

Introduction to Robert Battle: 12:33 min. Photo: Andrew Eccles. Montage: Raymond Elman. Music: Simple Gifts performed by David Molho.

Video Chat with Robert Battle: From Liberty City to the Statue of Liberty

By Elman + Perez-Trujillo

Robert Battle became artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in July 2011 after being personally selected by Judith Jamison, making him only the third person to head the Company since it was founded in 1958. Mr. Battle has a long-standing association with the Ailey organization.

A frequent choreographer and artist-in-residence at Ailey since 1999, he has set many of his works on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Ailey II, and at The Ailey School. The Company’s current repertory includes his ballets *Awakening*, *No Longer Silent*, and *The Hunt*. In addition to expanding the Ailey repertory with works by artists as diverse as Kyle Abraham, Mauro Bigonzetti, Hope Boykin, Ronald K. Brown, Rennie Harris, Matthew Rushing, Paul Taylor, and Christopher Wheeldon, Mr. Battle has also instituted the New Directions Choreography Lab to help develop the next generation of choreographers.

Mr. Battle’s journey to the top of the modern dance world began in the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami, Florida. He showed artistic talent early and studied dance at a high school arts magnet program, before moving on to Miami’s New World School of the Arts, under the direction of Daniel Lewis and Gerri Houlihan, and finally to the dance program at The Juilliard School, under the direction of Benjamin Harkarvy, where he met his mentor, Carolyn Adams. He danced with The Parsons Dance Company from 1994 to 2001, and also set his choreography on that company starting in 1998. Mr. Battle then founded his own Battleworks Dance Company, which made its debut in 2002 in Düsseldorf, Germany, as the U.S. representative to the World Dance Alliance’s Global Assembly. Battleworks subsequently performed extensively at venues including The Joyce Theater, Dance Theater Workshop, American Dance Festival, and Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival.

Mr. Battle was honored as one of the “Masters of African-American Choreography” by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2005, and he received the prestigious Statue Award from the Princess Grace Foundation-USA in 2007. In 2014 he received an honorary doctorate from The University of the Arts. Mr. Battle was named a 2015 Visiting Fellow for The Art of Change, an initiative by the Ford Foundation. He is a sought-after keynote speaker and has addressed a number of high-profile organizations, including the United Nations Leaders Programme and the UNICEF Senior Leadership Development Programme.

— Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

The videos below are organized by topic and run between 30 seconds and 13 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 5:48 min.



We attended the Miami premiere of your piece called “Awakening,” which was magnificent. Did the movement come from the early part of your career?

CRITICAL THINKING: 7:16 min.



There is so much personal symbolism in “Awakening.” How much do you expect the audience to understand?

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 2:47 min.



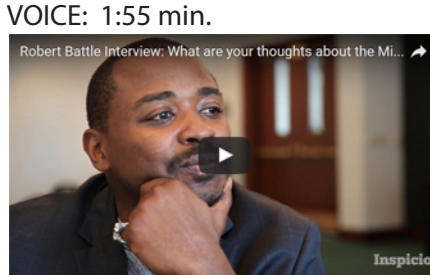
When did Erwin Schulhoff write the music you use in “No Longer Silent,” and why did you use it?

COLLABORATION: 2:30 min.



How did you evolve into your role as artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater?

DEVELOP A UNIQUE VOICE: 1:55 min.



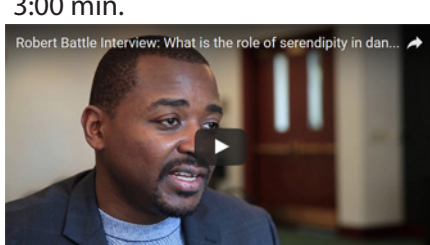
What are your thoughts about the Miami dance community?

VALUES LEARNING DISCIPLINE: 8:15 min.



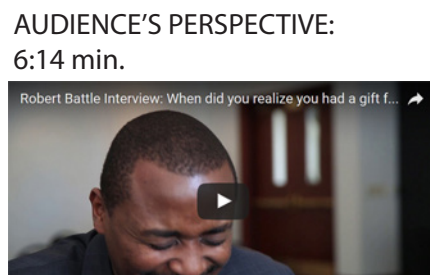
Please describe some of your community outreach programs in Miami.

SERENDIPITY: 3:00 min.



What is the role of serendipity in dance?

UNDERSTANDS THE AUDIENCE’S PERSPECTIVE: 6:14 min.



I’ve heard you communicate very effectively with an audience. Was there a moment when you realized that you have a gift for oratory?