



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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CULTURAL
AMBASSADOR
TO THE WORLD

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

ALVIN AILEY DANCE FOUNDATION OPENS ITS NEW ELAINE WYNN & FAMILY EDUCATION WING AT THE JOAN WEILL CENTER FOR DANCE

***Ailey Invites the Public to Celebrate with Five Days of Free Dance Classes Open to All
at New York's Largest Building Dedicated to Dance***



Ailey Executive Director Bennett Rink, Elaine Wynn, Artistic Director Robert Battle, Board members, government officials, building architects and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Photo by Christopher Duggan. [Ctrl+Click for hi-res download.](#) Please credit photo.

NEW YORK, NY, October 19, 2017 — At a festive ribbon-cutting, celebrated on the evening of October 18, leaders of the Ailey organization joined with dancers, students, donors, and friends from New York City's dance community to open The Elaine Wynn & Family Education Wing, a 10,000-square-foot expansion of Ailey's permanent home, The Joan Weill Center for Dance. Featuring special performances by dancers from Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and The Ailey School, and tours of the bustling new facilities, the private ceremony and reception inaugurated a week-long open house, in which the public is invited to enjoy a wide range of free Ailey Extension dance classes through October 22.

Designed by The Center's original architects, Iu + Bibliowicz Architects, The Elaine Wynn & Family Education Wing adds three floors to the west side of Ailey's building to provide four additional dance studios, two new flexible classrooms, and added administrative office space. The \$25 million project has also enabled Ailey to renovate existing dressing rooms, lounges, restrooms, and the company's costume shop. With the new Wing, Ailey is now offering more than 500 weekly classes, an increase of 20% since the start of the project, to meet the needs of The Ailey School's pre-professional and professional training programs for young people, and Ailey Extension's dance and fitness classes for the public. The expanded space also will accommodate rehearsals for Ailey II and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (currently preparing for its annual season at [New York City Center](#), November 29 – December 31), in addition to serving the needs of the entire dance community.

Ailey's Board Chair **Daria L. Wallach** and President **Debra L. Lee** joined Artistic Director **Robert Battle** and Executive Director **Bennett Rink** to acknowledge philanthropists **Joan Weill and Sanford I. Weill** and welcome **Elaine Wynn** and members of the Wynn family, thanking them for helping Ailey to serve more students and dancers, and an ever-growing national and international audience. Among the dignitaries who came to mark this milestone for the City of New York and the world of dance were New York State Senator Brad Hoylman, New York State Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal, and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer.

Bennett Rink said, "We are deeply grateful to Joan and Sandy Weill, whose extraordinary leadership enabled us to begin this journey, and to Elaine Wynn and her family for their exceptional support that will allow Ailey to take another leap upward. They have been joined by Daria Wallach, Debra Lee, John Schaefer, our generous Board, and the many other supporters of the Campaign for Ailey's Future who saw the potential of this project to elevate everything we do. We feel especially honored to have received a significant capital investment from the City of New York. We take this public participation as a testament to the vital cultural and educational contributions of the Ailey organization and as a recognition of New York City's eminence as the dance capital of the world."

Elaine Wynn said, "Ailey's wonderful education programs benefit so many people, from children training at all levels at The Ailey School, to underserved students in the AileyCamps, 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."

Robert Battle said, "Our educational mission is a legacy from Mr. Ailey himself, handed down to us through Judith Jamison. They taught us that dance has to touch the hearts and minds of people of all ages and backgrounds, and change their lives for the better. The Elaine Wynn & Family Education Wing is going to help us pass on our cherished legacy. This new facility expands the reach and impact of all our programs whether it's carried out in these studios and classrooms or in one of Ailey's Arts In Education activities implemented off-site, in cities across the U.S."

New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl said, "The Ailey organization is an essential part of New York City's cultural landscape. The de Blasio Administration is proud to have invested more than \$2 million in this exciting project, which will expand Ailey's ability to engage audiences and serve tens of thousands of students every year. Ailey's existing facility was at full capacity thanks to the popularity of their programming, making this an urgent and welcome addition to this important institution. 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 vibrancy of our city. I'm thrilled to see this new Wing completed and already bursting with activity."

“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**. “It benefits New Yorkers and art lovers everywhere to have Alvin Ailey housed in a space as welcoming and vital as the company itself—which is why the City Council has provided \$1.8 million in capital funding to aid in this expansion, so that this landmark organization can continue to thrive for another 60 years and beyond for the good of all. I thank NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelppearl, the leaders of Alvin Ailey, and my fellow Council members for their vision in securing these essential funds.”

Gale A. Brewer said, “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. I’m proud to have given my office’s support to this project and am excited to be here to cut the ribbon for these wonderful new facilities.”

Celebratory Free Public Dance Classes

Ailey’s ribbon-cutting event kicked off a public celebration of the opening of the new Wing, during which Ailey Extension is offering five days of free dance classes. From **Wednesday, October 18 through Sunday, October 22**, Ailey Extension educators will teach a range of styles from House Dance with a live DJ to Hip-Hop, Zumba, West African Dance, New York Style Mambo, and Contemporary Dance.

