

## Andre W. Tyson Biography

André W. Tyson is a former Principal Dancer and Company Teacher with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. His affiliation with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Foundation began as a scholarship student in 1980 and continued through 1994. Mr. Tyson became a member of the Foundation's two junior companies, Ailey 3 (1980) and Ailey 2 (1982) and performed with the main company from 1985-1994. Presently, Tyson is Senior Faculty/Contemporary at California Institute of the Arts Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance. As a faculty member he teaches Contemporary technique (Levels I-IV), Pilates method (Mat I-II and Reformer II), Jazz and Repertory. He is an Admissions Recruiter and Department Faculty Liaison for the Korea National University of Arts Exchange Program. Tyson also serves as a Peer Advisor for the Dance Department and is a Faculty Advisor for the CalArts Collective.

Prior to joining the team at CalArts, Tyson was an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Peck School of the Arts Department of Dance from 1998-2008. Throughout his career he has studied with, worked along side and collaborated with a range of prominent master teachers, educators and artists. His ongoing quest for excellence is evidence of a commitment to his personal growth as an artist and a belief that such commitment is reflected in the devotion and instruction he provides his students. Creative expression as manifested in the expansion of physical and artistic boundaries, reflects Tyson's proactive approach to his career development and concomitantly enriches his ability to create, instruct and inspire.

### Training and Study

The list of master teachers with whom Tyson has studied is a long and distinguished one, including Alvin Ailey, Ana Marie Forsythe, Judith Jamison, Milton Myers and James Truite in Horton technique. Graham technique was studied with Penny Frank, Carol Fried, Pearl Lang, Denise Jefferson, Pat Thomas and Dudley Williams, while ballet was learned under the tutelage of Delores Brown, Homer Bryant, Robert Christopher, Fred Danielle, Kyne Franks, Gabriella Taub-Darvash, Walter Raines and Michael Vernon. Tyson broadened his expertise by studying jazz with Fred Benjamin, Nat Horne, Cecilia Marta, Alvin McDuffie, Jose Meir, Jerome Robbins and Suzie Taylor and Dunham Technique/African dance with Katherine Dunham, Joan Peters and Lavinia Williams.

To further strengthen the command of his craft, Tyson acquired extensive training in somatic applications. Pilates method was studied with Romana Kryzankowska a protégé of Joseph H. Pilates, Master Instructor Phoebe Higgins and founder of Power Pilates /New York, NY, Susan Moran.

Floor Barre a Terre technique was developed with Master Teacher Zena Romett and somatic technique innovators Diane Grumet and Pam Pribisco. In 1985 with a personal

invitation from Alvin Ailey, Tyson joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Company.

## Choreography

Tyson has choreographed more than 65 works. Notably, he has created ballets for a eclectic range of companies such as Ailey 3, Ailey 2, Dance Compass, Brooklyn Dance Theater, Nanette Bearden Contemporary Dance Company, Premiere Dance Theatre, Milwaukee Dance Connection, City Ballet Theatre, Milwaukee Ballet 2, Milwaukee Ballet, Ballet Forder Zentrum /Nuremberg, Germany, Dance Point /Osaka, Japan and de Theaterschool Jazz Dance Company /Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

*Tyson has a knack for quirky phrases that stick in the brain... Tyson wedded phrases to specific themes to achieve formal clarity.*

~Tom Strini / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

In 1982 Tyson was the recipient of New Jersey State Council of the Arts Fellowship Grant for choreography. He served as an assistant to Talley Beatty in the re-staging of his work *The Road of the Phoebe Snow* on Ailey 2, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and the Nanette Bearden Contemporary Dance Company 1985-1990. He also assisted Mr. Beatty during the re-staging of his *The Stack Up* on the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company for the American Dance Festival in 1988. In 1994, Tyson was invited to participate as a guest choreographer at the prestigious Carlisle Project.

