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

DALLAS, TX - The 29th Annual International Conference and Festival of Blacks in Dance returns to Dallas, Texas for “Boundless Excellence in Dance,” where they are honoring dance industry trailblazer Robert Battle, Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Robert Battle is the recipient of the prestigious Founder's Award to be presented during the conference’s Awards Luncheon where he will deliver the keynote address. The conference and festival takes place January 25 - 29, 2017 at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel, 400 North Olive Street, Dallas, Texas. Following the Awards Luncheon Battle will take part in a panel discussion.

The Founder's Award is given to an individual who is one of a kind and consistently explores new and groundbreaking approaches to dance in our community. The award recognizes exceptional choreography, performance, and uniqueness of the Dance Artists creative voice. This award recipient has demonstrated a genuine commitment to the mission of IABD and its philosophy which emphasizes the continued responsibility of "carrying the torch" by preserving and promoting dance by people of African ancestry or origin.

Robert Battle became the Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in July of 2011. He is only 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, where he set many of his works on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II and The Ailey School. 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. Battle trained at The Juilliard School. Battle has successfully continued to push boundaries and expand the conversation around what defines the Black Dance experience. He has done so by exposing audiences to an eclectic and non-traditional range of choreographers that have set commissioned works on the Ailey company. Robert Battle’s diverse career as a performer, choreographer, artistic director, philanthropist and visionary make him an ideal speaker for the multigenerational dance artists of color that will have the privilege of experiencing his keynote address.

More than 700 participants worldwide are expected to attend the 29th Annual International Conference and Festival that is designed to meet the needs of professional, advanced, and student dancers as well as dance administrators and instructors/educators. The conference and festival is filled with 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 organizations attending the Ballet audition are:

- Ballet Austin, Austin, TX
- Ballet Memphis, Memphis, TN
- Charlotte Ballet, Charlotte, NC
Thursday, Friday, and Saturday performances by internationally renowned dance companies such as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (New York, NY), Philadanco! (Philadelphia, PA), Cleo Parker Robinson Dance (Denver, CO), Dallas Black Dance Theatre (Dallas, TX), Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (Dayton, OH), Lula Washington Dance Theatre (Los Angeles, CA), and numerous others, are another highlight of the conference and festival experience. All performances will take place at the Majestic Theatre exhibiting a wide array of dance styles.

- Thursday Evening: Emerging Artists & Youth Company performances
- Friday Evening: Established Artists & Member Company performances
- Saturday Evening: Founders & International Company performances

Dallas Black Dance Theatre has hosted this international conference and festival seven times during its 29-year history and it is a part of DBDT’s 40th Anniversary Season. The conference and festival headquarters is the Sheraton Dallas Hotel, 400 North Olive Street, Dallas, Texas 75201. For more details and conference registration information, visit [http://www.iabdassociation.org/conference](http://www.iabdassociation.org/conference).

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About The 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 by people of African ancestry or origin. IABD also assists and increases opportunities for artists in advocacy, audience development, education, funding, networking, performance, philosophical dialogue, and touring. 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 (DBDT) 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.