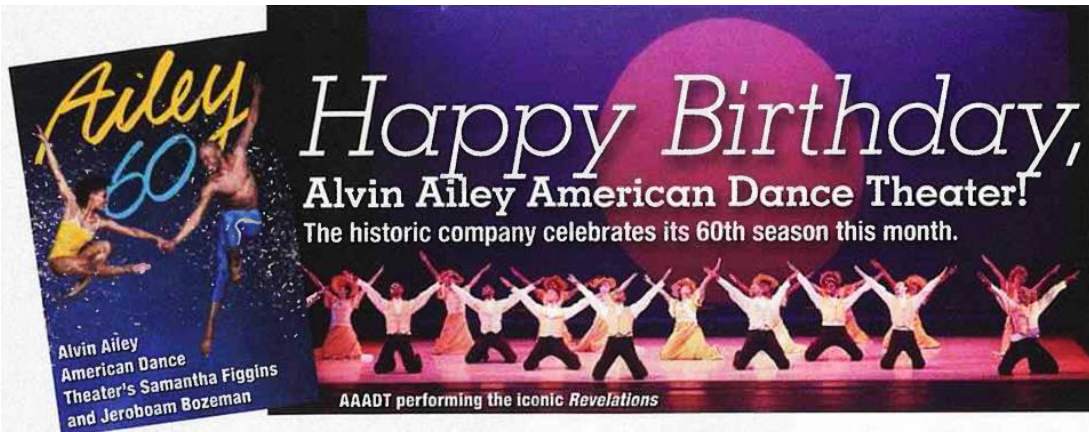


Upfront Buzz

By: Courtney Bowers

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UPFRONT
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On March 30, 1958, at the 92nd Street Y in NYC, dancer Alvin Ailey and a group of African-American dancers performed onstage together for the first time. Since then, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the company Ailey formed, has become legendary in the dance world. To commemorate its 60th anniversary, AAADT has dubbed its annual City Center season "Ailey 60." From Nov. 28–Dec. 30 choreographers including Ronald K. Brown, Jessica Lang, and Rennie Harris will present premieres, alongside the works of current artistic director Robert Battle, Judith Jamison, and over two dozen pieces by Alvin Ailey himself. We asked a few of the company members to share what the anniversary means to them.



Linda Celeste Sims
(joined in 1996):

"Dancing for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater means everything to me. I've

been dancing with the company for 23 years and have been able to experience the 45th, 50th, and now 60th anniversaries. Ailey's works are masterpieces. They're full of truth, honesty, and humility. It's the reason audiences are moved when they watch us. The 60th anniversary proves what Mr. Ailey said: "Dance is for everybody." "



Jeroboam Bozeman
(joined in 2013):

"I'm a part of something much larger than myself, and I'm just grateful

to be a witness. What I love most about the company is the richness of its history. Mr. Ailey was an African-American man who was able to capture the experiences of African-Americans in society, and translate them through dance.

The company has always been diverse, and has paved the way for so many artists of color. I have so much gratitude, because I know that I stand firmly on the backs of those who came before me. Mr. Ailey was trying to show the world that we're all human beings and that color isn't important. What's important is the quality of work."



Samantha Figgins
(joined in 2014):

"To me, the history of the company shows that we all have the right to dream. And

when you dream with purpose, others will believe in your dreams and, in turn, they'll believe more in their own.

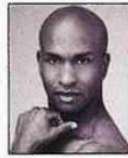
To carry on Mr. Ailey's legacy means I've been entrusted with a responsibility. This company has fought to be a pillar in the dance community and become a household name, so I must approach the work with the same dignity and respect of those that came before me. It's an opportunity to bring those values and culture to my generation."



Jacqueline Green
(joined in 2011):

"This company carries with it the history of the African-

American heritage and culture, expressed through dance. That's the truest example of the human spirit. People want to see that—they want to see something real. That's why this company continues to thrive. I love that back in the '50s and '60s, Ailey saw that people of color had something to say through dance and choreography. Today, this history and legacy are honored, appreciated, and still necessary. It's with seriousness and integrity that I keep the Ailey legacy alive and flourishing."



Glenn Allen Sims
(joined in 1997):

"When the company turned 40, I had no idea that my journey with Ailey would last

for two decades. I've been groomed by some of the greats that sat next to Mr. Ailey. I'm grateful that I'm a part of the history of Ailey men.

The company's history and legacy are very dear to me. The reason I'm an Ailey man today is because I saw a photograph taken by Jack Mitchell of Mr. Ailey in his ballet *Hermit Songs*. That image changed my perspective on what a male dancer looks like, because I saw my musculature. I knew then that this company would be the place I'd love to call home one day."



Courtney Celeste Spears
(joined in 2018):

"Being in a company rooted in so much history allows for a deeper connection to

the movement and the intent behind the ballets we perform. It's a celebration of Mr. Ailey, the life he lived, and everything he went through.

Learning Mr. Ailey's ballets is so much fun. They're challenging, in the sense that you have to keep the integrity of the movement that was taught. But in doing that, you end up feeling so connected to the company, the vision, and all the dancers who came before you."

[FROM TOP] DONNA WARD, COURTESY ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER; [7] ANDREW ECCLES, COURTESY AAADT