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Press Contacts:

Christopher Zunner  
czunner@alvinailey.org  
(212) 405-9028

Tracy Severe

tsevere@alvinailey.org  
(212) 405-9032



# 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

## ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER'S 65TH ANNIVERSARY OPENING NIGHT GALA PERFORMANCE AND PARTY HONORS BELOVED ARTISTIC DIRECTOR EMERITA JUDITH JAMISON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 AT 7PM

Honorary Chairs are Tony®, Emmy®, and GRAMMY® Award-winning Actress and Singer Cynthia Erivo and  
Emmy® Award-winning co-host of ABC's "The View" Sunny Hostin

One-Night-Only Program Features a Live Performance by Vocal Powerhouse Cynthia Erivo  
Followed by Alvin Ailey's *Revelations* with Live Music

Celebration Launches Ailey's New York City Center Five-Week Engagement, November 29 – December 31

**NEW YORK – Updated November 21, 2023** —On the heels of a successful international tour, [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) kicks off its 65th anniversary season at New York City Center on November 29 with an Opening Night Gala honoring beloved trailblazer and iconic Artistic Director Emerita [Judith Jamison](#) in her 80th year. The celebration pays tribute to her legendary career as a groundbreaking dancer, choreographer, and visionary leader who has left an indelible mark on Ailey, the greater dance community, and American culture. The evening's Honorary Chairs are Tony®, Emmy®, and GRAMMY® Award-winning and Oscar-nominated actress, singer, author, and producer Cynthia Erivo and 3x Emmy® Award-winning co-host of ABC's "The View" and 2x *New York Times* best-selling author Sunny Hostin.

Judith Jamison shared, "The joy and gratitude I feel for my life with Ailey is overflowing at the thought of being honored as the 65th Anniversary season launches. I will cherish this tribute among the many treasured memories created since the genius Alvin Ailey invited me to join as a dancer in 1965, which led to 15 years of life-changing performances around the world and the honor of leading the Company for over two decades."

This historic evening begins at 7pm at New York City Center with a pièce d'occasion choreographed by former Ailey dancer Hope Boykin in collaboration with vocal powerhouse Cynthia Erivo entitled *A Tribute and Celebration, for Judith Jamison*. "I am thrilled to be a part of this evening and to be able to share the stage with the glorious Alvin Ailey Dance Company," stated Cynthia Erivo. "I have been a longtime fan and supporter of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and am so honored to be given the opportunity to support this company, who has given the arts so much."

As an 80th birthday present to Ms. Jamison, Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation has provided generous support for the new work. Elaine Wynn said, "There is no better way to celebrate the force that is Ms. Jamison than to create new works in her honor. This special premiere is our gift to her. We hope it brings joy to all, but especially her and all the women who have upheld and uplifted Alvin Ailey's legacy."

"As I look back and look forward, thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of the wonderful people, leadership, and artists who have joined in continuing Alvin Ailey's legacy, including the Board, staff, crew, dancers, choreographers, and musicians," Judith Jamison said. "I am profoundly overwhelmed by the meaningful gift of artistry and spirit being planned and am thrilled to extend my gratitude to all joining in the celebration, especially the prodigiously-talented Cynthia Erivo and the amazing Elaine Wynn, a dear and generous friend who I love and admire. It will be a night I'll never forget!"

The Gala program culminates with Alvin Ailey's American masterpiece [\*Revelations\*](#), with its unforgettable score of spirituals sung live by a soul-stirring choir.

Prominent figures in the worlds of entertainment, business, philanthropy, and politics will join in the festive dinner-dance at the Ziegfeld Ballroom following the performance. Proceeds from the Gala support the creation of new works, scholarships for talented students at The Ailey School, and Ailey's educational programs for children. The event's **co-chairs** are **Emily & Len Blavatnik, Raina & Jack Pitts, Dr. Danielle Robinson & Reverend Dwayne McClary, Daria L. & Eric J. Wallach, Joan & Sandy Weill, Elaine Wynn and Pamela D. Zilly & John H. Schaefer**; **vice chairs** are **Jill & Gunther Bright, Anthony S. Kendall, Anthony A. Lewis, and Leslie & Tom Maheras**. Call 212-405-9031 or visit [alvinailey.org/support/opening-night-gala](http://alvinailey.org/support/opening-night-gala) for tickets.

Ailey is pleased to announce the **65th Anniversary Opening Night Gala Honorary Committee**, a distinguished group of individuals across industries who will join the organization in celebrating the international dance luminary Judith Jamison: **Jason Bolden, Michael Ealy, Cynthia Erivo, Tamron Hall, Sunny Hostin, Leslie Odom, Jr., Billy Porter, Lionel Richie, Robin Roberts, Amy Sherald, Lena Waithe, and Pauletta & Denzel Washington**.

Ailey's five-week engagement of new works and returning favorites at City Center features the world premiere of Amy Hall Garner's [\*CENTURY\*](#), a deeply personal piece inspired by her grandfather and set to the music of Ray Charles, Count Basie, The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, and more; a *Pioneering Women of Ailey* program celebrating Carmen de Lavallade, Judith Jamison, Denise Jefferson, and Sylvia Waters, who are core to Ailey's extraordinary legacy; highlights of a dozen works by founder Alvin Ailey; as well as performances featuring music by jazz greats and Mr. Ailey's American masterpiece *Revelations*, both danced to live music on select days throughout the season. **Tickets for season performances from November 29 through December 31, start at \$32, and are on sale** at the New York City Center Box Office, by phone at (212) 581-1212, and at [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org) or [www.nycitycenter.org](http://www.nycitycenter.org).

**PRESS:** For photos, videos, and materials, visit [pressroom.alvinailey.org](http://pressroom.alvinailey.org) or [click here](#).



(L to R): Cynthia Erivo. Photo by Mark Seliger; Judith Jamison in Alvin Ailey's *The Mooche*. Photograph by Henry Wolf published in New York Magazine November 10, 1975; Sunny Hostin. Photo by Jeff Lipsky.

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***The 2023 Winter Season is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.***

***The Opening Night Gala is sponsored by Diageo North America.***

## **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, posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation’s highest civilian honor, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company was then led by Robert Battle from 2011 to 2023. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 25 million people in 71 countries on six continents, 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 the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, 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 world during extensive 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](http://www.alvinailey.org).

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