



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 SPRING GALA VIRTUAL BROADCAST CELEBRATES HOPE, PROMISE AND THE FUTURE ON THURSDAY, JUNE 24 AT 7:30PM EDT

Special Appearances Include Guest of Honor Lonnie G. Bunch III, Secretary of the Smithsonian, Congressman James E. Clyburn and Former First Lady Michelle Obama

Presentation will Pay Tribute to the Life and Legacy of Late Congressman John Lewis

Post-Performance Dance Celebration with Music by DJ M.O.S. and DJ Kiss

New York – June 8, 2021 – The Ailey organization springs into summer with the [Ailey Spring Gala](#) virtual broadcast celebrating **Hope, Promise and the Future** on **June 24 at 7:30pm EDT**, an exceptional culmination of the [Ailey All Access](#) online performance series inspiring millions around the world. Presenting a special homage to our nation’s capital, Washington, D.C., appearances will include **guest of honor Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III, Congressman James E. Clyburn and Former First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama** along with performances from [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) and gifted young dancers from [The Ailey School](#).

Viewable via the Ailey Spring Gala [website](#) for 48 hours, the free broadcast is made possible through the generous support of [Southern Company](#), a leading energy company serving nine million customers through its subsidiaries. Benefit Co-Chairs are **Michele & Timothy Barakett, Lyndon K. Boozer, Sela and Art Collins, Stephen J. Meringoff, Daria & Eric Wallach** and **Yelberton R. Watkins**; Vice Chairs are **Joyce Brayboy, Janell Mayo Duncan & Lawrence Duncan III, Tanya Leah Lombard, Nicole Venable, Vanessa Reed** and **Katharine Weymouth**; and Corporate Chair is **Southern Company President & CEO, Thomas A. Fanning**.

“Over the past year, we’ve learned to focus on the opportunity of this moment, not the challenges, and the privilege of carrying on the legacy of Alvin Ailey that speaks to all of us,” stated [Artistic Director Robert Battle](#). “Instilled in movement is a message of hope that helps us look towards the bright promise of our future together. We’re delighted to have this opportunity to share Ailey’s inspiring artistry in new dance films and honor a legend of the Civil Rights Movement as we join in a virtual celebration with our community around the world.”

The Ailey Spring Gala program showcases Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in three premieres expressing the evening’s themes choreographed by Company members, [Ghrai DeVore-Stokes \(Hope\)](#), [Chalvar Monteiro \(Promise\)](#) and [Kanji Segawa \(Future\)](#). Ailey’s extraordinary dancers made various iconic New York City locations their stage to create the new dance films, including Hudson Yards, St. Nicholas Park and [The Unisphere](#), one of the largest globes ever made and built as a symbol of world peace.

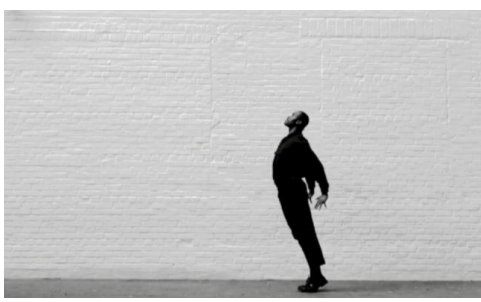
During the global broadcast, the organization will honor the late Congressman John Lewis for his unwavering commitment to the Civil Rights Movement. As part of the tribute, Congressman James E. Clyburn will reflect on Mr. Lewis' legacy, which will follow excerpts from *In Memory*, a powerful film created as a commission for the virtual [March on Washington Film Festival](#) by Ailey resident choreographer [Jamar Roberts](#). Roberts has leapt to the forefront of dance on film during the pandemic, creating praised works that engage artfully with contemporary issues such as gun violence and the devastating effect the pandemic and police misconduct have had on Black bodies and Black lives. Founded in 2013, The March on Washington Film Festival is held every year in Washington, DC, serving as a national platform to tell, celebrate, and increase awareness of the untold events and icons and foot soldiers, known and unsung, of the Civil Rights Movement. This year's festival will take place October 1 – 4, 2021 celebrating heroes of yesterday, pioneers of today and the leaders of tomorrow.

The evening will also feature *For Four*, a filmed dance choreographed by Artistic Director Robert Battle set to "Delfeayo's Dilemma" by Wynton Marsalis, and a performance by [Clifton Brown](#) and talented students from The Ailey School in *Bird Lives!*, based upon Alvin Ailey's dance tribute to jazz legend Charlie "Bird" Parker.

The gala raises the vital funds needed to sustain its programs for young people, like scholarships to The Ailey School and Ailey's [Arts In Education & Community Programs](#), including [AileyCamp](#) – an innovative, full-scholarship summer day camp that uses dance as a means to help inner-city youth stretch their minds, bodies, and spirits. **A post-gala dance party will continue the joyous program with music by DJ M.O.S. and DJ Kiss.** Join Ailey for a celebration of the future of both the capital of our nation and the first city of dance, great legacies of hope that inspired us all, and the promise of the next generation.

To **register for a reminder** to enjoy the free Ailey Spring Gala global broadcast, please visit [here](#). The broadcast will be **livestreamed for 48 hours starting Thursday, June 24 at 7:30pm EDT** on the [Ailey Spring Gala website](#).

Preceding the virtual gala will be two Ailey All Access online offerings: "**The Greenwood Story**" program available **now through Tuesday, June 8**, includes excerpts from Donald Byrd's riveting ensemble work that draws on the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre as a source, a documentary "Black Wall Street Remembered," and a deeper look into the creative process with a behind-the-scenes video. **To observe Juneteenth**, a presentation sponsored by Amazon will be streamed on **Wednesday, June 16 at 7pm EDT** featuring a special BattleTalk with Opal Lee "Grandmother of Juneteenth," Sam Collins, Juneteenth Legacy Project's historian and co-chair, as well as the Juneteenth Legacy Project's commissioned artist, Reginald Adams. In addition to the conversation, excerpts from [Lazarus](#), [Judith Jamison](#) performing the third section of [Cry](#), "Right On, Be Free," and "Rocka My Soul" of [Revelations](#) will be shown. For further updates on the spring series of free online performances, visit [Ailey All Access](#) and [www.alvinailey.org](#).



Left to right: Jamar Roberts' *In Memory*, a tribute to John Lewis. Photo courtesy of Ailey; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Patrick Coker, Courtney Spears, and Yannick Lebrun in Chalvar Monteiro's *Promise* for Ailey's Spring Gala, 2021. Photo by Emily Kikta; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Kanji Segawa's *Future* for the Ailey Spring Gala, June 24, 2021. Photo by Cherylynn Tsushima. **Ctrl + Click for hi-redownload. Please credit photos.**

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.

***For Four, Hope, Promise* and *Future* are supported, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts.**

Special thanks to Hudson Yards for providing the filming location for *Hope*.

Generous support for *Future* is provided by The Fred Eychaner New Works Endowment Fund.

***For Bird, With Love*. The creation of the original score for this work was made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency.**

The Ailey Spring Gala is sponsored by Southern Company.

The Ailey Spring Gala event partner is EMPIRE.

Ailey All Access Juneteenth program sponsored by Amazon.

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, recent 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 6 continents – as well as millions more through television broadcasts, film screenings, and online platforms - 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 Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County in Miami, 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 United States and 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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