



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

THE JOAN WEILL CENTER FOR DANCE 405 WEST 55TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10019-4402 PH 212.405.9000 FX 212.405.9001 WWW.ALVINAILEY.ORG

CULTURAL
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TO THE WORLD

Alvin Ailey, Founder Robert Battle, Artistic Director Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director
Judith Jamison, Artistic Director Emerita Bennett Rink, Executive Director

ALVIN AILEY DANCE FOUNDATION BEGINS EXPANSION OF THE JOAN WEILL CENTER FOR DANCE AND NAMES NEW EDUCATION WING IN HONOR OF PHILANTHROPIST ELAINE WYNN

**\$48 Million Raised to Date Enables Ailey to Grow at Home and Launch New Education
Programs and Initiatives Including Destination Dance in Atlanta**



Photo (left to right): Elaine Wynn, Joan and Sandy Weill with Ailey II Artistic Director Troy Powell and Ailey II dancers. Photo by Christopher Duggan.

NEW YORK, NY — September 20, 2016 —Leaders of the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation today celebrated the expansion of Ailey’s permanent home, The Joan Weill Center for Dance, with a ceremonial roof-breaking to mark the company’s upward growth. The event featured an unveiling of the design for the expanded building and performances by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s Jacqueline Green, Ailey II and students from The Ailey School.

Ailey’s Chairman **Daria L. Wallach** and President **Debra L. Lee** announced that the expanded portion of the building will be named the Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation Education Wing. Adding three floors to the west side of Ailey’s building, the expansion provides much-needed space in response to the demand for Ailey’s education initiatives. The start of construction marks the next phase of Ailey’s dramatically increased education and community programming in New York City and across the country, including the new Destination Dance, also announced today, which will be launched as a pilot program in Atlanta in 2017.

Ailey Executive Director **Bennett Rink** said, “We are deeply grateful to Sandy and Joan Weill, whose extraordinary leadership started this incredible journey, and to Elaine Wynn and her family for the exceptional support that will allow Ailey to take another great leap upward. Daria Wallach, Debra Lee, John Schaefer, our generous Board, and the supporters of the Campaign for Ailey’s Future have also graciously stepped forward to carry on the Weill’s legacy of philanthropy. We are honored by the important capital investment from the City of New York, which is a testament to Ailey’s vital contributions as a cultural treasure, and to the role of dance in New York City - the dance capital of the world. As we grow to magnify the positive impact of Ailey’s performances, training programs and educational activities on people around the world, the future looks bright.”

Philanthropist **Elaine P. Wynn** said, “Ailey’s wonderful programs benefit so many people, from children training at all different levels at The Ailey School, to underserved students in AileyCamp and other education programs across the country, to the Company’s breathtaking dancers who awe people around the world with their grace and power. My family and I are proud to be a part of this remarkable organization, which gives us all so much joy and inspiration. I look forward to opening the doors to this new wing next year.”

Ailey Artistic Director **Robert Battle** said, “Following in the footsteps of our legendary founder, Ailey’s mission continually touches the hearts and minds of people of all ages and backgrounds in life-changing ways. The Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation Education Wing, along with initiatives like Destination Dance for audiences in U.S. cities and a new Ailey Arts In Education curriculum for public school students, provide further opportunities to discover our shared humanity and imagine the boundless possibilities to join in building an ever-expanding legacy of revelations.”

A host of New York dignitaries, leaders and philanthropists gathered at the Ailey studios on West 55th Street and 9th Avenue to mark this milestone for the city of New York and the world of dance. Along with **Daria Wallach, Debra Lee and Elaine Wynn; Joan H. Weill**, Ailey Chairman Emeritus; **Sanford I. Weill**, philanthropist; **Elaine P. Wynn**, philanthropist; **Gale Brewer**, Manhattan Borough President; **Tom Finkelpearl**, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs; and Congressman **Jerrold Nadler** joined with **Robert Battle** and **Bennett Rink** for the roof-breaking event.

“Among the most extraordinary presenters of this art form anywhere in the world, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s energy and vitality are closely linked with its history and home here in New York City,” said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. “The de Blasio Administration is proud to invest over \$2 million in this exciting project that will expand Ailey’s ability to engage audiences and serve thousands of students every year. We are grateful to all of the partners—including the City Council and the Manhattan Borough President’s Office—whose support will help increase access to studio and classroom space and ensure that New York remains a place where artists live, work, and contribute to the vibrant fabric of our city.”

“The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has been a vital cultural institution in New York City for nearly six decades,” said **New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “With \$1.8 million in capital funding from the City Council to aid in expanding their home, it is our hope to see this landmark organization continue to thrive for another 60 years and beyond. It benefits New Yorkers and art lovers everywhere to have Alvin Ailey housed in a space as innovative as the company itself. I thank NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl, the administrators of Alvin Ailey, and my fellow council members for their visionary work on securing these essential funds.”

“I’m thrilled that construction is beginning on the expansion of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s permanent home. The Ailey organization occupies an extremely important place in New York City’s cultural landscape, and its influence is only growing,” said **New York City Council Majority Leader and Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs Jimmy Van Bramer**. “I’m honored to have been able to help allocate almost \$1.8 million for this project, and look forward to visiting the new space once it’s complete.”

