

DANCE

magazine

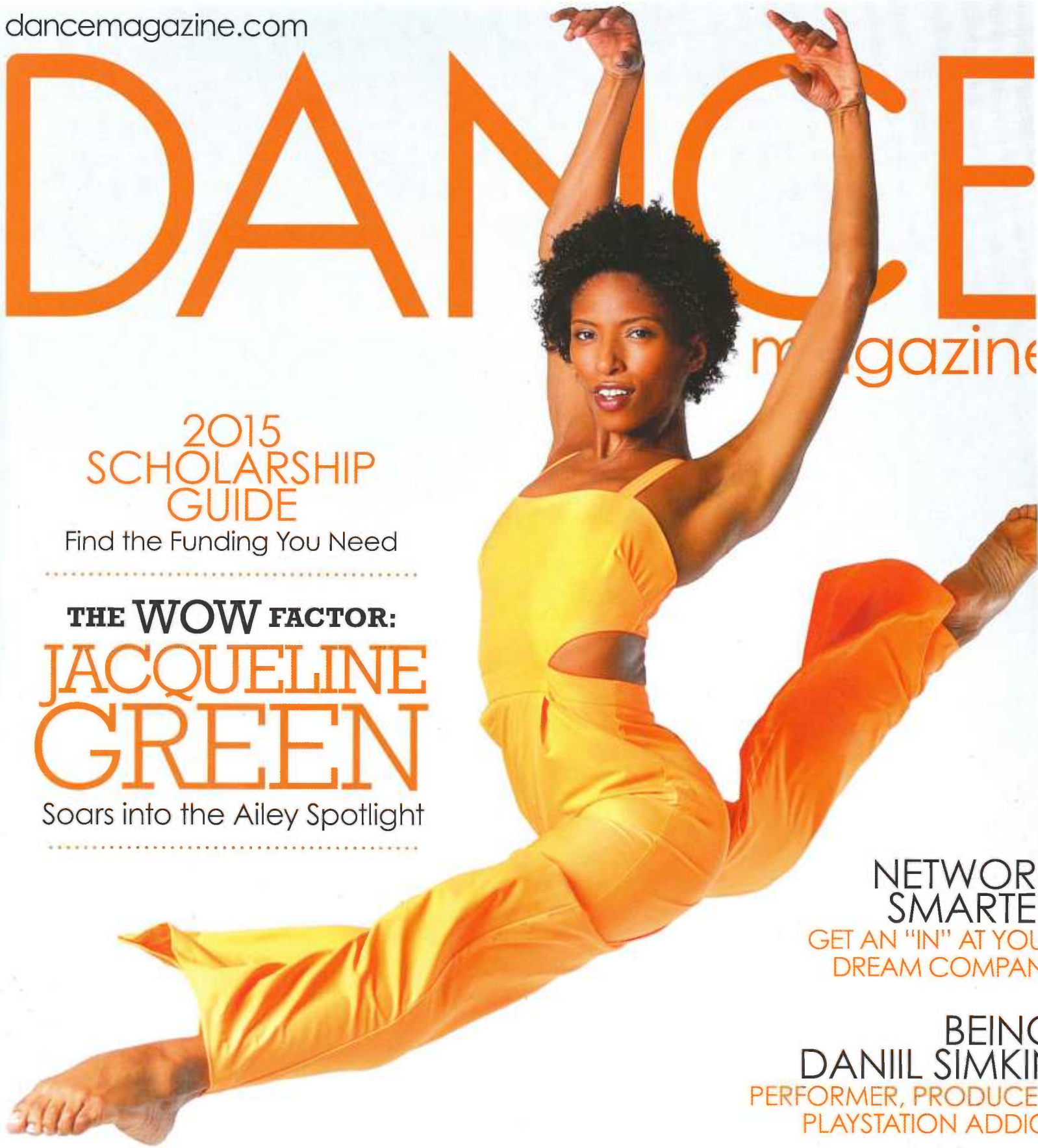
2015 SCHOLARSHIP GUIDE

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THE WOW FACTOR:

JACQUELINE GREEN

Soars into the Ailey Spotlight



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GET AN "IN" AT YOUR
DREAM COMPANY

BEING DANIIL SIMKIN

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AUGUST 2015

THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET

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"I want girls to think, Oh, wow; she's like me."

