



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

AILEY II | THE AILEY SCHOOL | AILEY ARTS IN EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS | AILEY EXTENSION

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

AILEY ALL ACCESS RETURNS WITH A SPRING SERIES OF FREE DIGITAL BROADCASTS MARCH 17 – JUNE 24

**Special Cry Film Adaptation on Mother's Day to Toast Five Decades of Alvin Ailey's
Beloved Work Celebrating Black Women**

**Ailey Spring Gala Virtual Broadcast on Thursday, June 24
Celebrates Hope, Promise and Future**

New York, NY – March 17, 2021 – [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) will continue to inspire audiences virtually with a spring series of free programs through [Ailey All Access](#) from March 17 – June 24. Using dance as a vehicle for joy and hope during a time of unprecedented challenges and separation, the presentations will advance the Ailey organization's online initiatives that have inspired and enlightened over 12 million people in 121 countries over the past year, including a [December holiday season](#) featuring several dance film premieres.

"It's been very important for us to not just think about dancing in spite of the pandemic, but dancing because of our love and our mission to bring dance to the people as Alvin Ailey wanted us to do," stated [Artistic Director Robert Battle](#). "Dance feeds the soul and can be healing, so it was essential that we reached across the world virtually over the past year. Our movement continues to share a message of hope and the promise of advancing together towards a better future."

Ailey All Access free programs will **premiere on select nights at 7pm ET** from March through June and be available online for two-week period. On **Wednesday, March 17**, during Women's History Month, the streaming will feature the legendary [Judith Jamison's A Case of You](#), an emotional and sensual duet performed to Diana Krall's version of Joni Mitchell's song by the same title. The **Tuesday, March 30** presentation of [Blues Suite](#) will mark the Company's anniversary and the historic first performance in 1958 that defined Alvin Ailey's choreographic genius in presenting real people on the concert dance stage. Vividly evoking the sorrow, humor and humanity of the blues, *Blues Suite* conjures Alvin Ailey's "blood memories" of the barrelhouses and fields of rural, Depression-era southern Texas and the songs he called "hymns to the secular regions of the soul."

During Jazz Appreciation Month, Ailey will unveil two broadcasts set to the music of jazz greats: [Night Creature](#) on **Wednesday, April 14**, a bubbly champagne cocktail of a dance that perfectly fuses Alvin Ailey's buoyant choreography and Duke Ellington's sparkling music, as well as [Members Don't Get Weary](#) on **Wednesday, April 28**, Resident Choreographer [Jamar Roberts'](#) work set to music of John Coltrane.

In a joyful nod to the **50th anniversary of Alvin Ailey's iconic masterpiece, *Cry*, which debuted May 4, 1971** as a birthday present for his mother Mrs. Lula Cooper, a new film adaption will premiere on Mother's Day on **May 9**. Dedicated to "all Black women everywhere – especially our mothers," the 16-minute tour-de-force solo created on his stunning muse, Judith Jamison, was an instant sensation and went on to become an enduring work of American art. Alvin Ailey and *Cry* are spotlighted in a segment narrated by Kelly Rowland in "Black Renaissance," a tribute to those who have shaped Black History presented by [YouTube Originals](#), in partnership with Google Arts & Culture. Watch the segment [here](#).

[The Ailey Spring Gala](#) on June 24 at 7:30pm ET celebrates Hope, Promise and Future in a virtual broadcast finale of the free Ailey All Access spring series. Presenting a special homage to our nation's capital, Washington, D.C., the gala features appearances by gifted young dancers from [The Ailey School](#) and special guests. This joyous program, made possible through the generous support of [Southern Company](#), will feature Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in three premieres expressing the evening's themes choreographed by Company members Ghrai DeVore-Stokes, Chalvar Monteiro and Kanji Segawa, and includes remarks from guest of honor Lonnie G. Bunch III, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The Corporate Chair is Southern Company President & CEO, Thomas A. Fanning.

The gala raises the vital funds needed to sustain its programs for young people, especially during this challenging time when other sources of funding, such as from live theater performances, aren't possible. The evening will also include a special VIP pre-performance virtual reception and a post-gala celebration.

Additional online special programs in May and June will be announced later. For further updates on the spring series and schedule, visit [Ailey All Access](#) and www.alvinailey.org.