“The Ailey organization is a quintessential New York arts institution committed, as its namesake and founder was, to our city’s values of eclecticism, diversity, and excellence,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “I’m excited to see Ailey expand into these wonderful new facilities, and am proud that I could support this project.”

Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation Education Wing



Rendering for expansion of Ailey’s building, The Joan Weill Center for Dance, with the Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation Education Wing

Scheduled to open in fall 2017, the Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation Education Wing will help accommodate Ailey’s ever-increasing number of students and the more than 200,000 visitors to the building annually. Opened in 2005, The Joan Weill Center for Dance is by far the largest and most active destination for dance in New York City, and has been bursting at the seams from public demand. The Center’s original architects, lu + Bibliowicz Architects, are designing the 10,000-square-foot expansion of Ailey’s glass-enclosed building. The project will heighten the mid-block portion of the Center by three floors to match the height of the existing corner portion. Ailey will add four dance studios, two flexible classrooms and administrative offices and renovate existing lounges, locker rooms, restrooms and the company’s costume shop. The project also encompasses infrastructure upgrades to lighting and audiovisual theatrical equipment as well as mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.

The building’s new façade will feature motorized solar shades and unitized advanced insulated glass components with an undulated frit pattern, inspired by Alvin Ailey’s signature masterpiece *Revelations*. The new curtain wall made of thicker glass will improve the acoustical rating between the new dance studios and the building’s exterior. The new warm-up spaces and lounges will include rubber flooring, recycled from tires, and additional and renovated spaces will have energy-saving state-of-the-art LED lighting and dimming systems.

The addition of the Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation Education Wing will better position Ailey to meet the needs of The Ailey School’s pre-professional and professional training for dancers ages 3 to 25. Since 2005, enrollment in the Junior Division has risen 89 percent and in the Professional Division has increased 100 percent; now more than 3,500 students participate in The Ailey School’s 300 classes weekly in a broad range of dance techniques. The Professional Division develops well-rounded performing artists of the future through its programs. The Scholarship Program provides more than 400 scholarships each year to talented and deserving students and the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A in Dance, which offers the best of two worlds: the artistic pre-eminence of The Ailey School combined with Fordham University’s exceptional liberal arts education, which stresses intellectual development and personal growth.

With the added space, a variety of class offerings will continue at The Ailey Extension, which since its inception in 2005 has welcomed more than 125,000 members of the general public, including many residents of the surrounding Clinton neighborhood, to join in the dance for fun and fitness. Studios will be available for the **New Directions Choreography Lab**, launched by Robert Battle in 2011 to help develop the next generation of choreographers and performing artists. The program provides resident fellowships each year to four emerging and mid-career artists, who receive a monetary stipend, creative mentorships, the opportunity to utilize dancers from The Ailey School, and rehearsal time at Ailey's studios. The building will also be able to continue to serve the entire dance community, with available rehearsal and performance space, including a subsidized rental program to provide affordable studio space where emerging choreographers and small dance companies can rehearse, experiment, and create new works to prepare for performances at prestigious venues and events across the Tri-State area and beyond.

The new Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation Education Wing will similarly free up space for curriculum enhancements and supplemental classes in performance techniques, musical theater, partnering, and strength training, while the new classrooms will accommodate study in anatomy, nutrition, music, stagecraft and production, wellness sessions and other professional development seminars. While The Ailey School is proud to be considered among the top dance academies nationally, there is a focus on enhancing the current programs and expanding efforts to reach new constituencies. Education is identified as one of the five priority areas in a Strategic Plan, adopted by the Board in 2014. The first goal under education is to "ensure that The Ailey School is competitive in attracting and retaining students of the highest caliber by developing additional studio space to meet demand and enhance programs."

The Ailey School is projecting approximately 230 more students in the Junior Division by 2019, as well as additional students in The Ailey Extension, given the phenomenal popularity of and demand for enrollment in these two programs. For the Professional Division, curriculum enhancements will likely increase the number of studio and academic class offerings, from the 185 classes offered today to 270 classes in the near future. By increasing both the number and breadth of its academic classes, Ailey hopes to significantly enhance students' ability to enter the work force in the field of dance and the arts at large as performers, educators, managers and producers.

Campaign for Ailey's Future

Ailey's architectural and programmatic expansion is made possible by the Campaign for Ailey's Future, inaugurated by Sandy Weill to celebrate his wife Joan, Ailey's beloved Board Chairman Emerita, who is credited with more than two decades of transformative leadership on the Board. Bennett Rink announced that the campaign honoring Mrs. Weill has raised \$48 million toward its \$50 million goal, including funds for expanding Ailey's home and the extension of Ailey's artistic and educational initiatives. Major leadership gifts to the Campaign for Ailey's Future, co-chaired by Board Chairman Daria Wallach and Trustee John H. Schaefer, have been received from Joan and Sandy Weill together with Ailey's Board and dedicated supporters, including The Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation, Daria L. & Eric J. Wallach, Pamela D. Zilly & John H. Schaefer, and Debra L. Lee. Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Ford Foundation are among the major foundations providing generous support. The City of New York has also earmarked a significant capital appropriation.

