



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALVIN AILEY DAY AT THE FILM SOCIETY, FEB. 1

Four programs of rare archival material celebrate Ailey and his company, a renowned ambassador of dance and culture

The Film Society hosts the poster exhibit “Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: The First 50 Years,” Feb. 1-28

NEW YORK, Jan. 13, 2009—The Film Society of Lincoln Center is teaming up with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for **Alvin Ailey Day**, celebrating the visionary company’s 50th year and launching Black History Month at The Film Society’s Walter Reade Theater, Sunday, Feb. 1. The all-day event offers four programs of rare archival material and television documentaries honoring the life and work of the iconic dancer and choreographer, as well as the internationally renowned company he founded.

On stage guests will include Ailey artistic director Judith Jamison, actress and performance artist Anna Deavere Smith, dancer Donna Wood Sanders, and filmmakers Orlando Bagwell and Patricia Birch. Additionally, The Film Society’s Frieda and Roy Furman gallery will host “**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: The First 50 Years**,” an exhibit of international Ailey performance posters, throughout the month.

“The Film Society of Lincoln Center’s 50th anniversary tribute to Alvin Ailey’s pioneering legacy and the company’s enduring artistry will be an extraordinary celebration,” says Judith Jamison, artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. “This retrospective will give audiences a unique opportunity to experience rare and moving pictures—treasured memories and visions of Alvin Ailey and inspiring performances from the past five decades.”

Alvin Ailey Day begins at 1:00 p.m. with the Emmy Award-winning “**A Hymn for Alvin Ailey**,” made for PBS’s Great Performances as an homage to Ailey choreographed by Judith Jamison and featuring Anna Deavere Smith. It screens with an episode of “**In the Company Of...**,” in which Harry Belafonte interviews Alvin Ailey about his beginnings in dance, his company, choreography, and views on the black experience in the arts. Jamison, Smith and “A Hymn for Alvin Ailey” director Orlando Bagwell will answer questions on stage following the screening.

Ailey's formative role as a performer and choreographer commands the day's middle programs. At 3:30 p.m., "**Alvin Ailey: Memories and Visions**," presenting several of the company's major works, screens alongside rare archival footage from the early '60s of Ailey's work with Carmen de Lavallade in ballets by Ailey's mentor Lester Horton and Joe Layton's version of "Porgy and Bess." At 6:15 p.m., the CBS specials "**Ailey Celebrates Ellington**" and "**Lamp Unto My Feet**," featuring the first televised airing of Ailey's masterpiece "Revelations," highlight Ailey's inspiring and unique artistic vision.

The programs conclude at 8:15 p.m. with filmmaker and choreographer Patricia Birch introducing her film "**Three by Three**," a sampling of dance pieces by acclaimed black choreographers. It screens with an excerpt from "**Two by Dove**," showing the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater rehearsing with Ulysses Dove and a full performance of his "Vespers," with commentary.

"Alvin Ailey has been a significant force in the history of dance, a dreamer, a pioneer, and an encourager of other black choreographers," says The Film Society's Joanna Ney, who curated Alvin Ailey Day. "As an admirer of his company and its evolution through the leadership of Judith Jamison, I wanted to celebrate this landmark anniversary. The glorious dancing of these beautiful, totally committed dancers never ceases to amaze me, season after season."

Additionally, the poster exhibit "**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: The First 50 Years**" will be on display at The Film Society's Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery throughout February. The exhibition presents Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performance posters from across the globe, illustrating the passion, beauty, and artistry of Ailey and the company's inspiring international role in celebrating the modern dance tradition. The Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery is adjacent to the Walter Reade Theater. It is open daily 1:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Single screening tickets for **Alvin Ailey Day** at The Film Society of Lincoln Center are \$11; \$7 for Film Society members, students and children (6-12, accompanied by an adult); and \$8 for seniors (62+). An Alvin Ailey Day Pass is also available for all four programs: \$32; \$24 for Film Society members. Tickets are available at both the Walter Reade Theater box office and online at filmlinc.com. For information, call (212) 875-5601.

The Film Society of Lincoln Center was founded in 1969 to celebrate American and international cinema, to recognize and support new directors, and to enhance the awareness, accessibility and understanding of film. Advancing this mandate today, The Film Society hosts two distinguished festivals—The New York Film Festival and New Directors/New Films—as well as the annual Gala Tribute, and a year-round calendar of programming at its Walter Reade Theater. It also offers definitive examinations of essential films and artists to a worldwide audience through Film Comment magazine.

