

BACKSTAGE

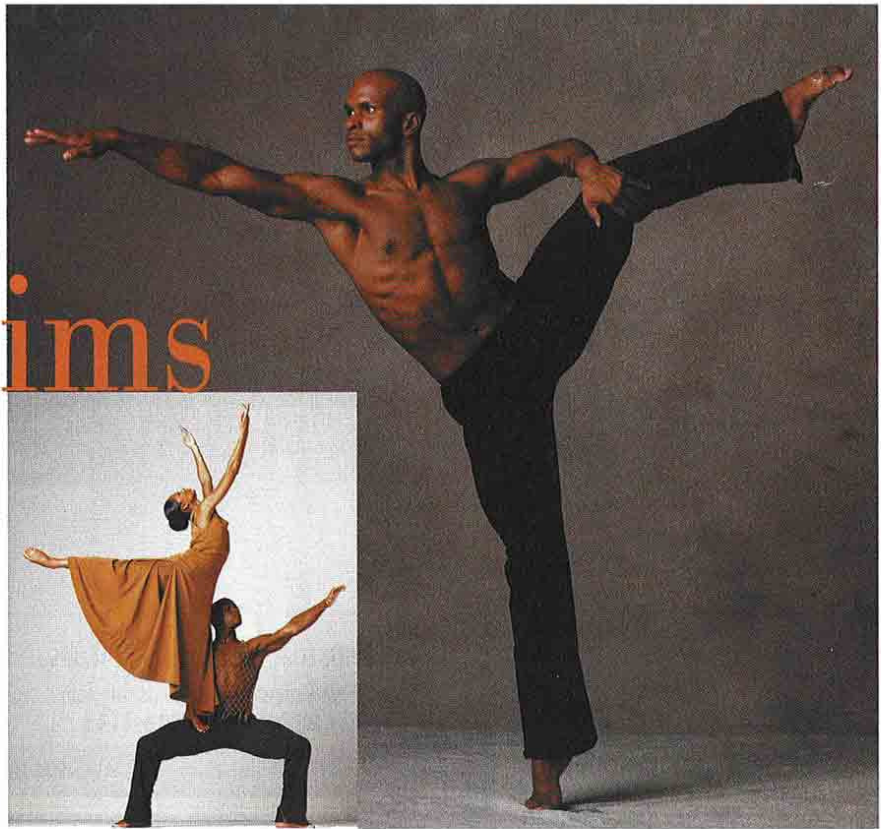
with

Glenn
Allen Sims

By Sharon Wagner

Even in the twenty-first century teachers and company directors will tell you that the male dancer is a much sought-after commodity. A strong presence and strong partnering skills are a prerequisite. On meeting Glenn Allen Sims, one would think from his appearance that he is an athlete but in fact, he is a prominent member of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Glenn's interest in the performing arts started at an early age, choreographing and directing his brothers and cousins in youthful family performances. The public school system in Long Branch, New Jersey, where he lived, was very involved in promoting the arts in education and Glenn started out as a singer. There was a "pretty lady teaching dance," and he was drawn to her class at age nine and has been dancing ever since.

He studied tap and jazz with Michelle Neiberline and Yvonne Lamb Scudieri but it was Jennifer Church, director of The Academy of Dance Arts in Red Bank, New Jersey, who saw Glenn's potential and encouraged him to take ballet more seriously. All through high school he continued his pursuit of a professional career studying on scholarship at the Ailey School during the summer of 1993 and 1994. Upon graduation, he auditioned for and was accepted as a dance major at the prestigious Juilliard School at Lincoln Center in New York City. Ben Harkarvy, the dance department's director, was a great artistic force in his life taking him to the next level of professional expertise. Glenn also cites Hector Zaraspe as having a strong influence during his time at Juilliard where, in addition to ballet classes, he studied the modern styles of Jose Limon, Martha Graham, Paul



Photos: Andrew Eccles

Taylor and Lester Horton. At the end of this third year at Juilliard, Glenn was offered a contract with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Mr. Ailey was always a driving force in Glenn's career, even though the two had never met. He had a large photo of Ailey hanging over the bed in his dorm room. Although urged to complete his studies at Juilliard, he opted to start his professional career and accepted to join the company. During his first year, he learned solos in Judith Jamison's "Sweet Release" and also works by George Faison and Dwight Rhoden. Some of his favorite roles are the I Wanna Be Ready and Wade in the Water sections of Ailey's "Revelations," as well as "Episodes" by Ulysses Dove. He has appeared as a guest artist with the Urban Dance Theater and Creative Outlet Dance Theater of Brooklyn and also in a command performance for the King of Morocco. He was honored by his high school in Long Branch, New Jersey and is the youngest inductee in their Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame.

Glenn is married to Ailey dancer Linda Celeste Sims. She is a local New York City gal who received her training at the Ballet Hispanico School and the Fiorello H. LaGuardia

High School of the Arts. When not in the classroom, rehearsal studio or on stage, Glenn finds the gym a great release and keeps in shape by doing yoga, Pilates, jogging and spinning, a form of bicycle exercise. He is certified to teach floor barre and might be interested in becoming a personal trainer down the line. Outside the areas of dance and physical fitness, he is an expert baker and produces delectables under the name Sweet Simsations. After a long search to buy a condo, Glenn became interested in real estate and home improvement and lists handiwork and apartment painting among his hobbies.

Glenn Allen Sims "proudly fulfills Ailey's belief that dance came from the people and should always be delivered back to the people." He would tell aspiring dancers that regardless of what anyone tells you, you can accomplish your dream no matter what your background or education.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will return to New York's City Center Theatre from November 29- through December 31 after completing a tour of England, France and China. The Company will be touring throughout America in 2008. Check their website www.alvinailey.org for details. **DM**