



# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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The Joan Weill Center for Dance 405 West 55th St, New York NY 10019-4402 (212) 405-9000 AlvinAiley.org

Robert Battle, Artistic Director Matthew Rushing, Associate Artistic Director Bennett Rink, Executive Director  
Alvin Ailey, Founder Judith Jamison, Artistic Director Emerita

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## ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL SEASON CELEBRATING SIX DECADES OF *REVELATIONS* DECEMBER 2 – 31, 2020

**“Revelations Reimagined” Opening Night Virtual Benefit on Wednesday, December 2**

**Four-Week Season Features World Premiere of *Testament* by Associate Artistic Director Matthew Rushing, Company Member Clifton Brown, and Former Company Member Yusha-Marie Sorzano**

**Ailey Resident Choreographer Jamar Roberts Creates Premiere as Part of the Centennial of Jazz Revolutionary Charlie “Bird” Parker**

**Ailey & Ellington and *Revelations* Interactive Family Matinees and Other Special Programs Throughout Holidays**

**New York – October 8, 2020 – [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#)**, recognized by U.S. Congress as “a vital American cultural ambassador to the world,” is known for uplifting and uniting audiences across the globe with messages of hope as it will this holiday season with a free virtual season from December 2 – December 31, 2020 celebrating six decades of [Revelations](#), thanks to the generous support of Bank of America. Led by Artistic Director [Robert Battle](#), Ailey’s extraordinary dancers will elevate a legacy of innovation and excellence in artistry with a reimagined season featuring premieres by Associate Artistic Director [Matthew Rushing](#), in partnership with Company member [Clifton Brown](#), and former Company member Yusha-Marie Sorzano, and Ailey’s Resident Choreographer [Jamar Roberts](#), as well as a variety of other special programs.

“Despite the current challenging circumstances, Ailey’s holiday tradition will move forward this December with virtual performances sharing characteristic warmth, spirit and artistry,” stated Artistic Director Robert Battle. “We hope Ailey’s groundbreaking season will provide inspiration and unity as we celebrate six decades of *Revelations*, reinvent classic works by our beloved founder and premiere choreography by members of the Ailey family, including Associate Artistic Director Matthew Rushing and Resident Choreographer Jamar Roberts.”

The virtual season **kicks off with “Revelations Reimagined” Opening Night Virtual Benefit on Wednesday, December 2 at 7:30pm ET** celebrating the global impact of the soul-stirring American masterpiece that is needed more than ever during these trying times. Springing from Ailey’s childhood memories of growing up in the south during the depression and attending services at Mount Olive Baptist Church in Texas, *Revelations* pays homage to the rich cultural heritage of the African-American on a journey from struggle to surrender to salvation that ultimately speaks to our common humanity and the power of faith and hope. This free event will be live streamed on various digital platforms and will include a spectacular virtual performance featuring Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and other special guests, followed by a post-benefit dance party. It will surely be a night to remember — one of celebration, dance, and love shared with people around the world.

The world is invited to join in the dance on **Thursday, October 8 at 12pm ET during a free [Revelations Celebration interactive workshop on Facebook Live](#) led by Ailey Arts-In-Education Master Teacher [Nasha Thomas](#) who will teach moves from Alvin Ailey’s must-see American masterpiece.** A former member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ms. Thomas has led special activities and residencies across the country, including for young people at The White House and Gracie Mansion. In partnership with EHE Health, the livestreamed workshop from the [620 Loft & Gardens](#) rooftop at Rockefeller Center to people of all ages around the world will help launch the season celebration of six decades of *Revelations* and will remain available on [EHE Health’s Facebook page](#).

An interactive **Family Matinee** program will engage the next generation as they explore and connect to *Revelations*, acclaimed as a must see for all. Alvin Ailey’s uplifting “blood memories” are also the inspiration for a world premiere that is shaped by the voices of those who know it so well – the artists who have danced it.

Weaving together deep personal experiences, reflections from current dancers, and an original score by composer **Damien Sneed, Matthew Rushing**, in his first season as Associate Artistic Director, will join with Company member and Assistant to the Rehearsal Director **Clifton Brown** and former Company member **Yusha-Marie Sorzano** to present ***Testament*** -- a contemporary response to Alvin Ailey’s masterpiece that illuminates the enduring impact of the beloved classic 60 years after its creation.

