

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER'S OPENING NIGHT GALA HONORS
DANCE EDUCATION LUMINARY JODY GOTTFRIED ARNHOLD
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4 AT 7PM

Co-Host of "CBS Mornings" and Editor-at-Large of Oprah Daily Gayle King
and Two-time Tony® Award-winning Actress Phylicia Rashad to Serve as Honorary Chairs

One-Night-Only Program Features Debut of 25th Anniversary Production of Ronald K. Brown's *Grace* with
Live Performance by Tony® and GRAMMY® Award-winning Artist Leslie Odom, Jr. and
Composer, Visual Artist, and GRAMMY® Award-winning Vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant

Celebration Launches AILEY's Holiday Season at New York City Center, December 4 – January 5,
Honoring the Life and Legacy of Artistic Director Emerita Judith Jamison

NEW YORK — updated November 12, 2024 — [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) kicks off its five-week holiday season celebrating the life and legacy of Artistic Director Emerita Judith Jamison on Wednesday, December 4 at 7pm with a star-studded [Opening Night Gala](#), including a performance at New York City Center and party at Ziegfeld Ballroom. The Gala honors Jody Gottfried Arnhold for her steadfast commitment to accessible dance education for all and her invaluable support of AILEY's mission. The Honorary Chairs for the evening are Gayle King, co-host of "CBS Mornings" and Editor-at-Large of Oprah Daily, and Phylicia Rashad, two-time Tony® Award-winning actress.

This one-night-only extravaganza features an excerpt of Mr. Ailey's [Cry](#) to pay tribute to Judith Jamison, who originated the role and ignited the ballet with her unparalleled grace and power, and features the 25th anniversary return of Ronald K. Brown's rapturous [Grace](#) with a special live performance by Tony® and GRAMMY® Award-winning artist **Leslie Odom, Jr.** and composer, visual artist, and GRAMMY® Award-winning vocalist **Cécile McLorin Salvant**. Fueled by Duke Ellington's classic "Come Sunday," Peven Everett's hit "Gabriel," and the irresistible pulse of Fela Kuti's Afro-Pop, *Grace* depicts individuals on a journey to the promised land, expanding from a single angel-like figure in white to the fireball intensity of 12 powerful dancers. Revered by *The New York Times* as an "amazingly explosive image of a spiritual journey," *Grace* is a fervent tour-de-force connecting African and American dance.

Following the inspiring finale of Alvin Ailey's 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. Proceeds from the Gala support the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, the creation of new works, scholarships for talented students at The Ailey School, and AILEY's innovative educational programs for children. The event's co-chairs are **Emily & Len Blavatnik, Jack Pitts, Dr. Danielle Robinson & Reverend Dwayne McClary, Daria L. & Eric J. Wallach, Joan & Sandy Weill, and Pamela D. Zilly & John H. Schaefer**; vice chairs are **Anthony S. Kendall and Anthony A. Lewis**. Call 212-405-9031 or visit www.ailey.org/events/opening-night-gala for tickets.

AILEY is pleased to announce the **2024 Opening Night Gala Honorary Committee members: John Arnhold, Julia Arnhold & Lane Gerson, Paul Arnhold & Wes Gordon, Agnes Gund, Carolina Herrera, Regina King, Tina Knowles, Bianca Lawson, Tarell Alvin McCraney, and Indré Rockefeller.**

Ailey's five-week engagement at City Center promises to captivate audiences with an impressive lineup of world premieres, including Interim Artistic Director Matthew Rushing's *Sacred Songs*, Hope Boykin's *Finding Free*, Lar Lubovitch's *Many Angels*, and Jamar Roberts' *Al-Andalus Blues*. In addition to Ronald K. Brown's *Grace*, the season also features a new production of Elisa Monte's mesmerizing *Treading* and a variety of repertory favorites, including Alvin Ailey's seminal work *Revelations*, performed to live music during the opening weekend. Tickets for season performances from December 4–January 5 start at \$42 (fees included) and are on sale at the New York City Center Box Office, through Customer Care at 212-581-1212, or online at www.ailey.org or www.nycitycenter.org.

PRESS: For photos, videos, and materials, visit pressroom.alvinailey.org or [click here](#). Additional images can be found [here](#).



(L to R): Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Corrin Rachelle Mitchell and Michael Jackson Jr. in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*. Photo by Paul Kolnik. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Coral Dolphin and Solomon Dumas in Ronald K. Brown's *Grace*. Photo by Nir Arieli; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*. Photo by Dario Calmese.

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Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

The Opening Night Gala Ailey Vanguard Supporters are Jody & John Arnhold.

The Opening Night Gala Spirits Sponsor is Diageo North America.

The original production of *Grace* was supported by Natasha Leibel Levine, M.D. & Harlan B. Levine, M.D., and Elizabeth Marsteller Gordon.

The creation of this work was also made possible, in part, by AT&T, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and The Harkness Foundation for Dance.

ABOUT ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recognized by US 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. Forged during a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement, the Company was established to uplift the African American experience while transcending boundaries of race, faith, and nationality with its universal humanity. Before his untimely death in 1989, Mr. Ailey named Judith Jamison as his successor, and for 21 years she brought the Company to unprecedented success. 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 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. AILEY also includes Ailey II, a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School, 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 Ailey Extension, a program offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of AILEY's permanent home, The Joan Weill Center for Dance—the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City—at 55th Street at 9th Avenue in New York City. AILEY is partnering with the Whitney Museum of American Art to present *Edges of Ailey* (September 25, 2024–February 9, 2025), the first large-scale exhibition to celebrate the life, creativity, influence, and enduring legacy of Alvin Ailey. For more information, visit www.ailey.org.

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