—JACQUELINE GREEN ON VISITING HER HOMETOWN OF BALTIMORE

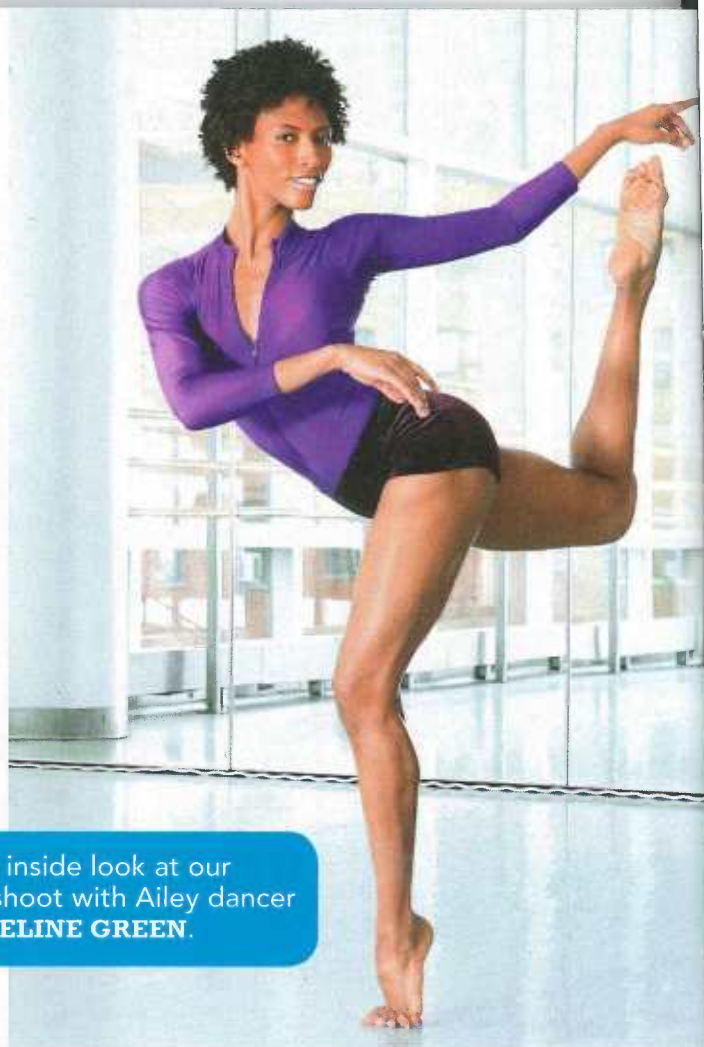
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On the Cover
Jacqueline Green in her own clothes.
Photographed by Jayme Thornton.
Hair and makeup by Angela Huff.

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Get an inside look at our cover shoot with Ailey dancer **JACQUELINE GREEN**.

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May DANCE MAGAZINE Video of the Month

Congratulations to **Alyssa Aparicio** and **Erik "Talltree" Butts**, winners of May's Video of the Month contest. Their video, "Diario de Viaje," is filmed on location in Baja California, Mexico.



PLAY VIDEO Watch at dancemedia.com/v/12173

You Could Be the Next Winner: Enter your dance film at dancemedia.com.

Correction: The photo on page 58 of Dance Magazine's June issue was incorrectly credited. It is by Eddy Fernandez.

What's on Your Mind?