He was the featured choreographer for *Toenails of Steel & Ruby Red Text*, a program produced as part of the 20th Anniversary Season for the Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center in Brooklyn, NY in 1996. Here his work, *Lost Boyz*, was presented as part of a collaborative project of other black gay and lesbian composers, poets and choreographers under the direction of Ron K. Brown, Founder /Artistic Director of Evidence Dance Company.

He restaged Alvin Ailey's *Sinner Man* and *Mean Ole' Frisco* for the 65th Anniversary Celebration of Men Dancers at Jacob's Pillow in 1997. Most recently, Tyson restaged Talley Beatty's *Come And Get The Beauty Of It Hot* for the University of South Florida School of Theater and Dance, collaborating with former Ailey dancer John Parks.

Tyson was selected to choreograph Chancellor Nancy Zimpher's Inaugural Celebration at UW-Milwaukee in 1999. While in Milwaukee he developed an affiliation with Ko-Thi Dance Company, one of the country's pre-eminent independent companies focused on works of African and Afro-Caribbean origin.

In 2000 Tyson performed as a Guest Artist and served as Creative Consultant for the company. Tyson went on to receive a grant from the Alvin Ailey Dancer's Resource Fund that same year. In 2003 he received a grant from the UW-Milwaukee Arts and Humanities Award Program and choreographed for the University's Viennese Ball in 2004.

Tyson's choreographic foray into musical theater was a very successful and well reviewed re-staging of *Ain't Misbehavin* for the Skylight Opera Theater that same year. He was a 1999, 2005 and 2006 recipient of grants from the Faculty Development Fund of the UW-Milwaukee PSOA Department of Dance.

Further choreographic endeavors include *Juke Joint* a second collaborative offering with Ko-Thi Dance Company under the musical direction of Milwaukee Jazz legend Berkley Fudge. He followed that with the creation of *Armatrading* a poignant work set to music of Joan Armatrading at UW-Milwaukee PSOA as well as *Sketch Pad* and Personal *IMPERATIVES* for AAADT Joan Weill Center for Dance 2005. Additionally, Tyson presented the world premiere of [awt@vestiges.com](http://awt@vestiges.com) for the Milwaukee Ballet, a work that integrates digital media and addresses society's interdependency with technology. Prior to leaving UW-Milwaukee PSOA he created *Organic Algorithms* and *The Permanence of Goldfish* 2008.

He created *Sketch Pad Book 2: Impulses* 2008 and *fEnDiNg* at the California Institute of the Arts 2010. That same year, Tyson participated in *Conversation With A Choreographer*, part of the Pasadena Dance Theater *Choreographers Masters Series* and created a new work *Rumours*. This was a very unique choreographic enterprise in which, over the course of three weekends, PDT challenged three different choreographers, each from a different dance genre, to create an original dance work in only twelve hours using the same ten dancers, each work lasting the same eight to twelve minutes with music picked from a lottery of musical scores. In 2011 Mr. Tyson restaged *Treading in the 2nd Mind* for Irvine Valley Community College Irvine, CA and Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville, FL.

2012 was a very industrious year for Mr. Tyson as he choreographed *dArK Matter* on Douglas Anderson High School of the Arts students in Jacksonville, FL. *dArK Matter* is the first piece of a triptych evening length work Mr. Tyson is working on. He create two slightly different versions of the second installment *dArK Matter~Obfuscation* for Jacksonville University and California Institute of the Arts Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance students in Jacksonville, FL and Los Angeles CA respectively. The final work *The God Particle* will be completed in the near future.

