

P.O.V.

Point of View: A WEEK IN REVIEW AT THE
Adrienne Arsht Center
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

AILEY DANCER COMES HOME TO GIVE BACK

August 2, 2010

“Now is *your* time to shine. Here we go, 5, 6.... 5, 6, 7, 8!” and with that Yusha-Marie Sorzano sends her AileyCamp Miami student dancers flying. They are preparing for the AileyCamp final performance in three weeks, and Yusha has them dancing fast and fierce – just as she has done on stages across the globe. Born in Trinidad, Yusha’s family moved to Miami when she was 9 years old, where she promptly enrolled herself in after school dance classes at her local, Miami public school. She went on to study dance at New World School of the Arts, and then jumped straight into the New York dance scene, landing a spot in the one of the world’s most acclaimed modern dance companies, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. After several years with the Ailey Company, Yusha is now back in Miami, working as an instructor at AileyCamp at the Adrienne Arsht Center – touching the lives of young people through the magic of dance.



What made you decide to come onboard as an instructor at AileyCamp Miami?

I’ve always taught kids, but this is such a different experience – to teach all day long, four technique classes, and really get to know the kids. I wanted to introduce myself to this type of teaching experience. Plus, I started dancing in the public school system (*all AileyCamp students are Miami-Dade County public schoolers*), so it was important to me to give back. I had planned to come to Miami, and now every night I tell my parents and friends how much fun I’m having here.

Is it exhausting, teaching 100 middle school kids from 8:30am to 3:30pm?

YES!

What has been the biggest challenge for you at AileyCamp?

Learning all 100 of the kids’ names! I want to get to know each student personally. Now, what I’m working on is trying to remember one special thing about each of them.

Do the kids know that you’re an international dance superstar?

Ha! I’m not sure they fully understand the importance of Alvin Ailey. But when they read my bio and see that I’ve danced with Rihanna and Beyonce, then they say ‘wow.’

Tell us about your technique class for AileyCamp.

Basically, it's the 20K take on Horton technique for young kids. I'm introducing the technique to kids who haven't had much dance training, so I try to make it relatable for the kids, combining it with popping and locking, playing songs the kids know. I want them to know Horton technique can be lots of fun.

Now that you're back in Miami, what are the next steps for you?

I definitely want to do more outreach in Miami. I hadn't planned on it, but this experience has shown me that I do. I also want to dance in Europe. And I just acted in my first indie film in LA, produced by Omar Epps and written, directed, and starring another Miami New World graduate.

Best moment in AileyCamp so far?

Watching the person in the back – who usually has some difficulty getting the steps – finally get it. Seeing the smile on their face. The joy.

Class is winding down and Yusha gathers the students for a bit of advice. "We are working very fast, yes?"

"YES!" her students echo.

"So you need to practice these steps. You need to eat, breathe, and sleep these steps," Yusha says. Vigorous nods from the kids. "You wake up in the morning – practice the step. A beat comes on the radio – practice the step. You're shopping for groceries – practice the step."

The dancers grin and head out the door practicing... following in Yusha's footsteps.