In our June issue, we gathered advice for navigating the tricky transition from college to career. Readers shared their own tips:

"Let the maturity and wisdom that you gained in college help steer your will and desire. Intelligent desire will get you far!"
—Ballet West principal Christopher Ruud (@cruud35) via Twitter

"Network! Talk to other dancers, choreographers and directors. There are Facebook pages dedicated to helping dancers find work."
—Zayani Gardner Mandigo via Facebook



"It's easy to get frustrated after all the opportunities college offers. Don't give up, and keep confident!"

—Sara M (@Sara_Mol14) via Twitter



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Find Your Joy

On the subway one morning just before finishing up this issue, I started thinking about Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and what the company has meant to me over the years. I began reminiscing about the time in high school when I got to take Ailey's company class. One of my ballet teachers, Zoltan Peter, often taught it when the troupe toured to Berkeley, so one Saturday I got to tag along, then watch the matinee. After doing barre and center next to so many superhuman movers, I was shocked when, during *Revelations*, a 65-year-old Dudley Williams came center stage. I couldn't figure out why such an athletic company would feature a performer his age. But I couldn't stop watching him. It was like he translated the music in his bones, and I could feel the spirituality of the iconic piece through his movement. Watching how he luxuriated in the joy of the choreography, it was the first time I truly realized how dance could transcend virtuosity.

Later that day after my nostalgic subway daydreams, I learned that Williams had just passed away over the weekend. After performing with Ailey for 41 years, he'd spent his last decade teaching at The Ailey School, and dancing with Paradigm, an ensemble of not-exactly-retired modern dance legends.

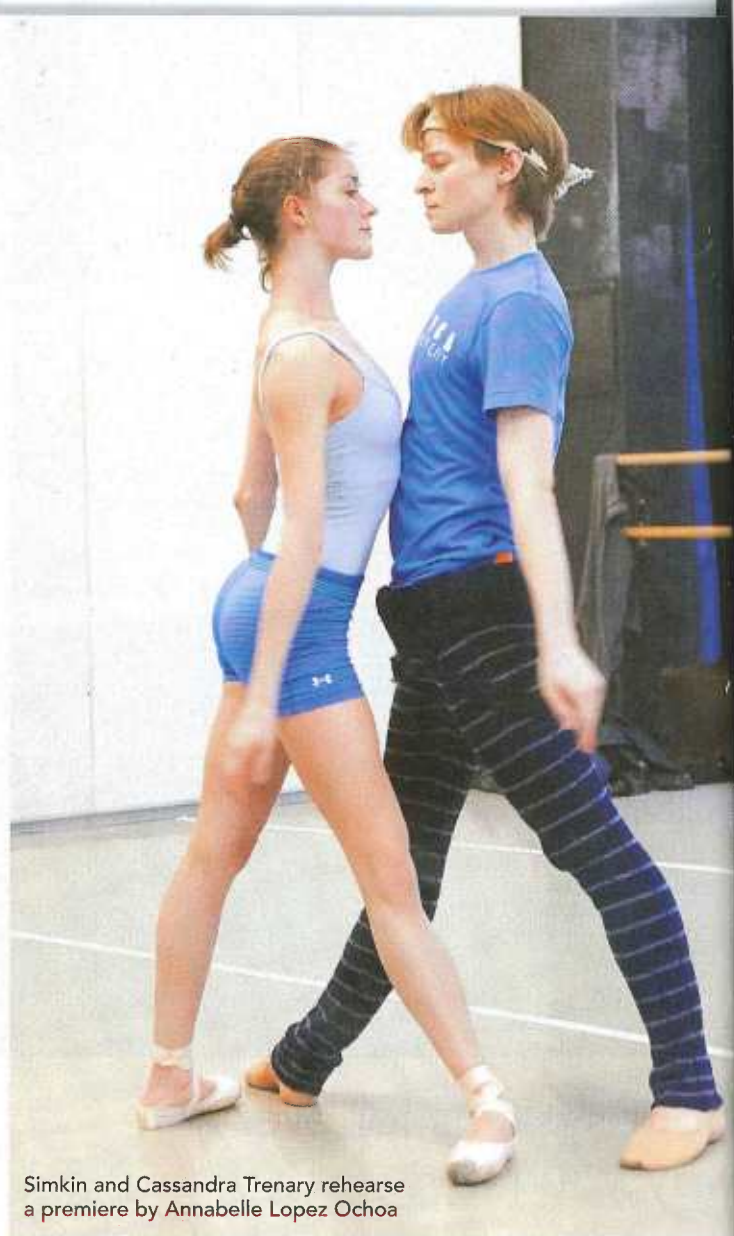
Any dancer would be lucky to embody a hint of Williams' lifelong eloquence. In today's versions of *Revelations*, one of the most powerful performers is Jacqueline Green, who beautifully takes on the classic "umbrella" role. As Robert Battle puts it in our cover story, "She has within her movement that old-time religion—something in the lilt of the movement, the weight, that reminds you of our past." In this role, it's not her airy leaps that make you do a double take, but the wavelike rippling through her torso, the dynamic way she responds to the music and the sense of purpose she puts behind every step.

