



New Adventures

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By Daniel Harder

Hello! My name is **Daniel Harder**, and I am one of the newest members of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. I am very excited to be able to share all of my thoughts with you through this blog, about the amazing new adventure I am embarking upon. My first international tour with the Ailey Company is less than three weeks away!

So far, it has been a very hectic summer, as one could imagine for any new dancer just joining a company. I, along with three other new Company members, am in the process of learning all of the repertory (new and old) that the Ailey Company performs around the world. It has been a grueling, yet exciting process, trying to gather and store all the information that is being shared with us by our director, and fellow dancers. I must say, that everyone has been very welcoming, which has helped make the transition into the company a lot smoother.

Already, we have begun rehearsing ballets by Alvin Ailey, Judith Jamison, Geoffrey Holder, Mauro Bigonzetti, George Faison, and many more (constantly drilling the movement, as well as stressing the intent behind it). Two ballets that have been absolutely wonderful to work on are Robert Battle's "The Hunt" and Christopher Huggins' "Anointed."

Robert Battle, who is now the artistic director designate of the Ailey Company, has created several ballets on Ailey. Yet, I think the most exciting challenge he's brought into the repertory is his latest addition, "The Hunt." Set for six men, it is a ballet that has cardio written all over it. It is a non-stop, very physical and demanding work that has us scouring up every ounce of power, aggression, and STAMINA (I'm running out of breath as I think about it) that we can muster. I had the opportunity to perform the work as a member of Ailey 2, but I must admit... the bar has risen now that I am a member of the main Company. The talent and drive of my fellow dancers is awe-inspiring. I know that when the curtain goes up, the dancers in this Company mean business and the expectations of Mr. Battle are even greater because of the level of the men he's now working with. I know I am definitely looking forward to performing the ballet when we head to the UK in three weeks to begin our international tour.

Similarly, "Anointed," by Christopher Huggins is also another ballet that requires great precision, grace, and vigor. A former Ailey Company member, Mr. Huggins challenges us to not only demand fabulous technical feats from ourselves, but also to push past our artistic comfort zones and dig DEEPER! I have had several opportunities to work with him, but I know that this experience is going to challenge me to reach above and beyond anything I've ever demanded of myself before. We are only on day three of rehearsing Christopher's ballet, but already the bar has been set very high. "Anointed" is set to have its first premiere in the UK, and I know Christopher will have us twirling every day in preparation for showtime! I expect "Anointed" to not only take the dancers on an electrifying journey, but the audience as well.

Well, it's getting late in the evening and I need to begin preparing for tomorrow's day of extensive rehearsals and class. So, I feel like now is the time to get as much shut eye as possible... before the real fun and madness begins! I am looking forward to sharing and giving you all a glimpse in to the world of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, through my eyes. I predict it's going to be a riveting roller coaster ride.... Stay tuned! :-)