In addition to the classes that were held on October 18, the following are free and open to the public:

- **Thursday, October 19, 7:30pm-9:30pm:** House Dance with Kim Holmes (featuring live DJ)
- **Friday, October 20, 6:30pm-8:30pm:** West African Dance Family Series with Maguette Camara
- **Friday, October 20, 6:30pm-7:15pm:** Strong by Zumba with Irena Meletiou
- **Friday, October 20, 7:30pm-8:30pm:** Whine Up with Irena Meletiou
- **Saturday, October 21, 4:30pm-6:30pm:** New York Style Mambo with Katherine Jimenez
- **Sunday, October 22, 2:30pm-4:30pm:** Contemporary Dance with Christopher Jackson

All classes are open to new and returning students, ages 16+. West African Dance Family Series is open to adults and children, ages 10+. Register online at www.aileyextension.com/ailey-spirit-week or at The Joan Weill Center for Dance – standby registration begins 15 minutes before class, first come, first served.



L to R: Ailey Board President Debra Lee, Artistic Director Robert Battle, Elaine Wynn, Board Chairman Daria Wallach, Executive Director Bennett Rink and members of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Elaine Wynn watching Ailey Athletic Boys in West African class. The Ailey School students performing Tracy Inman's *Reverence*. All photos by Christopher Duggan. [Ctrl+Click for hi-res download](#). [Please credit photos](#).

Elaine Wynn & Family Education Wing



The Joan Weill Center for Dance with The Elaine Wynn & Family Education Wing. © Frederick Charles, fcharles.com.

The Elaine Wynn & Family Education Wing will help accommodate Ailey’s ever-increasing number of students and visitors—some 200,000 a year—who flock to The Joan Weill Center for Dance. Inaugurated in 2005, the Center 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 architects, lu + Bibliowicz Architects, designed the 10,000-square-foot expansion of the glass-enclosed building. The project heightens the mid-block portion of the Center by three floors to match the height of the existing corner portion. The new wing has enabled Ailey to add four dance studios, two flexible classrooms, and administrative offices, and to renovate existing lounges, locker rooms, restrooms, and the company’s costume shop. The project has also encompassed infrastructure upgrades to lighting and audiovisual theatrical equipment as well as mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

The building’s new façade features 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 improves the acoustical rating between the new dance studios and the building’s exterior. The new warm-up spaces and lounges include rubber flooring recycled from tires, and additional renovated spaces now have energy-saving state-of-the-art LED lighting and dimming systems.

More Space, More Classes

With the new Wing, Ailey is now offering more than 500 weekly classes, an increase of 20%, to meet the needs of The Ailey School’s pre-professional and professional training programs for young people and Ailey Extension’s dance and fitness classes for the public. The expanded space also will accommodate rehearsals for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, and the New Directions Choreography Lab fellowship recipients.

The Ailey School—one of the top dance academies for dancers ages 3 to 25 in the U.S.—will be a primary beneficiary of the new Wing. The School is projecting approximately 230 more students in the Junior Division by 2019. For the Professional Division, curriculum enhancements will likely increase the number of studio and academic class offerings, from the 231 classes offered today to 270 classes in the near future. By increasing both the number and breadth of its academic classes, The Ailey School hopes to significantly enhance students’ ability to enter the workforce in the field of dance and the arts at large as performers, educators, managers, and producers.

The Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. in Dance—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—also will benefit from the additional space provided by the new wing. Two new flexible classrooms will accommodate study in dance history, anatomy and kinesiology, music for dancers, and other professional development seminars.

New Directions Choreography Lab—launched by Robert Battle in 2011 to help develop the next generation of choreographers and performing artists, provides resident fellowships each year to four emerging artists allowing them the opportunity to utilize dancers from The Ailey School, and rehearsal time at Ailey’s studios. This year’s fellowship recipients included Chuck Wilt, Cameron McKinney, Amy Hall Garner, and Stuart Singer, with creative mentorship from Alexandra Beller, Charmaine Warren, Stefanie Batten Bland, and Gus Solomons, Jr., respectively.

Ailey Extension—launched in 2005 with the original opening of Ailey’s permanent home, furthering Alvin Ailey’s life-long commitment of bringing dance to everyone by offering “real classes for real people.” The program offers 100 weekly classes in more than 25 dance and fitness techniques, including Horton (the modern dance technique seen in Alvin Ailey’s masterpiece *Revelations*), Ballet, Hip-Hop, Samba, Afro-Cuban, Masala Bhangra, and Ailey Barre. All backgrounds and levels are welcomed – even absolute beginners. New this fall, Ailey Extension offers dance fitness classes taught exclusively at Ailey: “DanceFit,” a 60-minute, high-intensity cardio workout taught by a certified personal trainer; “Body Ballet®,” a one-hour workout program with cardio strength-building techniques adapted from those practiced by professional ballet dancers; and “Strong by Zumba®,” which combines high-intensity interval training with the science of synced music motivation. Ailey Extension has also added some of New York City’s top dance instructors to its roster, including Shirlene Quigley, a former backup dancer for Beyoncé, Rihanna and Missy Elliott, and Lisa-Marie Lewis, a former Radio City Rockette who currently stars in the Broadway production of *The Lion King*.

The 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. The campaign honoring Mrs. Weill has exceeded its \$50 million goal, including all of the funds for Ailey’s expansion and the extension of its 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 & BET/Viacom. 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.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater New York City Center Season

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will return to the [New York City Center stage from November 29th – December 31st, 2017](#) with premieres and new productions performed by 32 acclaimed dancers during a five-week engagement, which has become a joyous holiday tradition. Tickets starting at \$29 are now on sale. Following the New York season, the Company will embark on a coast-to-coast North American tour from January 30th – May 13th, 2018. 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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