For dancers who are still searching for their place onstage, this issue features a detailed guide on how to get an "in" with your dream company—with invaluable tips for even the most networking-averse dancers. Directors like Doug Varone and Dwight Rhoden gave us some incredibly honest answers about who they hire, what turns them off and even what they find annoying but works anyway. Chasing

down your career goals takes persistence (and incredible resilience), but it's all worth it once you find your place where, like Dudley Williams, you can just luxuriate in the joy of dancing.

Jennifer Stahl

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Simkin and Cassandra Trenary rehearse a premiere by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa

"The more you speak it, the more fluent you become and the more enjoyable the piece becomes."

—**Danil Simkin**, on how learning new choreography is like learning a new language, **page 30**

FUND YOUR TRAINING:

Our **2015 Scholarship Guide (page 46)** has details on hundreds of merit- and need-based awards.

Accidental Star

Jacqueline Green didn't take her first dance class until a hic



The first time Jacqueline Green auditioned for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, she was 16. She'd taken her first dance class just three years earlier—when teachers had to physically hold her foot to teach her a tendu. Yet when she and a couple of friends learned that Ailey's main company was holding auditions in Washington, DC, they shuttled down from Baltimore to try out.

The auditions were being run by Matthew Rushing—now the company's rehearsal director—and then-artistic director Judith Jamison. "After a couple of combinations, Miss Jamison said, 'I think some of you need to be auditioning for The Ailey School'—and my girlfriends said, 'I think she's talking about us.'"

It may have been the last time Green took anything in her dance career so casually.

Ailey audiences know the 25-year-old rising star for her impossibly long legs, her angular ferocity, her regal onstage presence, even her elegant braided hairstyles. New Yorkers got to know her this spring as the girl in a giant split leap on subway posters promoting Ailey's Lincoln Center run. But ask her colleagues about this Princess Grace Award winner and they focus not on her physical characteristics but her more cerebral ones.

"She's hungry, and she has great potential," says Ailey artistic director Robert Battle. "She still has room to grow, because she's so curious, so intelligent. That's a unique combination. You get a sense that she hasn't plateaued."

