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A dazzling, jazzy day at Alvin Ailey

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Dancing is great fun and something we love to do. We were so happy to find out that we were going to the New York City Center to watch a rehearsal of "Grace," performed by the Alvin Ailey dancers. Afterward, we were able to talk with two of the brilliant dancers, Jacqueline Green and Yannick Lebrun. This was an experience that most kids could only dream of.

We attended a rehearsal for their upcoming show. They incorporated African dance with jazz and ballet. The choreographers were onstage, fixing what they thought the dancers needed to change. The performers danced to great music. The Alvin Ailey dancers are all amazing. Their style is unique, combining jazz and ballet.

The costumes are cultural and go with their dances very

well. The company tours internationally. While the dancers are traveling, they get ready by stretching and practicing their dances many times. After preparing, it's time to put on the show.

After the rehearsal, we walked excitedly to the V.I.P. room, where we meet Yannick and Jacqueline. We asked many questions and learned some of their famous dance moves.

It was a great day and a really fun experience! Their current performance at the City Center runs through Sunday. You don't want to miss it. Visit them online at alvinailey.org

We asked Jacqueline what made her want to dance. She said, "My mommy. I'm from Baltimore, so I was looking for high schools, and my mom said, 'You need a really good academic high school . . . so you should audition for the Baltimore School for the Arts.' But I didn't know what I would

go for. So I auditioned for dance because I was flexible. And when I auditioned, they accepted me and I was [thinking], 'OK, I'll try this.' Then, the first week of dance classes, I fell in love with it. So even to this day I'm, like, "Thank you, thank you [to my mom]."

Yannick told us, "I started dancing when I was 9 — very young for a man, especially in French Guiana, where I grew up. Dance is not something that everybody does, so it's very young."

We wanted to know if they are involved with the international tours. Yannick said, "Every year, we have a very intense international tour and, of course, a North American tour, traveling and being able to perform in front of different audiences. It's good to share the African-American culture and the modern dance tradition abroad."

Jacqueline added, "You know how you guys are into sports? You know how they have home



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Kidsday reporters Alexis Barone, left, and Katelyn Rossello with Alvin Ailey dancers Yannick Lebrun, left, and Jacqueline Green

games and away games? We do that every year. We have home, where we travel, America, and then we go overseas, like Germany and France. So it's nice."

See our video with the Alvin Ailey dancers. Go to exploreLI.com/kidsday