Ailey's artistry will also be presented virtually by **New Jersey Performing Arts Center on Mother's Day weekend, with a virtual free screening of "*Revelations Reimagined*,"** reinventing and exploring the beloved cultural treasure in a new context. To RSVP for the screening visit [here](#). Also, Ailey fans can tune into a program featuring the **world premiere of a newly commissioned work by Jamar Roberts as part of Cal Performances at Home on Thursday, June 10 at 7pm PT**. Tickets for the Spring 2021 Cal Performances at Home series can be purchased online at calperformances.org/at-home.

In addition to performances, Ailey virtual workshops and classes have been inviting people of all ages around the world to join in the dance. [Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs](#) has [expanded remote learning](#) opportunities with a new available offering - a [Revelations Virtual Dance Workshop Series](#) for middle school students that blends dance with poetry, history, music and more, to build a foundation of artistic exploration that will enhance any students' academic experience. Led by master teachers and former Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater members [Nasha Thomas](#) and [Michael Thomas](#), the series is adapted from the popular [Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach](#) curriculum, utilizing Alvin Ailey's signature work as an inspirational framework for a comprehensive study of language arts, social studies and dance.

The [Ailey Extension](#) program which brings "brings dance back to the people" has leapt from the studio into homes with an expanded slate of online offerings, including special [Absolute Beginner Ballet](#), [Horton](#) and [Afro-Cuban](#) classes and workshops to mark first day of spring on **March 20** and a cheerful [Masala Bhangra workshop](#) led by [Sarina Jain](#) celebrating Holi, the Hindu Spring "festival of colors," on **March 27**. Even dancers as young as five years old can learn basic skills and try out new techniques during the [Kids & Teens Online](#) Spring session which runs from **March 1 – May 2**. Ailey Extension also offers more than 30 weekly classes for adults in a variety of different styles including hip-hop, ballet, Horton, West African, samba, contemporary, BellydanceBURN, Broadway Jazz and more. Visit alvinailey.org/extension for schedule information.

As we move forward together, the Ailey organization will continue to find ways to build community, uplift with Ailey's artistry, and celebrate the indomitable human spirit through dance. 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 share Ailey All Access. To enjoy a variety of digital content, follow Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the Ailey Extension on Facebook and Instagram, The Ailey School on Instagram, and visit www.alvinailey.org regularly for updates.

Ailey All Access replaces the performances that would have been seen during Ailey's National Tour.

Bank of America is the National Tour Sponsor for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

The 2021 North American Tour is supported, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts.

This production of *Blues Suite* was made possible with major support from American Express.

Generous support for *Blues Suite* was also provided by The Ellen Jewett & Richard L. Kauffman New Works Endowment Fund.

This production of *Night Creature* was made possible, in part, by a grant from Ford Foundation and with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The creation of *Members Don't Get Weary* was supported by commissioning funds from New York City Center.

Major support for the creation of *Members Don't Get Weary* was provided by Denise Littlefield Sobel and Michele & Timothy Barakett.

Additional support for the creation of *Members Don't Get Weary* was provided by Simin N. Allison, Patricia S. Brim, Addie & Tom Jones, Judith McDonough Kaminski & Joseph Kaminski, Daria L. & Eric J. Wallach, Vera F. Wells, The Ellen Jewett & Richard L. Kauffman New Works Endowment Fund, Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey - Sara & Bill Morgan New Works Endowment Fund and The Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn & Nicolas Rohatyn New Works Endowment Fund.

This production of *Cry* was made possible with generous support from Judith McDonough Kaminski & Joseph Kaminski.

The original production of *Cry* was made possible, in part, by a grant from Ford Foundation.

The Ailey Spring Gala is sponsored by Southern Company.



(L to R) Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Jamar Roberts and Jacqueline Green in *A Case of You* excerpt from Judith Jamison's *Reminiscin'*. Photo by Paul Kolnik; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Alvin Ailey's *Night Creature*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Jamar Roberts' *Members Don't Get Weary*. Photo by Paul Kolnik.

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Both photos are of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Jacqueline Green in Alvin Ailey's *Cry*. Photo by Paul Kolnik
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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 55th Street at 9th Avenue in New York City. For more information, visit www.alvinailey.org.

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