

The Dancers Glenn & Linda Sims Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Married 1.5.2001

It was Linda Celeste's legs that first caught Glenn Sims's gaze 16 years ago. "I remember looking at her amazing calves," Glenn, now 38, recalls, "and it changing my whole life." That day back in 1997 was Glenn's first rehearsal with Alvin Ailey, the preeminent African-American dance company—and the first time he met his future wife, who had joined the troupe a year earlier. After that fateful rehearsal, Glenn and Linda walked together to New York's 59th Street train station, forging a sweet friendship. Still, it would take time—and a *my caliente* turn on the dance floor—before sparks officially flew, at least on her part. "I thought of him as just a friend," Linda, 37, admits. "He was a great listener and we would laugh at the same things."

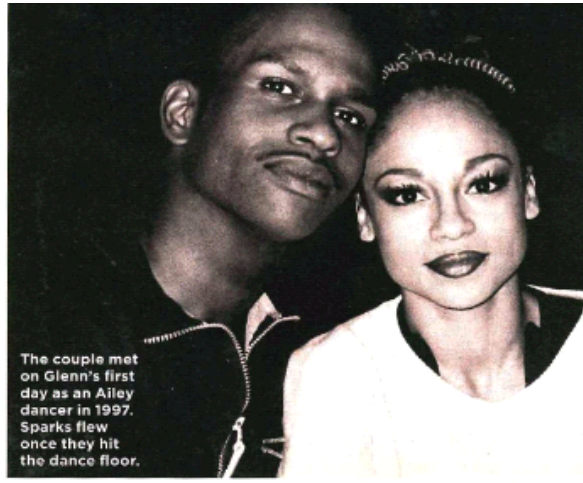
While touring internationally with the company, the two drew closer. They both loved dance, of course, but also discovered they had many mutual acquaintances and a shared passion for food and music. Their friendship got a jolt of something more when they visited a salsa club while touring in Europe in 1998. It was on that dance floor that Linda started looking at Glenn differently. She had no idea he could salsa and merengue—and keep up with her! "It turned me on," she says with a laugh. "Salsa brought us together."

The two began dating but chose not to broadcast it to the others at Ailey. "I wanted to keep work separate and keep my business my business," Linda says. "So at rehearsals we'd be in work mode, which meant no smooching or holding hands. But we would still talk, laugh and sit together." It wasn't until they decided to get married three years later that they finally told their colleagues about their romance.

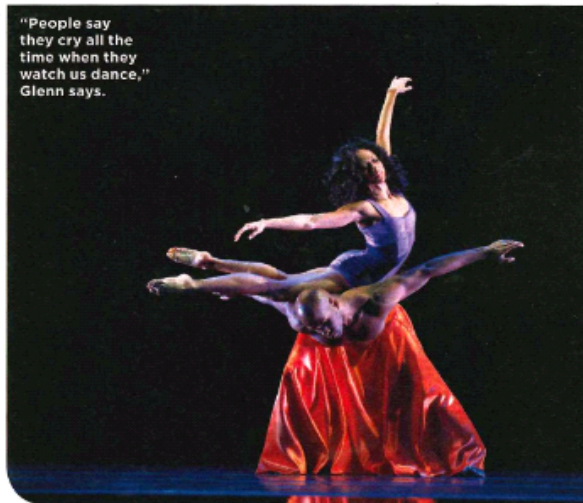
Because of their intense performance schedule, the couple planned their nuptials to take place during their January break before Glenn even proposed. But Glenn still wanted to formally pop the question to his leading lady. Two weeks before their wedding, Glenn got up early one morning as Linda slept. He created a trail of rose petals from the bed to the bathroom, drew her a bath, broke out strawberries and champagne, and laid out a collection of love poems. Linda awoke completely surprised by his romantic gestures. After reading "To Love Someone Is Life's Greatest Gift" by Teresa M. Reiches and serving his homemade cinnamon-raisin French toast, Glenn gave Linda a single rose with her engagement ring hidden in the petals, while she sat on the couch in pajamas with a head full of rollers.

"I found it so romantic and beautiful," Linda remembers. "For me the proposal was genuine. It didn't have to be grand, as long as it came from the heart."

Fourteen years later, the duo is still dancing. They now perform several pieces during the Ailey season, and onstage their chemistry is palpable and captivating. "When we dance together, there's a sense of trust. There is a whole other artistry that opens up because the love is already there," says Linda. As leadership transitioned at the dance company, the couple continued to be matched as partners, even by directors



The couple met on Glenn's first day as an Ailey dancer in 1997. Sparks flew once they hit the dance floor.



"People say they cry all the time when they watch us dance," Glenn says.

and choreographers who didn't know they were married. "We have both spent our careers dancing with other people where you have to draw more out," Glenn says. "but if you're already comfortable with someone, you can really be yourself. People say they cry all the time when they watch us dance."

Sharing the same employer with your spouse can seem challenging to many. But for Linda and Glenn, working and dancing together has given their partnership a rock-solid foundation and deepened their love. "When you're going back and forth with the same schedules, you sometimes forget that this person was your friend before you said 'I do' and before you went on this entire journey together," says Glenn. "I have to remind myself that not only is Linda my wife and my coworker, but she's also my friend." Adds Linda: "There is no script to marriage, and it takes a lot of work. It's about communication and remembering how you met. And keep rekindling the spark: Get some sexy pumps!" —LaShieka Purvis Hunter >



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