Roof-Breaking Performance

To herald the official start of the expansion, talented student dancers from The Ailey School performed a dance created for the occasion dedicated to Ailey's past, present and future, culminating in the unveiling of the architectural design for the expanded The Joan Weill Center for Dance. Excerpts from Alvin Ailey's beloved signature work *Revelations* were danced by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Jacqueline Green and dancers from Ailey II in Ailey's beautiful 5th floor studios with the stunning Manhattan skyline as a backdrop. In a celebratory finale to the roof breaking, Elaine Wynn, and Joan and Sandy Weill joined the dancers on stage for the joyous final bows.

Destination Dance

While Ailey's presence grows in New York City with the enlargement of The Joan Weill Center for Dance, along with an annual holiday season at New York City Center and a June engagement at Lincoln Center's David H. Koch Theater, the organization is also deepening its commitment to communities across the country. To extend its position as a cultural ambassador, in the coming year Ailey will pilot an initiative entitled "Destination Dance," which will create collaborations with community-based organizations in urban centers across the country to use dance as a centerpiece for engagement. Ailey's Destination Dance in Atlanta will be inaugurated through partnerships currently being developed with a wide variety of valued cultural institutions in the area, building upon Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's 41-year history in Atlanta, the Company's annual engagement at The Fox Theatre (next scheduled for February 15-19, 2017) and the increasing demand for Ailey's performances and programs. Year-round programming will range from performances to dance classes open to the public to education programs for children to conversations with artists and scholars. Ailey will thematically link all programs to unite these offerings and help foster dance as a galvanizing cultural force. Ailey also will create a dedicated website resource for the initiative, which will serve as a central hub of information.

Ailey is currently engaged in discussions with a variety of partner organizations regarding potential collaborations. Atlanta Ballet, the presenter of AileyCamp in Atlanta, will be the location of a joint training intensive for Georgia-area dancers offered with The Ailey School, in addition to annual auditions. The Ailey Extension's "Ailey Experience" workshops, open to the general public, will be scheduled at AREA dance studio. There is the potential for public and school-time performances by Ailey II at Rialto Center for the Arts at Georgia State University, as well as additional outreach and participation in ELEVATE, the multi-arts festival which was started by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs in 2011 to activate the downtown Atlanta area through visual art, performances, and cultural events. The Ailey organization also looks forward to realizing additional collaborative initiatives with Dance Canvas; the High Museum of Art; the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, including an annual panel discussion led by Ailey Artistic Director Robert Battle; Spelman College Atlanta; and local artists and scholars, such as author Pearl Cleage.

Expanding Education Programs

During the past two years, Ailey has increased its education programming across the country. AileyCamp, the organization's summer program for children ages 11-14 that uses dance to enhance the lives of underserved children, has expanded to ten locations with the launch of the program in Seattle. Existing AileyCamps are conducted in Atlanta, Baltimore, Berkeley, Chicago, Kansas City (MO), Kansas City (KS), Miami, New York, and Newark.

Following the success of the *Revelations* Residency Curriculum, which utilizes Mr. Ailey's signature work as an organizing theme for a comprehensive, in-depth study of language arts, social studies and dance, this fall, Ailey will pilot its second Arts in Education curriculum, *Night Creature: An Imaginative Journey Through Dance*, in two New York City Department of Education elementary schools. Designed by choreographer and curriculum consultant Catherine Gallant in collaboration with the Ailey education team, the program's core theme is imagination. To develop the curriculum, Ms. Gallant extensively interviewed the artists who developed the ballet *Night Creature (1974)* with Mr. Ailey, as well as a select number of dancers who have continued to interpret the work.

The reach of AileyDance Kids, which presents dance classes and cross-curricular lessons to more than 5,000 public school students annually in New York and New Jersey, is also being enlarged to serve special needs children. Given the success of a recent pilot project offering dance instruction for special needs students in five District 75 schools—P35M, P169M, P811M, P10X, and P751M—selected in cooperation with the New York City Department of Education, the initiative will continue for a second year. Ailey Arts In Education Teaching Artists will continue their work with Diane Duggan, Ph.D., BC-DMT to design, write, and deliver individual lesson plans for special needs dance instruction.

Currently on a two-month international tour, [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) will return to the New York City Center stage from **November 30th – December 31st 2016 with premieres and new productions performed by 32 acclaimed dancers during a five-week engagement**, which has become a joyous holiday tradition. Tickets are now on sale. A coast-to-coast **North American tour from February 3rd – May 14th, 2017** will include performances at Atlanta's Fabulous Fox Theatre from February 15-19. For further information on Ailey's performances, training programs and educational activities, visit: www.alvinailey.org.

Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation is extremely grateful to all the individuals and organizations providing support to the Campaign for Ailey's Future, and to Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP for its generous counsel.

PRESS: For Photos, Video and Other Information about Ailey's Next Revelation – [Click Here](#)

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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