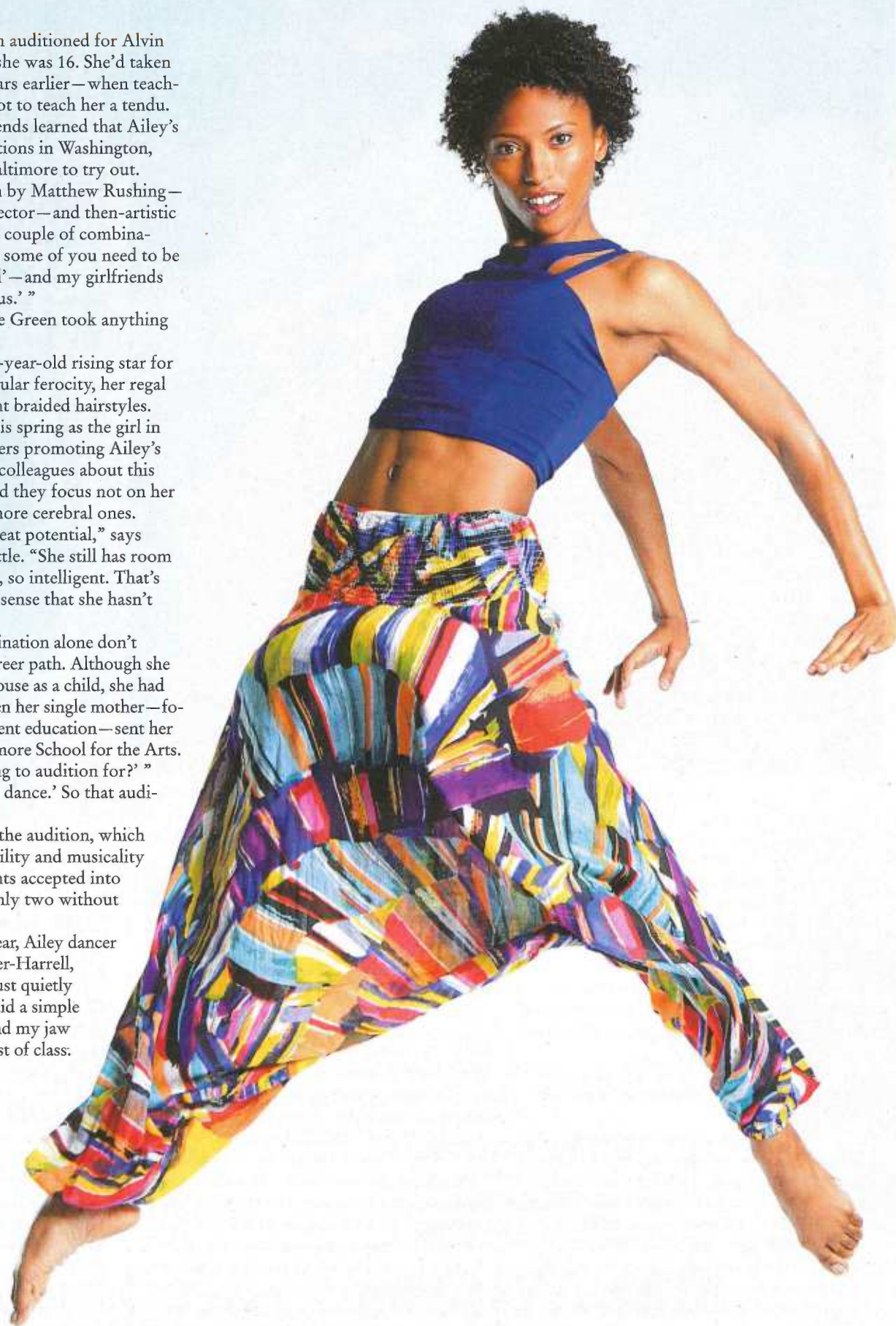
But Green's drive and determination alone don't explain what's been a meteoric career path. Although she was always dancing around the house as a child, she had no training until high school, when her single mother—focused on giving her kids an excellent education—sent her to audition for the rigorous Baltimore School for the Arts.

