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**The online edition of The New York Times for the iPad had the photo as its filler page.*

The New York Times



A Commanding Salute to Posterity

Renee Robinson gave the farewell performance every dancer would love to give at City Center Theater on Sunday evening. After more than 30 years of professional dancing, she was still a compelling image of style, moving with verve and élan at the heart of two of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's classic works. Any dancer in any company could learn from her about focus, projection and ardor; she danced as if she had not only the equipment to carry on much longer but the hunger for it too.

**ALASTAIR
MACAULAY**

**DANCE
REVIEW**

Like thousands, I shall miss her glamour, the proud carriage of her beautiful head with its memorable cheekbones and jawline, and the bright light in her eyes. The way she turns that

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Renee Robinson, foreground, performing "Night Creature," part of her farewell on Sunday at City Center, after more than 30 years of professional dancing.

head and those eyes to different points in the theater — aiming never at the rehearsal mirror but always at you, you, you and me — has long been a thrill. So has been the sheer power and sensuality of her dancing. The figure-eight twists of her hips at the start of "Night Creature" on Sunday could have drawn any newcomer at once into the idiom with which this work opens.

And as the dance changed, so did she: jumping and turning with a command that belied her years. At one point she was

carried onstage in an overhead lift, with one leg beaming upward and her head and shoulders arched right over her partner's back. This acrobatic lift is often seen these days in ballet, but most ballerinas perform it with a desperate and all-too-passive quality; Ms. Robinson showed precisely how it should be done, with a firm arc through her thigh, spine and arms — radiating energy like force of mind. (When the curtain fell and the applause ended you could hear an extra echo of appreciation for Ms. Robinson from all onstage.)

The evening closed with Ailey's "Revelations." There she was once again in white wielding the white umbrella ("Wade in

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Commanding Salute Comes With Lesson For Posterity

From First Arts Page

the Water”), and then in the finale (“Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham”) at the heart of the women dressed in yellow with their fans and their stools. The cast included such other leading lights of the company as Matthew Rushing, Linda Celeste Sims, Alicia Graf Mack, Glenn Allen Sims and Jamar Roberts. Heaven knows how many hundreds of performances she has given of this work; she had as much passion and zest as ever — and, in the encore, even more glee.

She may make some final appearances with the company in Washington, her hometown, in 2013; but for most of us an era now opens up without her. Her professional career has been all Ailey; she is the only dancer who has worked for all three of its artistic directors, starting with Ailey himself. The present one, Robert Battle, opened Sunday evening with a happy, good-humored speech hailing her achievement. At the end flowers were thrown from the audience, but only two bouquets were presented onstage. Mr. Battle presented one; Judith Jamison, the company’s second director, presented the other. Holding one of those bouquets in each

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater continues performances through Dec. 30 at City Center, 131 West 55th Street, Manhattan; (212) 581-1212, nycitycenter.org.



ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Renee Robinson in her finale on Sunday, “Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham,” part of “Revelations.”

Only one dancer has worked for all three of Ailey’s artistic directors.

hand, Ms. Robinson, beaming her brightest, took a solo curtain call as the audience stood and cheered.

The program was one of “Ailey Classics.” The middle part consisted of seven excerpts from six other dances by Ailey: “Phases” (1980), “Opus

McShann” (1988), “Love Songs” (1972), “For ‘Bird’ With Love” (1984), “Hidden Rites” (1973) and “Cry” (1971) — some of which have not been seen for many seasons. Even when some of these include choreography that is less than inspired, Ailey’s sure skill at making dance register theatrically stays constantly impressive. His work still opens up generous, eager, communicative performing.

In a solo from “Love Songs,” the artistry of Mr. Rushing’s phrasing was extraordinary, turning material that

might easily be negligible into a commanding study in dance musicianship.

Though Ms. Robinson did not perform in these pieces on Sunday, the program was the ideal one for her farewell. She is, as Mr. Battle told the audience, an Ailey classic herself.

ONLINE: SLIDE SHOW

More photos from the performance: nytimes.com/dance