Dynamic Duo  American Dance Machine for the 21st Century teams up with Steps on Broadway.

When the curtain comes down on a Broadway musical, what happens to its choreography? That's the question Broadway dancer and choreographer Lee Theodore sought to address when she launched American Dance Machine in 1978. Her goal was to create a "living archive" of musical theater choreography, so that great works and the techniques behind them—would be preserved. The original organization folded after Theodore's death in 1987, but in 2012, Nikki Feit Atkins revived it as American Dance Machine for the 21st Century. The current incarnation seeks to continue Theodore's vision and educate younger generations on musical theater history. In the years since, ADM21 has staged several well-received shows at New York's Joyce Theater, and gained increasing recognition.

When Diane Grumet, co-artistic/managing director of Steps on Broadway, approached Atkins about teaming up, she jumped at the opportunity. Through the new partnership, which began in September, ADM21 is in residency at Steps, offering repertory classes and a Ballet for Broadway class for intermediate and advanced dancers. "If we're going to reconstruct work and preserve it, we need to teach it to today's dancers and choreographers so they can experience it," Atkins says. "It's so important for dancers to have that history, even if they're doing new work."

A rotating faculty of dancers, choreographers and directors—many of whom have staged work for ADM21’s performances—teach the repertory class, which begins with the original ADM warm-up created by Theodore. The program launched with Donna McKechnie teaching "Tick-Tock" from Company, originally choreographed on her by Michael Bennett. Others, like choreographer Warren Carlyle, have taught historic works by luminaries such as Carol Haney, Agnes de Mille and Jerome Robbins. Ballet for Broadway is taught by former American Ballet Theatre and New York City Ballet principal Robert La Fosse, who was Tony-nominated for his role in Jerome Robbins' Broadway and has staged Robbins works for ADM21.

The courses are generally geared towards pre-professional dancers, and the repertory classes are required for Steps' conservatory program students. "I think it's creating a great sense of community," Grumet says. "It's important to have working artists working with students, developing them, mentoring them." She hopes it will also lead to networking and hiring opportunities.

Talks of expanding the offerings are already in the works, and Atkins has a long list of artists she'd like to bring in, including choreographers from some of Broadway's more recent productions, like Andy Blankenbuehler, Joshua Bergasse and Josh Prince. Lorin Latarro is already on board. ADM21 is expanding in other ways, too—a possible Broadway production of their Joyce show is in the early stages of development, targeting a fall 2017 opening.

In the meantime, the partnership with Steps is opening new doors for both organizations—but it's also, in some ways, a reunion. When Steps opened its studios at 74th Street 32 years ago, founder and artistic director Carol Paumgarten still remembers who taught the very first class: Lee Theodore. "I feel as if it's gone full circle," she says. - Suzannah Frisca

ADM21 performs a scene from Golden Boy during a performance at The Joyce Theater.

News of Note

COMINGS & GOINGS
At Pacific Northwest Ballet, Benjamin Griffiths has been promoted to principal, Angelica Generosa and Matthew Renko to soloist. At Columbia City Ballet, Philip Ingrassia has been promoted to principal, Annie Ruiz and Reinaldo Vergara Soto to soloist. Maria Mosina will retire from Colorado Ballet at the end of the 2016-17 season after 21 years with the company. The Suzanne Farrell Ballet will shut down at the end of the 2017-18 season. Farrell will become a resident teaching artist at the Kennedy Center.

AWARDS & HONORS
Ralph Lemon has been awarded a National Medal of Arts by President Obama. Bill T. Jones has received the International Humanities Prize from Washington University in St. Louis, including $25,000. At the 2016 Creative Arts Emmy Awards, Quest Crew ("America's Best Dance Crew") and Kathryn Burns ("Crazy Ex-Girlfriend") each received an award for Outstanding Choreography. Chicago Human Rhythm Project recognized Michelle Dorrance and Nicholas Young with the JUBAL Award for Extraordinary Contributions to the Field.