

**AILEY'S "REVELATIONS REIMAGINED" OPENING NIGHT BENEFIT
LAUNCHES FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL HOLIDAY SEASON, AILEY FORWARD CELEBRATING SIX DECADES
OF TIMELESS AMERICAN MASTERPIECE REVELATIONS**

**Opening Night Program Streaming Free Through December 9th Features Alvin Ailey in Historic Film
from Six Decades Ago Dancing Alongside Current Company Members in Newly Created Footage of
Revelations Filmed at Wave Hill Public Garden & Cultural Center**

**Celebrity Guest Appearances by Sterling K. Brown, Jasmine Guy, Jillian Hervey of *Lion Babe*,
Nigel Lythgoe, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Phylicia Rashad, Shonda Rhimes, Lynn Whitfield,
Vanessa Williams, Oprah Winfrey, and Jeffrey Wright**

**Dove® Honored in Benefit to Support New Works, Scholarships, and Educational Programs
Raises Over \$1.7 Million to Date**

***Ailey Forward* Virtual Season Through New Year's Eve Contains Nine Breathtaking Programs Available for
Seven Days Each Including Three More Special Broadcasts in Coming Week**

**December 5th Ailey & Ellington Family Program and December 7th Dancing Spirit Presentation Examining
Spirituals with Corresponding BattleTalk Conversations Moderated by Artistic Director Robert Battle in
Dialogue with Wynton Marsalis and Rev. Dr. Eboni Marshall Turman with Toshi Reagon Respectively**

December 9th Farewell Tribute to Ailey Stars Glenn Allen Sims and Linda Celeste Sims



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in a reimagining of Alvin Ailey's *Revelations* at Wave Hill Public Garden and Cultural Center. Photos by Travis Magee.

[CLICK PHOTOS FOR DOWNLOAD](#)

Last night the premiere of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's ["Revelations Reimagined" Opening Night Benefit](#) for the groundbreaking [Ailey Forward first-ever virtual holiday season](#) began inspiring viewers around the world with incomparable performances introduced by Artistic Director [Robert Battle](#) and Artistic Director Emerita [Judith Jamison](#). Special guest appearances included **Sterling K. Brown, Jasmine Guy, Jillian Hervey of *Lion Babe*, Nigel Lythgoe, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Phylicia Rashad, Shonda Rhimes, Lynn Whitfield, Vanessa Williams, Oprah Winfrey, and Jeffrey Wright**. The star-studded event honored **Dove®**, the No. 1 personal wash brand nationwide, for its groundbreaking commitment to real beauty and racial equality.

The singular program features a series of pièce d'occasion performances by Ailey's brilliant dance artists re-imagined for this moment of COVID and the necessity of social distancing. Historic film footage brought Alvin Ailey and the Company from six decades ago to the virtual stage for a dance dialogue alongside current company members in newly created footage of Alvin Ailey's signature masterpiece filmed at [Wave Hill Public Garden & Cultural Center](#), a spectacular jewel overlooking the Hudson River.

In an introduction to the program finale, **Oprah Winfrey** [spoke of the significance of *Revelations*](#). “I can still remember the feeling of the first experience of the brilliance, strength, and beauty of an Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performance and how it took my breath away. My first experience was *Revelations*. ... it is through this piece that some measure of our truth, our beauty and depth of the African American experience is understood as both unique and universal. That is its genius, and therein lies its power to bring people together.”

The free broadcast is available for one week on Ailey’s [Website](#) and [Vimeo](#), and made possible through the generous support of **Dove®**, **BNY Mellon**, **Diageo**, and **EHE Health**. Benefit Co-Chairs were **Emily & Len Blavatnik**, **Paulette Mullings Bradnock & Howard Bradnock**, **Daria L. & Eric J. Wallach**, **Joan & Sandy Weill** and **Elaine P. Wynn**; and vice chairs were **Jill & Gunther Bright**, **Anthony S. Kendall**, and **Stephen J. Meringoff**. **Bank of America** is the *Revelations* at 60 Sponsor during Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s 2020 virtual season. So far, over **40,000 viewers** have joined in the celebration with **nearly 3,000 people** providing **gifts totaling over 1.7 million** to keep moving Ailey Forward while supporting the creation of new works, scholarships to [The Ailey School](#), and Ailey [Arts In Education](#) programs for young people.

The special broadcasts continue with the **Saturday, December 5th Ailey & Ellington Family Program** that includes a conversation focused on **Duke Ellington** between **Robert Battle** and **Wynton Marsalis** and features an excerpt of [Pas de Duke with Ailey stars Jacqueline Green and Yannick Lebrun](#) on the top of the landmark [Woolworth building](#) as a breathtaking love letter to New York City, along with newly-filmed versions of [Reflections in D](#) and [Night Creature](#) accompanied by reminiscences from **Sarita Allen**, an original cast member and current Ailey Extension teacher. Next week the **Monday, December 7th Dancing Spirit** explores the significance of spirituals featuring **Artistic Director Robert Battle** in conversation with **Reverend Eboni Marshall Turman** and singer **Toshi Reagon**, a performance by **students from The Ailey School**, and departing dancer **Hope Boykin** in an excerpt of **Matthew Rushing's ODETTA**. **Celebrating Glenn Allen Sims and Linda Celeste Sims on Wednesday, December 9th** spotlights the Company’s longest tenured dancers in farewell performances and the husband and wife duo in conversation with choreographer **Ronald K. Brown**.

Throughout the virtual holiday season engagement, which extends through New Year’s Eve, Ailey’s talented artists will unveil a total of nine presentations including a new work by **Ailey Resident Choreographer Jamar Roberts**, celebrating the centennial of jazz revolutionary **Charlie “Bird” Parker**, and the *Revelations*-inspired world premiere **Testament** created by [Matthew Rushing](#), in his first season as Associate Artistic Director, in collaboration with company member **Clifton Brown** and former company member **Yusha-Marie Sorzano**. For more information, visit alvinailey.org/virtualeason.

