



REFINERY29

Dance-Floor-Ready Shoes, Tested By Real Dancers

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Shoes tend to have a love-at-first-sight appeal. See a pair of pretty soles, and you're determined to wear them for as long as possible. But, it's not until you're actually out and about that you realize there's nothing lamer than shoes meant strictly for sitting. And, because we can all agree that your place at this year's tree-trimming bash is tearing up the dance floor, we enlisted the help of true professionals to put some festive footwear to the test.



In anticipation of their new season kicking off today, three dancers with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre have helped us demonstrate the best kind of party shoes made for moving. These beauties that will help you stay on the dance floor in your "No Flex Zone," while you "Shake It Off," and even up until the inevitable Mariah Carey holiday hits start playing. Ahead, meet the pros — and the shoes that can keep up with them.

Belen Pereyra, fourth season with Alvin Ailey



Which pieces will you be performing in this season?

"This season at City Center I will be featured in *Odetta* by our very own rehearsal director Matthew Rushing, *Suspended Women* by Jacquelyn Buglisi, *Polish Pieces* by Hans van Manen, *Pleasure of the Lesson* by Robert Moses, *Bad Blood*, *Episodes*, *Vespers* by Ulysses Dove, as well as returning works such as *D-Man in the Waters* by Bill T. Jones, *Minus 16* by Ohad Naharin, *Lift* by Aszure Barton, *Grace and Four Corners* by Ronald K. Brown, and of course masterpieces *Night Creature*, *Memoria* and *Revelations* by our founder, Mr. Alvin Ailey."

Favorite party dance move:

"Anything that has to do with letting the music dictate my hips. Depending on the genre of music, my Latin roots have undeniably influenced the way I approach and dance in any party scene."

What's the one most exciting part about the new Alvin Ailey season you can't wait to share?

"Learning new works by talented choreographers is always incredibly challenging. There's also a lot of individual work that goes into the training of our job, especially in an intense season such as this one, to meet both the level being asked as well as the level I personally demand from myself. The most exciting part, for me, is

sharing my new and improved, ever growing version of myself with the audience."

What's a mark of a truly awesome dancer?

"It's someone that with maybe just a shoulder roll, a change of focus point with the eyes, or even a moving finger, will make you hold your breath, because they mesmerize and captivate you."

Thick heels and an ankle strap are both signs of shoes that comes with support. These Pierre Hardy baby blues are equipped with both — the mark of a pair that can last through a long night of gettin' down.

Rachael McLaren (left), seventh year with Alvin Ailey

Which pieces will you be performing in this season?

"I will be dancing in almost every piece our company has to offer this season. Some of my favorites are Suspended Women, Odetta, Bad Blood, Four Corners, Episodes, Polish Pieces, Vespers, D-Man in the Waters, and just before the end of 2014, I will be dancing the lead in Night Creature, just once. This will be my New York City debut leading this incredible piece. A great way to bring on the new year."

Favorite party dance move:

"A slightly awkward but hopefully charming two-step with extra hip and lots of shoulder."

What's the one most exciting part about the new Alvin Ailey season you can't wait to share?

"Don't miss the opportunity to see Suspended Women and Uprising this season, two new pieces that I'm in love with and that will surely leave you with goosebumps."

If you're after ankle support, go for a bootie come party time. Even with a thinner stiletto heel, a proper-fitting one will be a secure option for any evening not spent being a wallflower. Shiny metallics are optional — but sort of a no-brainer, no?

Danica Paulos (right), first year with Alvin Ailey



Which pieces will you be performing in this season?

"I will be performing in the ballets D-Man in the Waters, Bad Blood, Odetta, Lift, Night Creature, The River, Memoria, Minus 16, Suspended Women, and Mr. Ailey's masterpiece Revelations."

Favorite party dance move:

"The Dougie."

What's the one most exciting part about the new Alvin Ailey season you can't wait to share?

"I am thrilled to premiere Matthew Rushing's ballet Odetta at City Center this season. I know that the audience will absolutely love it and I'm so excited to feed off their energy as well as the energy of my coworkers on stage."

What's a mark of a truly awesome dancer?

"The mark of a truly awesome dancer is when they make you feel something you cannot explain. I believe that when you are able to awaken emotions or move another person with your art, you have changed their life, and that is how we stay connected as human beings."

Don't feel like you need to forgo all thin heels in order to dance. Strapped up options like these help avoid wobbling, and the laces mean you can adjust for a perfect fit.

Your dance motto:

Belen: "NO EXCUSES, GET IT DONE."

Danica: "Dance is the universal language."

Rachael: "Be generous, be disciplined, appreciate every moment, take risks (a.k.a. fail until you succeed), and don't forget to breathe."

And, remember there's no judgement on the dance floor — you do you.

