

# BLACK STREET

SHOWCASING GREATNESS WITHIN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

## A DANCER THAT SINGS WITH HIS BODY- Yannick Lebrun

October 29, 2011



**Yannick Lebrun**, from Cayenne French Guiana, began training in his native country at the AdaclamSchool under the guidance of Jeanine Verin. After graduating high school in 2004, he moved to New York City to study at The Ailey School as a fellowship student. Mr. Lebrun has performed works by choreographers Troy Powell, Matthew Rushing, Debbie Allen, Scott Rink, Thaddeus Davis, Nilas Martins and Dwight Rhoden and danced with the Francesca Harper Project *Modo Fusion*. He was named one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" in 2011. Mr. Lebrun was a member of Ailey II and joined the Company in 2008.

**"Yannick Lebrun, with his elegant line, stands out ...More and more, he is becoming the dancer you notice in a crowd."**- The New York Times

**"...making an impression this season...Marvelous."** -The Star-Ledger

**"He was a vision throughout the program. Mr. Lebrun doesn't merely dance the steps,he sings with his body, and the music it makes keeps you wanting more."**- The New York Times

**BS: When did you began dancing? Did you get professional experience prior to Alvin Ailey?**

**Yannick Lebrun:** I started dancing at the age of 9. Dancing with the Alvin Ailey American dance theater was my first experience as a professional dancer. I was also a member of Ailey II before I joined the main company.

**BS: How were you introduced to the opportunity to the Alvin Ailey school? How has this experience impacted you?**

**Yannick Lebrun:** Since 1997, in French Guiana, I participated in dance competitions in various styles. Those competitions took place in every French department and are organized by the National Confederation of Dance in France. I remember going to Martinique in 2001 for a dance competition and the late Denise Jefferson was one of the judges. After the results, she announced that I was the recipient of a scholarship to come to The Ailey School summer intensive Program. The following years, in 2002 and 2003, she came to French Guiana and the same thing happened. Again, I was offered a scholarship to come for the Summer program.

I was 14 the first time I came to America to study at The Ailey School. The energy was amazing and the working environment was intense and challenging. The different techniques that I was introduced to amplified my love and passion for dance. Also getting the chance to work with great choreographers made me realize that Ailey was where I wanted to start a career as a professional dancer.

**BS: I can only imagine the level of discipline it must require for you to maintain such a beautiful physique. What are your daily regimes, exercises, and/or practices to maintain your body build? Do you rehearse daily?**

**Yannick Lebrun:** To maintain a body in great shape, I work out often. I make sure I take all the vitamins I need before rehearsals and performances. However one of the most important thing for me is to take class. We rehearse from Monday to Friday from 12 to 7pm and we have a company class at 10.30am prior to rehearsal.

**BS: Have you encountered any obstacles or challenges that threatened your dancing? If so? How have you overcome them? Have you encountered any other obstacles?**

**Yannick Lebrun:** When I was younger being the only boy doing ballet in my dance studio in French Guiana was not easy at first. I had to stay strong and focus on my goal to make others believe that being a male dancer was possible. Since then, I haven't really encountered any obstacles.

**BS: How long do you aspire to dance?**

**Yannick Lebrun:** As long as I stay healthy and as long as my body allows me to, I will always keep dancing. Even though I may perform less as I grow old, I want to keep inspiring the generations that will come after me.

**BS: What advice can you share with an aspiring dancer?**

**Yannick Lebrun:** The most important advice that I can give is to stay passionate, to work hard and to start thinking about how to keep your body in shape. To be able to know how YOUR body functions and not YOUR FRIEND'S body is very important to have a successful career in Dance.

**BS: Do you have any upcoming shows?**

**Yannick Lebrun:** Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's 2011 New York City Center Season November 30-January 1<sup>st</sup> and then a 27-city North American tour running from February-May.

