

ALL★ARTS

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ALL ARTS Presents a Look Inside Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Artistic Director Robert Battle's New Directions Choreography Lab in an Eight-Part Digital Series, Premiering May 2

Filmmaker Steven Tabakin follows choreographers Quilan "Cue" Arnold and Maria Bauman as they work with dancers training at The Ailey School to explore new territories in dance

ALL ARTS, the streaming platform and channel dedicated to the arts, will premiere **Alvin Ailey New Directions**, an eight-part digital series documenting the creative process of two choreographers as they explore new directions in dance during their residencies at the New Directions Choreography Lab, a creative residency program hosted by [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) Artistic Director [Robert Battle](#) and [The Ailey School](#), with Co-Director Melanie Person.

The documentary series follows the creative journeys of two-time Bessie Award-winning dance artist and community organizer **Maria Bauman** and movement artist **Quilan "Cue" Arnold** as they spend seven weeks working with student dancers from The Ailey School in a choreographic lab. Through direct-to-camera conversations with Arnold, Bauman and Battle, the series also delves into what it means to be an artist and how to foster community within artistic spaces.

"We are excited to partner with The Ailey School to share an intimate look at the workings of Robert Battle's New Directions Choreography Lab," said **James King**, senior artistic director of ALL ARTS. "What audiences don't necessarily witness on the stage are the creative risks

behind producing a new work. In ***Alvin Ailey New Directions***, viewers are invited on an artistic journey with Bauman and Arnold to experience how their ideas take shape.”

“Thanks to ALL ARTS, a curtain is now opening on the exhilarating world of creativity and collaboration that is the New Directions Choreography Lab,” said **Robert Battle**, artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. “Viewers will join the next generation of choreographers and dancers on a path of discovery at The Joan Weill Center for Dance, where they have time, space, and freedom for process, exploration and play. As artists, we know that playing around is serious business and can be the seed for the next innovation in dance that inspires and shifts perspectives.”

Alvin Ailey New Directions premieres May 2 on the free [ALL ARTS app](#), [website](#), [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).

Episode Premieres:

Alvin Ailey New Directions: Paying It Forward

Building on Alvin Ailey’s legacy, Robert Battle created New Directions Choreography Lab as a safe space for emerging choreographers to explore new ideas with The Ailey School student dancers. The residency culminates in an informal showing of their work.

Alvin Ailey New Directions: Quilan “Cue” Arnold

Choreographer Quilan “Cue” Arnold recounts his artistic evolution, including the experiences and people who got him to this point in his dance career. Speaking about the residency at The Ailey School, he finds he must resist his ambition to achieve.

Alvin Ailey New Directions: Maria Bauman

Traveling to The Ailey School from her home in NYC, dance artist Maria Bauman focuses on the idea of mentorship — with special gratitude for the queer and Black mentors who supported her work to create empowering artistic spaces.

Alvin Ailey New Directions: Searching for a True Move

Opening the studio to a camera crew creates an opportunity and a challenge for choreographer Quilan “Cue” Arnold. Rehearsing with cameras present sparks a new exploration of who to be and how to perform while maintaining community and truthfulness.

Alvin Ailey New Directions: Sweating Your Truth

Setting out to add new techniques to skills the dancers already have, Maria Bauman introduces text-based dancing, speaking and singing. The exercises challenge Ailey School students to improvise in response by drawing from their inner landscapes.

Quilan “Cue” Arnold’s presentation, “Searching for a True Move,” is an approach based on Ubuntu philosophy and the idea that “I am because you/we are.” He guides Ailey School students to explore what is meaningfully true for them in the moment.

During an open rehearsal, Maria introduces her explorations around Black wealth, including mentorship. This dance piece uses the recorded voice of her mentor Dr. William R. Jones, who was a Black Liberation scholar, a theologian and philosopher.

Reflecting on the New Directions Choreography Lab, Quilan “Cue” Arnold and Maria Bauman discuss vulnerability, courage and what it means to be an artist. Robert Battle notes Alvin Ailey said, “The most interesting works of art are the most personal.”

For ALL ARTS: Rachel Pearl is Multimedia Producer. Kristy Geslain and Joe Harrell are Executive Producers. James King is Senior Artistic Director. Diane Masciale and Neal Shapiro are Executives in Charge.

About ALL ARTS

About the New Directions Choreography Lab

The New Directions Choreography Lab (NDCL) is a creative residency program hosted by Robert Battle and The Ailey School. The program was initiated by Mr. Battle in 2011 as a response to what he identified as the biggest detriments to creativity in the choreographic process: lack of time, space, artistic and financial resources. The primary mission of the lab is

to cultivate an environment in which choreographers are free to take creative risks and explore new ideas. Four artists will be selected annually to receive a monetary stipend, access to dancers from The Ailey School and studio time at The Joan Weill Center for Dance for the purpose of choreographic exploration.

In the past decade, the New Directions Choreography Lab has welcomed 38 choreographers, 19 creative advisors, and involved over 240 of The Ailey School's Professional Division students.

New Directions Choreography Lab is supported, in part, by a WarnerMedia Arts and Culture grant funded by the AT&T Foundation. Additional support provided by Tarell Alvin McCraney and TD Charitable Foundation.

About The Ailey School

The Ailey School is the official school of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, which grew from a now-fabled March 1958 performance in New York that changed forever the perception of American dance. Founded by Alvin Ailey, posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation's highest civilian honor, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle. Guided by the belief that dance instruction should be made available to everyone, Alvin Ailey founded The Ailey School in 1969. In 1982, The Ailey School and its programs received accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Dance and flourished for almost three decades under the direction of Denise Jefferson until her passing in 2010. Since then, Co-Directors Tracy Inman and Melanie Person have led the prestigious faculty of over 75 dance professionals. The Ailey School offers one of the most extensive dance education programs in the world for ages 3-25, attracting students from over 93 countries and providing up to 450 awards to talented students with financial need in the form of scholarships and housing stipends each year. In 2017, The Ailey School expanded with the opening of the Elaine Wynn and Family Education Wing. With this addition, the building now encompasses 87,000 square feet with 16 rehearsal studios, two classrooms, a 275-seat theater, physical therapy facilities, a library, a costume shop, administrative offices, and more – making the School's home at 55th Street at 9th Avenue, The Joan Weill Center for Dance, the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the world capital of dance.

Visit [@theaileyschool](https://theaileyschool.org) and www.alvinailey.org, for more information.

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