Mr. Tyson created several new works in 2013/14 they include: *The Purity of Oblivion*, *Phantom Pain* and *Mnemonic Data* for the California Institute of the Arts Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance. *Released yEt ALWAYS* and *Field of Blood* was choreographed for Lula Washington Dance Theater during this time. Other recent works include *Circadian Rhythms*, *Vicissitudes of Time* for Pasadena Dance Theater Summer Workshop, *Circadian Dreams* for Barcelona Summer Intensive, *vErSeS* and *Harmonium* for Malashock Dance Summer Intensive along with *mEtA and Raison d'être (Except)* for Joffrey Jazz & Contemporary Summer Dance Intensive 2014. In 2015 Mr. Tyson created *Raison d'être* for California Institute of the Arts Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance students and later that fall he created for Ailey/Fordham a new work entitled *sCopToMa*. Tyson's passion for creative expression through choreography is constant. He created *Code~dlsSoNaNcE~REVERIE* on CalArts students in 2017. In 2018

he created three new works. The first on Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute Intensive he premiered *Anex La Nuit when we saw Acquiescence of Raum on Mango Drive in Bridge Lase London, Choreoglyphs*, on Milwaukee Ballet Summer Intensive students and at DanceCanvas in Atlanta he created *Ndanda*

*Tyson brings new dimensions to the UWM dance faculty. In addition to his grounding in Ailey and Horton, he studied Graham technique extensively and has a good deal of ballet training.*  
-Tom Strini /Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel

## Teaching

With more than 35 years of experience, Tyson has taught at studios throughout the New York Tri-state area as well as respected universities, schools and studios across the country and the globe. He has taught at such internationally renowned dance festivals as the International Tanz Wochen in Vienna, Austria in 1996 and the International Sommerakademie des Tanzes in Koln, Germany in 1997 and 1999. As a company teacher at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater from 1985-1994, Tyson conducted lecture demonstrations and master classes for residency programs. He continues as an AAADT Guest Artist, Guest Instructor at the school and Guest Company Teacher.

Teaching at Smith College, Wake Forest University, Ballet Forder Zentrum, University of South Carolina, Ballet Tennessee, Milwaukee Ballet School, de Theaterschool Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten and North Carolina School of the Arts, Tyson functioned as a member of the Contemporary Dance faculty. He taught all levels of contemporary dance (Horton and Graham based techniques), Pilates method, Jazz, Floor Barre a Terre, Contemporary Partnering, Repertory and Choreographic Workshops.

Additionally, he served as an Artistic Advisor and Mentor to the dance student body at each respective institution. He has taught summer workshop intensives for CalArts CSSSA (California State Summer School of the Arts) Program 2009, Hubbard Street Dance Company Los Angeles 2010/11. Bates Dance Festival 2011, Pasadena Dance Theater Summer Workshop 2013/14, Malashock Dance Intensive, Barcelona Summer Dance 2014, Joffrey Jazz & Contemporary Intensive 2014-2015 and Oklahoma Summer Arts Intensive along with Molinari Arts Center 2015.

Tyson continues to expand his range as a certified Pilates instructor and teaches the Pilates method locally and nationally. Since 2004 Tyson has visited Napoli, Roma, Pescara, Teramo and Olbia, (Sardegna) Italy where he conducted well-attended Contemporary Stages.

## Community

*Mr. Tyson, a former principal dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recently*

*spent 20 days as a Visiting Artist in the Paterson School District in order to identify and inspire talented youngsters...Through this residency, Mr. Tyson sought to nurture some of Paterson's young teenagers much as he was once nurtured in his hometown.*

-Barbara Gilford /the New York Times

Throughout his career, Tyson has evidenced a commitment to community service. He is firmly committed to making dance accessible to everyone and has done numerous master classes and residencies in New Jersey, Boston, Milwaukee and Los Angeles Public Schools. Tyson seeks to cultivate and help broaden the scope of artistic exposure for minority and inner city children and serves as a mentor to young students of color.

Upon arriving in Milwaukee, Tyson immediately became involved in community outreach teaching master classes and special workshops at Marquette High School, St. Joan Antida High School, Roosevelt Middle School and Milwaukee High School of the Arts. Furthermore, he conducted a master class for *Immersion Dance Workshop* Milwaukee, WI.

Tyson also served as Artistic Coordinator /Rehearsal Director and Company Teacher for City Ballet Theatre, a Milwaukee based modern dance company. Tyson supervised the dance component of CAP (CalArts Community Arts Partnership) Program at the Lula Washington Dance Theater in Los Angeles, CA.

