

# harlem world

## Walter's World: Jeroboam Bozeman Dance Warrior (with video)

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By Walter Rutledge

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort". Jeroboam Bozeman is living Roosevelt's observation. At first glance Jeroboam is a quiet, reserved young man with a warm and genuine smile; on stage Bozeman is a dance warrior. This talented 23 years old performer will make his debut with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater during the New York City Center season, which begins on Wednesday, December 4.

A native of Brooklyn, New York Jeroboam was one of those fortunate individuals who discovered his "joy of achievement" early in life. He began studying dance at the Ronald Edmonds Learning Center (Junior High School 113) in Brooklyn with Ruth Sistaire. It was Sistaire who soon introduced Jeroboam to Creative Outlet Dance Theater of Brooklyn, a community based dance school and company.

Under Artistic Director Jamel Gaines' guidance Jeroboam got his first real taste of the New York City dance scene. He trained in a nurturing family-like environment with working professionals including former Ailey dancers Shirley Black Brown and Raquelle Chavis. At age 16 he was asked to perform with the company and toured London, England. These experiences with Creative Outlet gave this young artist a chance to see the world, earn income and most importantly build a professional ethos.

Bozeman's talents were rewarded with full scholarships to attend two of New York City's most prestigious dance schools, the Joffrey Ballet School and Dance Theatre of Harlem. By age 19 his commitment and hard work paid off once again when he was chosen by choreographer Sarita Allen to perform in the Far East touring company of Elton John and Tim Rice's musical Aida. These experiences helped shape the aspiring artist, but his career defining moment came when Jeroboam joined Philadanco.

The venerable Philadelphia Dance Company known to the general public, as Philadanco was the environment that propelled Bozeman from neophyte to professional. He credits the no nonsense approach of Artistic Director/Founder Joan Myers Brown for his artistic growth. For over 40 years Brown's strong repertory company has featured choreography by such dance luminaries as Talley Beatty, George Faison, Rennie Harris and Ronald K. Brown; during his three-year association with the company Jeroboam learned to dance beyond the footlights.

A turning point for Bozeman came during the rehearsals of the solo from Faison's Suite Otis. Former Ailey dancer and current Philadanco Rehearsal Director/coach Debora Chase-Hicks pushed him to find that inner dance warrior. The sessions were a watershed moment for Jeroboam, helping him move his artistry to the next level.



Returning to New York in 2012 Bozeman danced with Ailey II under the direction of then newly appointed Artistic Director Troy Powell. Less than a year later he was invited to join the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. As Bozeman makes this next career move he retains a humble teachable spirit, unpretentious demeanor and that exuberant smile. We wish this rising dance warrior much continued success.