The Film Society of Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater is located at 165 West 65th St. between Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway. **Please note:** Due to construction work taking place around Lincoln Center, access to the Walter Reade Theater is near Amsterdam Avenue. Once there, take the escalator, elevator or stairs to the upper level.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Gabriele Caroti, (212) 875-5625, gcaroti@filmlinc.com

ONLINE PRESS OFFICE:

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Alvin Ailey Day at The Film Society, Sunday, Feb. 1
Schedule at a Glance (Detailed Program Information Follows)

Sunday, Feb. 1

- 1:00 A Hymn for Alvin Ailey,
with In the Company Of...
- 3:30 Alvin Ailey: Memories and Visions,
with Camera Three,
and Porgy and Bess
- 6:15 Ailey Celebrates Ellington,
with Lamp Unto My Feet
- 8:15 Three by Three,
with Two by Dove

all times p.m.

Alvin Ailey Day at The Film Society, Sunday, Feb. 1
Detailed Program and Schedule Information

A Hymn for Alvin Ailey

Orlando Bagwell; USA, 1998; 57m

Judith Jamison, Anna Deavere Smith and director Orlando Bagwell on stage after the screening.

Judith Jamison, whose visionary leadership of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater over the past two decades has reaffirmed the company's pioneering role in American dance, joined forces with actress, writer, and performance artist Anna Deavere Smith to create "Hymn," a theater-and-dance piece in homage to her mentor Alvin Ailey. The show, from PBS's "Great Performances: Dance in America," received an Emmy for Jamison's choreography. Courtesy of Dance in America, Thirteen/WNET New York.

screening with

In the Company Of...

Jon Merdin, USA, 1978; 30m

Dancer Donna Wood Sanders on stage.

In this episode of "In the Company Of..." Harry Belafonte interviews Alvin Ailey about his beginnings in dance, his company, choreography, and views on the black experience in

the arts. The show includes excerpts of Ailey conducting rehearsals of “Flowers” and “Masekela Langage,” with Donna Wood. Courtesy of Skyline, Thirteen/WNET New York.

Sun Feb 1: 1:00pm

Alvin Ailey: Memories and Visions

Stan Latham; USA, 1974; 54m

Introduced by Judith Jamison.

This introduction to the artistry of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater features selections from the major works of the company, including Alvin Ailey’s “Blues Suite” and “Cry.” Courtesy of Thirteen/WNET New York.

screening with

Camera Three

1963; 30m

A showcase of performances by Alvin Ailey, Carmen de Lavallade, and James Truitte in ballets by Ailey’s mentor, Lester Horton, including “Sarong Paramaribo,” “To Jose Clemente Orozco,” and “The Beloved.” Courtesy of Creative Arts Television.

and

Porgy and Bess

1961; 11m

Joe Layton directs Carmen de Lavallade and Alvin Ailey in this rare archival footage.

Sun Feb 1: 3:30pm

Ailey Celebrates Ellington

Joshua White, USA, 49m; 1974

Introduced by executive producer Herman Krawitz.

In this 1974 CBS special narrated by Gladys Knight, choreographer Alvin Ailey creates dances inspired by the music of Duke Ellington. Performances include “Night Creature,” “Such Sweet Thunder,” and a complete rendition of “The Mooche,” danced by the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, currently known as Ailey II. Courtesy of executive producer Herman Krawitz.

screening with

Lamp Unto My Feet

USA, 1962; 30m

This television episode features the first televised airing of Alvin Ailey’s masterpiece “Revelations,” danced by Ailey, James Truitte, Minnie Marshall, Thelma Hill, and artists from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Courtesy of CBS television. Thanks to Howard Roberts and the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Sun Feb 1: 6:15pm

Three by Three

Patricia Birch, USA, 57m; 1985

Introduced by director Patricia Birch.

Alvin Ailey opened doors for many black choreographers, including Bill T. Jones and Donald McKayle. Patricia Birch, choreographer of the stage and film versions of *Grease* and a collaborator with Stephen Sondheim on “A Little Night Music” and “Pacific Overtures,” presents selections from Jones’s “Fever Swamp,” Ailey’s “Blues Suite,” and

McKayle's "Rainbow Round My Shoulder." Thanks to Catherine Tatge. Courtesy of Dance in America, Thirteen/WNET New York.

screening with

Two by Dove

David Hinton, UK, 1995; 20m

This stunning excerpt from an Emmy-winning special showcases the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater rehearsing with Ulysses Dove and a full performance of his "Vespers," with commentary. Courtesy of Dance in America, Thirteen/WNET New York.

Sun Feb 1: 8:15pm

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