He is a founding member of *WE CARE*, (now *Ailey Dancers Resource Fund*) an organization formed in 1991 to assist members of the Alvin Ailey organization who have been affected by catastrophic illness and has produced and directed several successful fund raising benefits.

For more than 25 years Tyson has maintained a vibrant on-going presence and involvement with AIDS Walk NYC, AIDS Dance-A-Thon NYC, AIDS Walk Wisconsin and AIDS Walk Los Angeles

## **A Dancer's Life**

Tyson's career reflects artistic work and collaboration with a stellar roster of actors, choreographers, composers, dancers, directors, designers and technicians in both live and recorded performances. Tyson performed as a soloist in Osaka, Japan in 1995. He was a guest artist with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, *A Tribute to Judith Jamison 10th Anniversary Celebration* /New York, NY in 1999 and Ko-Thi Dance Company, *Art In Motion /Harvest* Milwaukee, WI in 2000. Tyson performed with Allyson Green Dance, *In The Name* New York, NY in 2001. He is also a former member of Complexions Contemporary Ballet, an exciting innovative company under the creative direction of Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson, two fellow Ailey alumni.

He has performed several works by Mr. Rhoden, notably *Interiors* at Symphony Space

New York, NY in 1995 and *Cake* at the Joyce Theater New York, NY in 1997. In 2005, he performed as a guest artist at Long Island University Faculty Dance Concert. Tyson also appeared as a performer and choreographed an episode of the NBC show *Parenthood -Team Braverman (Season 1/Episode 12)* in 2010.

*Ailey's 1961 Hermit Songs was a dramatic little gem performed with confidence by Tyson who, with his sharply chiseled features, looks rather dramatic himself. Tyson managed to exude a sense of barely contained strength, carefully rationed.*

~Julinda Lewis /Dance Magazine

For the past several years Tyson has combined a full teaching schedule with a successful range of international performances across Europe and Asia. He appeared in a feature article in the March 2005 edition of *Dancer Magazine: An Interview with Professor Dancer Andre Tyson* by Yvonne Houston, Dance Magazine College Guide *College Dance=New Directions* and *Back Stage*. He also conducted residencies at Long Island University and the AAADT Joan Weill Center for Dance.

In 2006 Tyson completed his sabbatical project, a solo performance and collaborative choreographic retrospective concert: *Recriminations & Recovery: Loose Confessions of an Ex Altar Boy* at UW-Milwaukee PSOA Department of Dance. The work opens a dialogue with the audience on the theme of justice as it relates to *identity, race, sexuality, art* and *life*. The work was met with positive response and enthusiastic reviews.

More recently he performed in *Layla Means Night* choreographed by CalArts colleague Rosanna Gamson at RedCat in Los Angeles, CA in 2011/12. Mr. Tyson attended Jacksonville University full-time as the 2012 Howard Gilman Fellow and attained his graduate degree in dance and choreography in 2014.

In 2014 he choreographed and performed in his thesis work *The United States of @ndre The Transmutation Of Identity Through The Body Politic* and Alvin Ailey's *I Want To Be Ready* with the Ailey/ Legacy Program under the direction of Sylvia Waters. He revisited the role in New York, NY and performed with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater as part of their City Center season. Tyson has recently obtain his Melt METHOD Certification in 2018.

Tyson's position as Senior Faculty at California Institute of the Arts Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance provides him with exciting new challenges that nourish him as an artist, administrator and an educator. Exploring stimulating career opportunities as well as new artistic frontiers color and heighten not only his life as a creator, performer, educator, but like a pebble in a pond, ripple outward to influence and enhance the lives of his students. They also imbue his passions and collaborative spirit as a global dance citizen.

The synergy and synchronicity of the art of dance is made manifest daily in the *dance* between teacher and student, choreographer and dancer, colleague and colleague, and college and community. These relationships, like art, are organic and evolving.

Tyson remains committed to sharing his talents and giving back to the art form he loves and that has been such a force for positivity in his life and the lives of so many others.

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