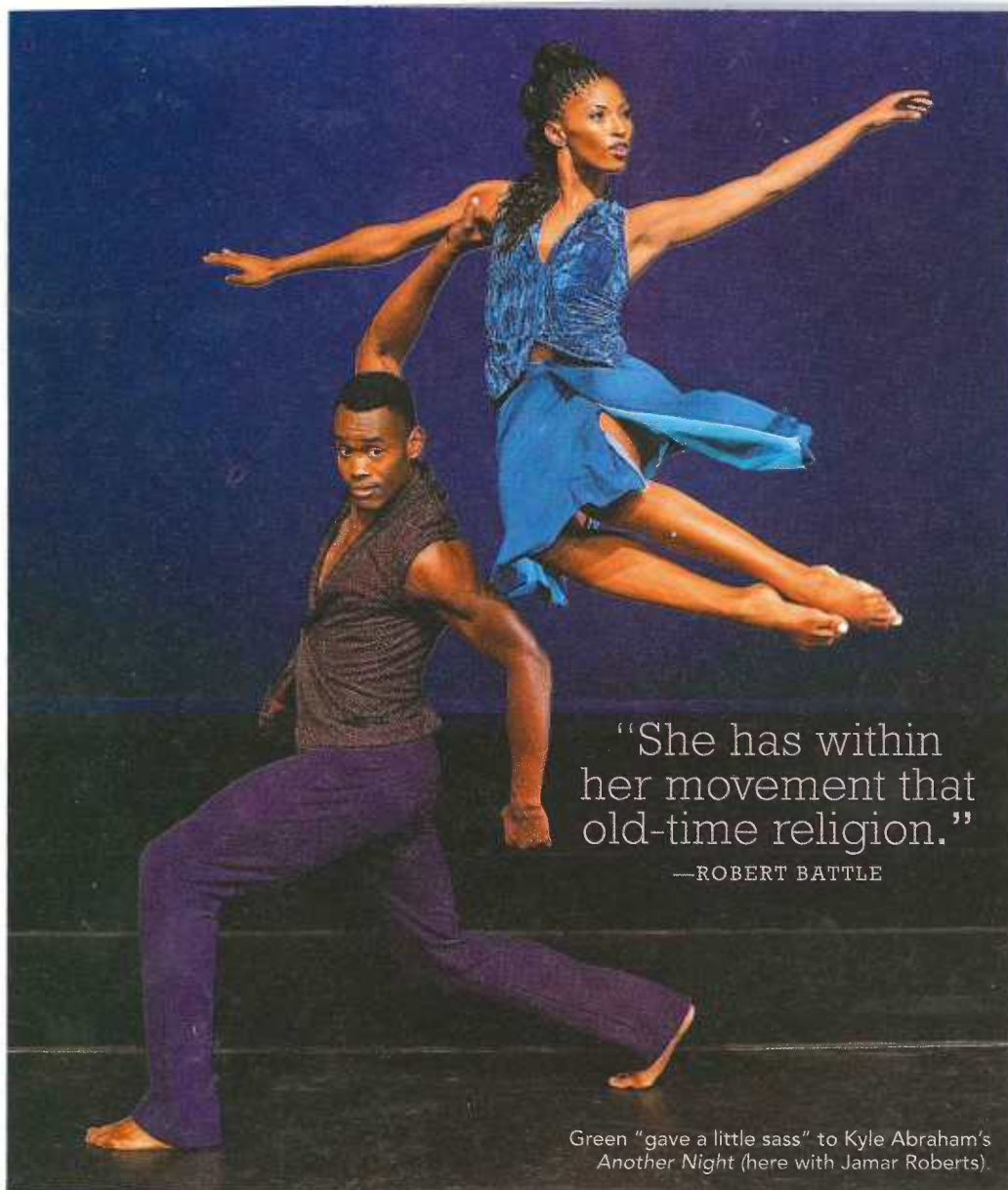
"I asked her, 'What am I going to audition for?'" Green says. "She said, 'Well, you dance.' So that audition was my first ballet class."

There were some 200 kids at the audition, which involved a short barre plus flexibility and musicality tests. Green was one of 22 students accepted into the dance program, and one of only two without training.

During Green's sophomore year, Ailey dancer and BSA grad Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell, dropped in for a class. "She was just quietly in the corner," Green says. "She did a simple arabesque enveloppé to passé—and my jaw dropped. I stared at her for the rest of class. She was so perfect, so beautiful."

Suddenly Green had a path forward. She started researching dance careers in general, and Ailey in particular. After three years of taking classical ballet, she started training in Horton during her senior year, and set her sights on Ailey's joint BFA with Fordham University. ▶





"She has within her movement that old-time religion."