BENEFIT PHOTOS AVAILABLE:

[Photos](#)

AILEY PHOTOS ALSO AVAILABLE:

[2020 Season Images](#) & [2020 Virtual Season Sizzle Reel](#) (For Broadcast)

UPCOMING PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 at 2:00pm EST (through December 12) : FAMILY PROGRAM: AILEY & ELLINGTON

On Saturday, December 5th Ailey will showcase three of the 14 ballets founder Alvin Ailey created during his career that celebrate the musical genius of the eminent American composer Duke Ellington that have become cherished Ailey standards - [Night Creature](#), [Reflections in D](#) and [Pas de Duke](#). Ailey’s artistry will be reaching new heights in the breathtaking [excerpt of Pas de Duke](#), originally created for Judith Jamison and Mikhail Baryshnikov, filmed at the newly transformed [Woolworth Tower Residences](#) on top of the iconic landmark Woolworth building with the New York skyline as a backdrop. A visually striking location for the celebration of America’s two great art forms - modern dance and jazz music – **The Woolworth Building** is an architectural gem that was officially inaugurated on April 24, 1913, when President Woodrow Wilson flipped a switch in the White House to illuminate what was then the world’s tallest structure. The program will include **BattleTalk with Wynton Marsalis**, artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center and world-renowned trumpeter and composer.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7 at 7:30pm (through December 14): *DANCING SPIRIT*

In the *Dancing Spirit* presentation Ailey examines the influence of spirituals, which were at the root of Alvin Ailey's presentation of his African American heritage. This program will include an excerpt of "**This Little Light of Mine**" from [ODETTA \(2014\)](#), **Matthew Rushing's** tribute to **Odetta Holmes** – one of the most influential singers of the 20th century known as the "voice of the Civil Rights Movement," featuring departing company member Hope Boykin and a new duet performed by **two Professional Division students from [The Ailey School](#)** set to "Hallelujah" by Toshi Reagon and choreographed by Freddie Moore, the Student Performance Group Rehearsal Director. A **BattleTalk with Reverend Dr. Eboni Marshall Turman and versatile singer-songwriter-guitarist Toshi Reagon** will delve deeper into the origins and significance of spirituals.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9 at 7:30pm ET (through December 16): CELEBRATING GLENN ALLEN SIMS & LINDA CELESTE SIMS

A heartfelt farewell to [Glenn Allen Sims](#) and [Linda Celeste Sims](#), Ailey's longest tenured dancers, features a new recording of the central duet from [The Winter in Lisbon](#), highlights an assortment of excerpts of the duo's performances of [Night Creature](#), [Polish Pieces](#), "The Lake" from *The River*, and "Fix Me, Jesus" from *Revelations*, as well as Linda in a solo from [Memoria](#) and Glenn in the finale of *Love Songs* ("He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother"); and includes a talk between the two and revered choreographer **Ronald K. Brown**.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 11 at 7:30pm ET (through December 18): *DANCING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE*

Ailey presents performance excerpts from Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's powerful ballet [Shelter](#), a passionate statement about the physical and emotional deprivation of homeless people and Kyle Abraham's [Untitled America](#), a work that shines a light on the impact of the prison system on African-American. Fittingly, a timely discussion centered around the arts and social justice will be shared through **BattleTalk with Kyle Abraham, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and activist and [Equal Justice Initiative](#) founder Bryan Stevenson**.

SPECIAL VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS AT AILEY

REVELATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 3:00PM ET | Ailey Extension Online

Come together with 300 students from around the globe to learn excerpts from Alvin Ailey's signature masterpiece [Revelations](#). Since its premiere in 1960, Alvin Ailey's *Revelations* has been performed continuously around the globe, transcending barriers of faith and nationality, and appealing to universal emotions, making it one of the most recognized ballets in the world. This monumental occasion will be led by Director of Ailey Extension and Company alumna, [Lisa Johnson-Willingham](#), and filmed for use during Ailey's upcoming virtual season.

NIGHT CREATURE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 AT 2:00PM ET | Ailey Extension Online

Join world-renowned dancer and Ailey Extension Instructor [Sarita Allen](#) for a special workshop learning choreography from Alvin Ailey's [Night Creature](#). Ms. Allen was a leading Company member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and one of the original cast members in *Night Creature*, chosen by Alvin Ailey himself to perform the lead role. Alvin Ailey's *Night Creature* is a perfect fusion of Ailey's buoyant choreography and Duke Ellington's sparkling music. At once wistful and sassy, it beckons viewers into a nocturnal world populated by jazz babies and night owls. Duke Ellington said that "night creatures, unlike stars, do not come OUT at night—they come ON, each thinking that, before the night is out, he or she will be the star."

MASTERCLASS WITH GLENN ALLEN SIMS AND LINDA CELESTE SIMS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19 AT 2:00PM ET | Ailey Extension Online

Join Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's longest tenured dancers, Glenn Allen Sims and Linda Celeste Sims for an in-depth masterclass inspired by Ailey movement style, which follows a heartfelt farewell program celebrating the beloved couple. After nearly 25 years with the Company and having been guest stars around the world, Glenn and Linda's professional journey has touched Ailey audiences for decades. This workshop will begin with a modern dance warm-up followed by a detailed study of technique and choreography. Students will learn to use their technique as the foundation to dance and find confidence and strength in the process of self-expression. Class will be followed by a 30-minute Q&A.

Ailey Opening Night Virtual Benefit Honoree: Dove

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Bank of America is the Revelations at 60 Sponsor during Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's 2020 virtual season.

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