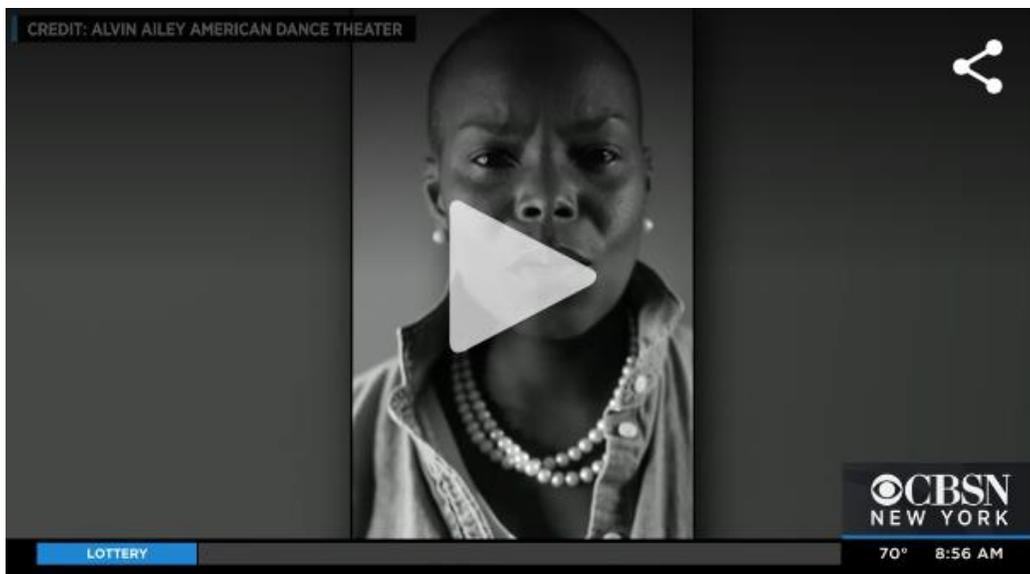


## All These Years Later, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Continues Spreading Message Of Inclusion

By: Jenna DeAngelis

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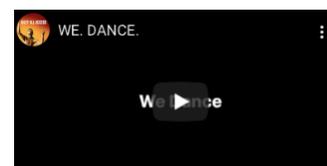


Watch here: <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2020/06/29/alvin-ailey-american-dance-theater-we-dance-hope-boykin-robert-battle/> (2 minutes)

While protests across the country call for racial justice, an organization in New York City has been spreading a message of inclusion for decades. And they've been doing it through dance. CBS2's Jenna DeAngelis has more on the work of Alvin Ailey.

A powerful video was created in the midst of protests, following the death of George Floyd. It featured poetry, paired with a universal language, which at times, says more than words. "We. Dance." by Hope Boykin. "This was my form of protest. This was the way that I could say it best to honor the organization that had started doing this more than 60 years ago," Boykin said.

That organization, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, was founded by the late Alvin Ailey during the Civil Rights movement. "As a way to give opportunities to people of color, dancers of color, on the concert dance stage and to tell the stories of his blood memories as he called them, of the contributions of African-American culture to the fabric of this country, and the world," said Alvin Ailey artistic director Robert Battle.



*Ctrl + Click to watch video.*

"Revelations," Ailey's best-known work, premiered in 1960. The company has gone on for decades, highlighting social injustice and spreading a message of equality through dance. "I think we've been able to show people in a very human way why they should pay attention to these things," said Megan Jakel, a former Ailey dancer.

With recent work "Greenwood," which looks at the 1921 Tulsa race massacre, and pieces like "Ode," which addresses gun violence. "I feel the work we do does reflect the world we live in, in a very poignant way," Battle said.

Battle took over the company 10 years ago, continuing Ailey's legacy of artistic activism. "I think he'd be proud to know that his company is playing a part in the healing that must take place," Battle said.

"He said dance came from the people, so it should be delivered back to the people," Boykin said.

And until the curtain is raised, the group is posting performances online, continuing to use the power of dance to inspire social change. Alvin Ailey also has arts and education programs, one being AileyCamp, a summer program for at-risk youth.