

SEPTEMBER 22, 2013

Arts & Leisure



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENCOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Movers and Shapers

Meet 10 dancers, choreographers and designers who will help this season lift off.

The energy that characterizes New York City finds artistic release in dance. Other cities around the world have important dance scenes, but for diversity and vitality this one has no match. Here ballet and modern mingle with tap and jazz. Here ethnic and experimental mixed media works find devoted audiences. Here it's natural to find the formal colliding with the forward-looking. And during the main season, from September to June, it's not un-

usual to find a dozen dance productions opening in a week.

In that spirit, we present 10 professionals who, working offstage or on, embody this range — from tap to ballet, flamenco to postmodern. Each, in a different way, makes New York's dance scene singular.

Sara Mearns, a stage animal of rare vibrancy, is changing our idea of how a ballerina looks and projects. Judy Hussie-Taylor, executive director at the Danspace Project at St. Mark's, is reshaping the course of modern dance. Alexei Ratmansky, formerly artistic director of the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow, choreographs

around the globe, but it's here that his most adventurous pieces have had their premieres. An important part of New York culture is the way it keeps drawing — and inspiring — dance artists from abroad.

Everyone on this list has become integral to this city's dance life — and between now and year's end, the work of each one can be seen in New York. Perhaps only a few, like the Alvin Ailey dancer Matthew Rushing, have reached full maturity. The others — even Ms. Mearns and Mr. Ratmansky — are still evolving. It's exciting to think that yet finer work lies ahead. Pages 8 and 10. ALASTAIR MACAULAY

Matthew Rushing, 38

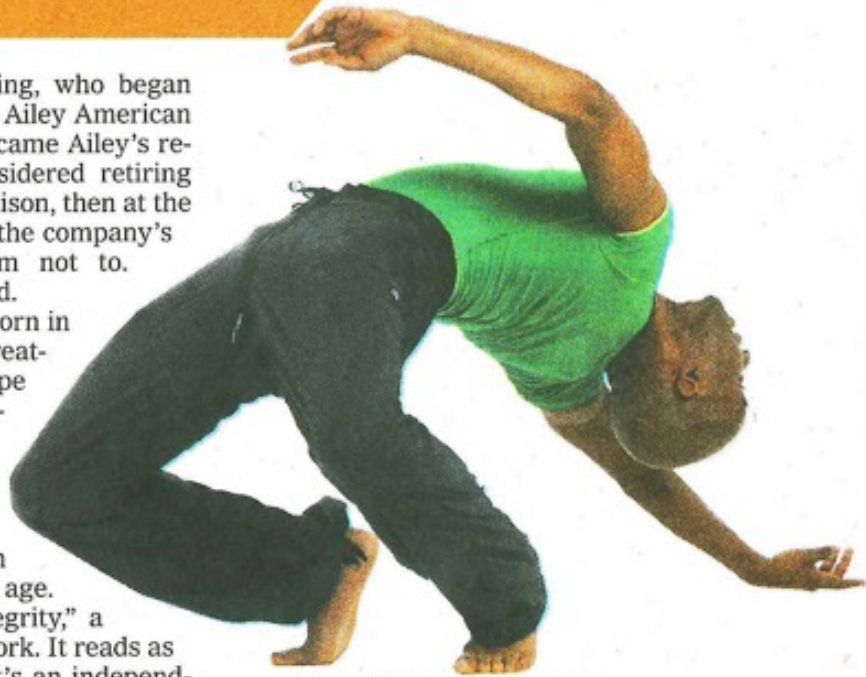
MODERN DANCER

In 2010 Matthew Rushing, who began performing with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1992, became Ailey's rehearsal director and considered retiring from the stage. Judith Jamison, then at the end of her long tenure as the company's artistic director, told him not to. Thank goodness he listened.

Mr. Rushing, who was born in Los Angeles, is still the greatest male dancer in a troupe that suffers no lack of candidates. In strength and stretch, he has shown little diminishment, and the quality that most distinguished him early on has only deepened with age.

Critics rightly call it "integrity," a service to each work. It reads as humility, yet it's an independent moral force that Ailey-style dances can't do without.

Since his near retirement, Mr. Rushing has remained irreplaceable, not only in repertory works, where you might expect his experience to give him an edge, but also in new pieces. He was the pillar of Rennie Harris's 2010 "Home," a hip-hop sermon on survival, and this year his sup-



TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES



ple spirituality set the tone for Ronald K. Brown's "Four Corners." During the company's encampment at City Center this December, Mr. Rushing will be dancing those works and will also have a prominent role in Aszure Barton's new "Lift." On Dec. 17, a special performance will celebrate his time with the company, the longest of any current dancer. It's a bit late for a 20th-anniversary party, but let's hope that a 25th will be in the cards. **BRIAN SEIBERT**