—ROBERT BATTLE

Green "gave a little sass" to Kyle Abraham's *Another Night* (here with Jamar Roberts).

"In the audition process with young dancers, you immediately recognize those with extraordinary talent and ability," says Melanie Person, now director of the Ailey/Fordham program, who was one of the audition judges that offered Green a spot. "Jackie has a beautiful facility for dancing. She also exudes this energy of aspiration and determination. She has a real, sincere desire to dance."

Green was determined to make a career at Ailey. "You walk in the building and it's just like," she says, pausing to find the right word, "history."

"And beautiful people," she adds, then qualifies it further—"and beautiful people who look like me."

By junior year, she was apprenticing with Ailey II; as a senior, she was a full member of the second company, layering her academic coursework on top of company dance classes, school dance requirements and rehearsals.

The next year, Green auditioned once again for the main company. This time, she was prepared—as was Battle, who had just stepped into his new role. "I'd had my eye on

her," he says. "I thought she'd be perfect for the main company."

Green has since taken on several of Ailey's iconic roles—including one originated by Jamison in *Pas de Duke* and the prominent "umbrella" role in *Revelations*, which she says has been her "favorite forever."

"*Revelations* is very heavy in the beginning, and she's the first glimpse of light and joy," Green says. "She's taking on the movement of the water...It's such a regal role. I'm trying to look at how other people did it," she adds. "I talked to Renee Robinson, to Miss Jamison. I'm still doing research."

To Battle, the umbrella role is just part of a range of work that shows Green's flexible talents. "With umbrella, she has within her movement that old-time religion—something in the lilt of the movement, the weight, that reminds you of our past," he explains. "It's got nothing to do with concert dance. But then she has this way, in *Chroma*"—a Wayne McGregor piece in which Green dances the same role often taken by Ailey star Linda Celeste Sims—"of doing something very futuristic.

She can give you that contemporary style."

In a company that has been known to emphasize crowd-pleasing flair and showy theatrics, Green is notable for her internal focus and economy of movement. Even in humorous pieces—the "Bucket" routine in Rushing's *Odetta*, for instance—she delivers razor-sharp restraint, to delicious effect.

Meanwhile, Ailey's diverse rep also gives Green an opportunity to challenge herself. "Anytime we have a choreographer coming in, I do a little research," she says. "If it's something I'm not used to, I just try to find something familiar that I can work with." For Rennie Harris' piece *Home*, from her first year, she dug into her Baltimore roots. When Kyle Abraham came in, she recalls, "the movement was very jazzy, but I knew he liked sass. So I gave it a little sass." It worked: Green had a starring role in his *Another Night*.

Or maybe it wasn't just the sass: Abraham praises not just the "otherworldly things she can do with her body," but also her collaboration during rehearsals. "She was very helpful with the other dancers in the room, teaching them the movements," he says. "It sets up a good environment for trust."

Even Green's elaborate hairstyles are deliberate—part of an effort to connect with the audience. "I like the braids because I had them in my head shot, so the audience can recognize me," she says. For Green, being recognized matters. "I want to do that for black girls who don't think they can be dancers," she says.

"Dance was a gift, a blessing. I want to make people aware of the opportunities they have. I didn't know about them till Linda-Denise came and took class, and that changed my life."

This past spring, Green was looking forward to performing in her hometown, but Ailey had to cancel its performances due to Baltimore's unrest over the death of Freddie Gray, who suffered fatal injuries in police custody. "It would have been so beneficial for us to be there; dance is very necessary," says Green, adding that, "Politics is completely who I am. I was a black person before I was an artist. But I use my frustrations, go into rehearsal or onstage and vent through what I do. It's an emotional release."

And when she does go back home to Baltimore, she tries to share her outlet with others. "I want girls to think, Oh, wow; she's like me," Green says. "I want to show them it is a dream, but you can make it a reality." ■

Rachel F. Elson is a writer in New York City.