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### **29th Annual International Conference and Festival of Blacks in Dance Honoring Robert Battle, Alvin Ailey's Artistic Director**

The **29th Annual International Conference and Festival of Blacks in Dance** is honoring dance industry trailblazer **Robert Battle**, the Artistic Director for **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** when it meets in Dallas, Texas January 25-29, 2017. Robert Battle is the conference luncheon keynote speaker and will participate in a panel discussion on "Transitions and Stability of Today's Dance Companies."

Robert Battle became the artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in July 2011. He is the third person to head the dance company since its inception in 1958. Battle was a frequent choreographer and artist-in-residence at Ailey since 1999. Mr. Battle also instituted the New Directions Choreography Lab to help develop the next generation of choreographers. Battle founded his own Battleworks Dance Company in 2002. He was honored as one of the "Masters of African-American Choreography" by the **Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2005**.

More than 700 participants worldwide are expected to attend the conference. The **International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD)** is designed to meet the needs of professional, advanced, and student dancers as well as dance administrators and instructors. The conference will provide master classes, lecture/demonstrations, panels, workshops, and performances.

There will be a multi-company audition for professionals conducted by the founding and member companies of IABD. Following a major triumph from the 2016 conference, IABD will hold the **2nd Annual Ballet Audition for Women of Color** who are seeking contracts and professional training opportunities with premier ballet companies.

Confirmed ballet companies attending the audition are:

- Ballet Austin, Austin, TX
- Ballet Memphis, Memphis, TN
- Charlotte Ballet, Charlotte, NC
- Dance Theatre of Harlem, New York, NY
- The Hartt School, Hartford, CT
- Nashville Ballet, Nashville, TN
- Pacific Northwest Ballet School, Seattle, WA
- Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh, PA
- San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco, CA
- School of American Ballet, New York, NY
- Texas Ballet Theater, Fort Worth, TX

Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings will showcase performances by internationally renowned dance companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the founding companies of The International Association of Blacks in Dance; **PHILADANCO!** (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), **Cleo Parker Robinson Dance** (Denver, Colorado), **Dallas Black Dance Theatre** (Dallas, Texas), **Dayton Contemporary Dance Company**, (Dayton, Ohio) and **Lula Washington Dance Theatre** (Los Angeles, California).

- Thursday Evening: Emerging Artists & Youth Ensemble Showcase
- Friday Evening: Established Artists & Members Showcase
- Saturday Evening: Founders & International Company Showcase

Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT) has hosted the conference and festival seven times during its 29-year history and it is a part of DBDT's 40th Anniversary Season. The conference headquarters is the Sheraton Dallas Hotel, located at 400 North Olive Street, Dallas, Texas 75201. All public performances will be held at the Majestic Theatre.

For more details visit <http://www.iabdassociation.org/conference>.

#### **About International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD):**

IABD has been the national service organization for Black dance professionals for over 25 years. It was formed to celebrate, preserve and promote dance from African origins. IABD also assists and increases opportunities for artists in networking, funding, performance, education, audience development, philosophical dialogue, touring and advocacy. IABD developed out of the International Conference and Festival of Blacks in Dance, which was first held 29 years ago. This event has become an epicenter for all individuals who are interested in the rich history, contributions, and advancement of black dance performance and artistry.

#### **About Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT):**

Founded in 1976 by Ann Williams, Dallas Black Dance Theatre is the oldest professional dance company in Dallas and the 10th largest minority arts organization in the nation. The mission of Dallas Black Dance Theatre is to create and produce contemporary modern dance at its highest level of artistic excellence through performances and educational programs that bridge cultures and reach diverse communities. During its 40-year history, Dallas Black Dance Theatre has a tradition of sharing its talents with the world starting in 1991 when the company performed in Lima, Peru and did a 10-city performing tour in Italy. DBDT has performed on five continents, in 15 countries and 31 states, including two Olympic Cultural events. Over the years more than 4 million arts patrons and 2.6 million students, grades K-12, have experienced the dance company. DBDT serves more than 100,000 people annually, including more than 20,000 youth. [www.DBDT.com](http://www.DBDT.com)



Robert Battle, Artistic Director Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

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