

October 29, 2018

**Open Rehearsal and Conversation with Robert Battle, Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**

***Award-winning choreographer will also discuss his work being staged on Princeton students by Elisa Clark for the Princeton Dance Festival***



Photo Caption: Robert Battle, Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Photo Credit: Andrew Eccles

What: Open Rehearsal and Conversation with Robert Battle, Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Who: Robert Battle conducts an open rehearsal with Princeton student dancers and stager Elisa Clark followed by a conversation about his work as a choreographer and artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

When: Wednesday, November 7; Open rehearsal 5:30-6:15 pm; Conversation 6:30-7:15 pm

Where: Hearst Dance Theater at the Lewis Arts complex on the Princeton University campus

Free and open to the public

(Princeton, NJ) Internationally-renowned choreographer and artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Robert Battle will lead an open rehearsal of his work *Rush Hour* with the cast of Princeton student dancers on Wednesday, November 7 at 5:30 p.m. in the Hearst Dance Theater at the Lewis Arts complex on the Princeton University campus. A conversation with Battle and the stager of *Rush Hour*, Elisa Clark, will follow the rehearsal at 6:30 p.m. The piece will be performed at the annual Princeton Dance Festival on November 30, December 1 and December 2 at the Berlind Theatre at McCarter Theatre Center. The open rehearsal and conversation are free and open to the public.

**Robert Battle** became artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in July 2011 after being personally selected by Artistic Director *Emerita* Judith Jamison, making him only the third person to head the Company since it was founded in 1958. 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*, *In/Side*, *Mass*, *No Longer Silent*, and *The Hunt*. In addition to expanding the Ailey repertory with works by artists as diverse as Kyle Abraham, Mauro Bigonzetti, Ronald K. Brown, Rennie Harris, and Paul Taylor, Battle has also instituted the New Directions Choreography Lab with a goal to help develop the next generation of choreographers.

Battle’s early study of dance led him to The Juilliard School. He performed with The Parsons Dance Company from 1994 to 2001 and set his choreography on that company starting in 1998. Battle then founded his own organization, 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.

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. He was named a 2015 Visiting Fellow for The Art of Change, an initiative by the Ford Foundation, and has been a featured speaker at the United Nations Leaders Programme and the UNICEF Senior Leadership Development Programme.

*Rush Hour* is one of Battle’s earliest works, danced to music composed by John Mackey.  It was inspired by Battle’s first impressions of the fast-paced energy of New York City as a young student.  The dance itself depicts people that are machine-like in their efforts to keep up, demanding stamina, precision and perseverance from the student performers.

**Elisa Clark** is an award-winning artist and educator and a founding member of Battleworks Dance Company. She has been a featured member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, and Mark Morris Dance Group, as well as performed with Nederlands Dans Theater and The Metropolitan Opera, in works by Jirí Kylián, and Crystal Pite, respectively.  Clark is currently on faculty at the University of the Arts, Jacob’s Pillow, MOVE (NYC) and the American Dance Festival, in addition to guest teaching nationwide.  She is a 2008 Princess Grace Award Winner.

Princeton students have been working extensively with Clark on *Rush Hour* to be performed at the Princeton Dance Festival alongside repertory works by Mark Morris, staged by Tina Fehlandt; and Crystal Pite, staged by Alexandra Damiani; and the premiere of new works by choreographers Marguerite Hemmings, Malcolm Low and Abby Zbikowski, one of Princeton’s inaugural Hearst Choreographers-in-Residence.

To learn more about the Princeton Program in Dance, the Dance Festival, and the more than 100 other performances, exhibitions, readings, screenings, concerts and lectures presented each year by the Lewis Center for the Arts, most of them free visit: [arts.princeton.edu](http://www.princeton.edu/arts).

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