

## **Where Do I Go?**

By

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While watching the January 2004 Kennedy Center performance of **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** (Ailey) something clicked. I was not looking at the dancers, choreography, scenery, lighting or even hearing the music the way I had in the past. What made this performance different? It wasn't the venue, the audience members, the time of year and it wasn't even my orchestra section seats. It was my vision it was different. No, not my 20/20 vision but my dance vision, it had been enlightened. Previous to attending the Ailey performance I served as the recorder for two days of the 2004 **International Association of Blacks in Dance** (IABD) conference held in Washington, D.C. That experience of sitting among the visionaries in Black dance altered my view of concert performance dance. Having a dance background, I have prided myself with the ability to identify and critique technique, stage presence as well as identify roots of choreographic style, but after attending IABD I had something else and until now I could not identify it. The two days (not even a full 48 hours) of attending IABD enhanced, elevated, clarified and created a level of responsibility for me as I observe dance. I was no longer simply a student of dance an educated spectator, but now an enlightened witness of dance beyond movement a dancer able to verbalize movement through emotional, historical plus a technical connection. As I reflected upon having sat among Eleo Pomaré, Syliva Waters, Joan Myers Brown, Dr. Sherrill Berryman-Johnson, Ronald K. Brown, Tiffany Jackson and Jasmine Wade mentioning only a few of a host of other dance legends and students I was able to study the WOM...MEN Celebrating Our

Dance and Treemonisha performances in addition to Ailey performance with sharper eyes, mind and soul. Also having witnessed and participated in discussions at IABD ranging from the role of Arts Administrator to the Politics and Aesthetics of dance heightened my perception of concert dance performance no longer allowing me to simply be entertained.

Now what! Where do I go from here? That is a good question. Where do I go from here?