

# Robinson retires, Abraham arrives: It's a season for celebrating at Alvin Ailey

If the dance world had a Triple Crown, Renee Robinson would be winning it. This year, the lithe performer with the high forehead earned an MFA from the Hollins University/ADF program, will receive the prestigious Dance Magazine Award on Dec. 3, and celebrates her final performance with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater on Dec. 9.

Robinson, who hails from Washington, D.C., wanted to be a lawyer but got sidetracked by a full scholarship to Ailey's school. The female dancer with the longest tenure in the company's history, she has hung in for 31 years, performing and mentoring younger arrivals. The last dancer to be chosen by Ailey himself, back in 1981 she was so shy that she was passed over at her first audition.

"They said they did not see my passion," she explains. "You have to go again, and don't stand in the back!" my friends said. The second time I stood in the front and smiled really big." Since then she's traveled the world and become

## If you go

► **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**  
Nov. 28-Dec. 30  
NYCity Center  
135 W. 55th St.  
\$20-\$150, 212-581-1212  
[www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org)

a pro at wielding a microphone, preparing kids for shows they're going to see.

She'll appear in all the performances of Ailey's classic "Revelations" during the first two weeks of the season, and also dance in his "Night Creature" at her farewell gala.

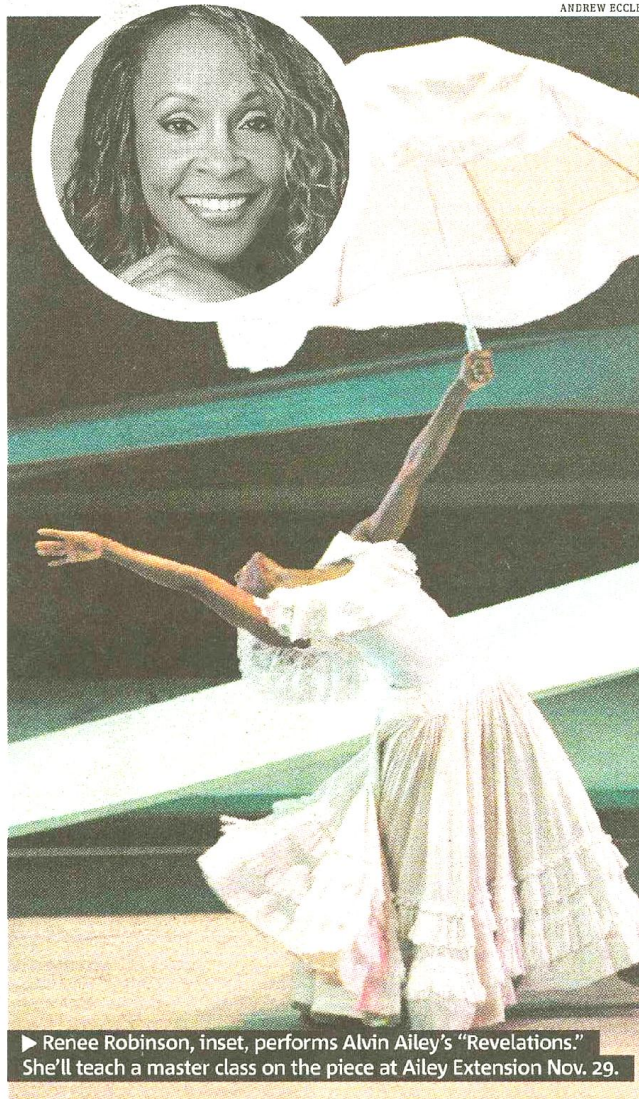
Speaking of prizes, Kyle Abraham, making his Ailey choreographic debut Dec. 5 with the world premiere of "Another Night" to Dizzy Gillespie, has just received a two-year resident commission by New York Live Arts. The grant covers salary, health insurance, studio space and a commissioning fee for new works. Now there's a Christmas present!

## Free dance class

With the ticket stub from any Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater or Ailey II performance around the nation, receive a free class at the Ailey Extension at the Joan

Weill Center for Dance. For complete class schedules and information on The Ailey Extension, visit [www.aileyextension.com](http://www.aileyextension.com).

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► Renee Robinson, inset, performs Alvin Ailey's "Revelations." She'll teach a master class on the piece at Ailey Extension Nov. 29.