**Acclaimed Ailey dancer and Resident Choreographer Jamar Roberts** will be contributing to the centennial (dubbed *Bird100*) of Charlie “Bird” Parker ([www.charlieparkermusic.com](http://www.charlieparkermusic.com)) with ***A Jam Session For Troubling Times***, a premiere inspired by and featuring the music of the revolutionary saxophonist and composer. Alvin Ailey is famous for having said that “dance came from the people, and it should always be delivered back to the people.” In this upbeat, quirky, and accessible work, Resident Choreographer Jamar Roberts holds fast to that mission. At a time in our world rife with chaos and uncertainty, *A Jam Session For Troubling Times* uses the energy, nuance, and virtuosity of the ‘bebop’ sound as a vehicle to lift our spirits and demonstrate that we are stronger than our circumstances. Jazz has provided the soundtrack to his other works for the Company, including [Members Don’t Get Weary](#) (2017) and [Ode](#), last year’s powerful meditation on the beauty and delicacy of life in a time of growing gun violence.

An **Ailey & Ellington program** will showcase some of the 14 ballets founder Alvin Ailey created during his career that celebrate the musical genius of the eminent American composer Duke Ellington that have become cherished Ailey standards, such as *Night Creature*, *Reflections in D* and *Pas de Duke*. Ailey's artistry will be reaching new heights in a breathtaking excerpt of *Pas de Duke*, originally created for Judith Jamison and Mikhail Baryshnikov, filmed at the newly transformed [Woolworth Tower Residences](#) on top of the iconic national and New York City landmark Woolworth building with the New York skyline as a backdrop. A visually striking backdrop for the celebration of America's two great art forms - modern dance and jazz music – **The Woolworth Building** is an architectural gem that was officially inaugurated on April 24, 1913, when President Woodrow Wilson flipped a switch in the White House to illuminate what was then the world's tallest building.

A variety of other online special programs that will span the month of December will be announced later. For further updates on the virtual season and schedule, visit [Ailey All Access](#) and [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org).

Since the shutdown in March, Ailey reinvented the way it was reaching audiences through [Ailey All Access](#), an online initiative that has been viewed by over 10 million in 121 countries with the streaming of free performances from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater repertory, classes, conversations and original short films created by the Ailey dancers "[separate but together](#)" from wherever they were. During these unprecedented times, the Ailey organization is grateful for contributions to the [Still, We Dance](#) campaign that is making it possible to move forward and prepare for the upcoming 2020-21 season paying tribute to six decades of *Revelations*.

In 1958, Alvin Ailey and a small group of dancers took the stage in New York and forever changed American dance and culture. One of the country's groundbreaking greats, his Company inspires all in a universal celebration of the human spirit using the African-American cultural experience and the modern dance tradition. More than 60 year after its founding, Ailey continues to break new ground under the leadership of Robert Battle, revealing time and again why Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is one of the world's most beloved dance companies.

**Bank of America is the *Revelations* at 60 Sponsor during Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's 2020 virtual season.**

**The 2020 virtual season is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.**



(L to R) Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*. Photo by Paul Kolnik; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater with Artistic Director Robert Battle, Associate Artistic Director Matthew Rushing, and Rehearsal Director Ronni Favors. Photo by Andre Eccles; Ailey's Jacqueline Green and Yannick Lebrun at the top of The Woolworth Building. Photo by Mikey Pozarik; Ailey's Jacqueline Green and Yannick Lebrun performing Alvin Ailey's *Pas De Duke* at The Woolworth Building. Photo Courtesy of Ailey.

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## **ABOUT ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER**

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recognized by U.S. Congressional resolution as a vital American “Cultural Ambassador to the World,” grew from a now-fabled March 1958 performance in New York that changed forever the perception of American dance. Founded by Alvin Ailey, posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation’s highest civilian honor, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle, whom Judith Jamison chose to succeed her on July 1, 2011. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 25 million people in 71 countries on six continents, promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition. In addition to being the Principal Dance Company of New York City Center, where its performances have become a year-end tradition, the Ailey company performs annually at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, The Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley, CA and at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark (where it is the Principal Resident Affiliate), and appears frequently in other major theaters throughout the world during extensive yearly tours. The Ailey organization also includes Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), one of the most extensive dance training programs in the world; Ailey Arts in Education & Community Programs, which brings dance into the classrooms, communities and lives of people of all ages; and The Ailey Extension (2005), a program offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of Ailey’s permanent home—the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the dance capital of the world —named The Joan Weill Center for Dance, at 55<sup>th</sup> Street at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue in New York City. For more information, visit [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org).

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