

## ROBERT BATTLE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



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 *Ella*, *The Hunt*, *In/Side*, *Juba*, *No Longer Silent*, and *Mass* – a 2017 Company premiere. In addition to expanding the Ailey repertory with works by artists as diverse as Kyle Abraham, Aszure Barton, Ronald K. Brown, Christopher Wheeldon, Rennie Harris, Hofesh Schechter, Jiří Kylián, Wayne McGregor, Robert Moses, Ohad Naharin, and Paul Taylor, 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 and visited the White House to accept from President Obama, on behalf of Alvin Ailey, the National Medal of Freedom – the nation's highest civilian honor. Mr. Battle was named a 2015 Visiting Fellow for The Art of Change, an initiative by the Ford Foundation. In October 2015, Simon & Schuster published *MY STORY, MY DANCE: Robert Battle's Journey to Alvin Ailey*, an inspiring children's book based on Mr. Battle's life. 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.

**"Under new leadership, Alvin Ailey troupe shines. ... going by the pleasant surprises in the repertoire, as well as the healthy appearance and vivid energy of the dancers, Artistic Director Robert Battle has the troupe's forward momentum well in hand."**

-*The Washington Post*, Sarah Kaufman – Feb. 8, 2012

**"...shepherding the company into exciting artistic territory..."**

-*The New York Times* – Nov. 27, 2015

**"...Battle isn't afraid of making a big noise."**

-*The New Yorker*, Marina Harss – Nov. 16, 2015

**"...He wasted no time in expanding the rep, reaching into the company's past riches as well as taking on other modern dance giants."**

-*Dance Magazine*, Wendy Perron - Dec. 6, 2011

**"When Robert Battle became the artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in July, he set a clear goal: to broaden the repertory. Now.... he's delivering."**

-*The Wall Street Journal*, Pia Catton - Nov. 20, 2011

**"an aural universe of pounding, elemental percussive rhythms and cries...fine choice for the virtuosic, athletic energies of the Ailey men as well as an appropriate acknowledgment of his [Robert Battle's] new presence. Most impressive...is the brutal physicality of the dancing and the way these men both find its nuances and give their all."**

-Roslyn Sulcas, *The New York Times*, Dec. 2, 2010

**"Battle represents a new generation, not just at Ailey, but in modern dance."**

-Jordan Levin, *The Miami Herald*, May 16, 2010

**"Some of them [his pieces] prompt wild audience ovations... He knows the dancers and their tradition, and he has already given them several popular successes. [He has] a strong track record working with a wide range of dancers. I can't see a better choice than Mr. Battle..."**

-Alastair Macaulay, *The New York Times*, April 29, 2010

**"Battle's choreography is dazzling."**

- Karen Campbell, *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 25, 2008