



## Alvin Ailey Dance Theater's Ailey Extension brings world-class dance to Chicago

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CHICAGO – Considered one of the most acclaimed dance companies in the world, many Chicagoans are already looking forward to the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's performances in March.

Before the dancers take the stage, some of the pros are in the city teaching their moves to those hoping to follow in their footsteps.

Whether teaching or performing, dance comes naturally for instructor Glenn Allen Sims, who danced with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for

23 years.

"Dance is a part of who I am and it is something as seamless as walking down the street," Sims said.

Saturday afternoon marks the first of the two-day Ailey Eperience at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts on the University of Chicago campus.

"I just want to try something new and have a fun experience," dancer Joey Armstrong said.

It's an opportunity for professional and amateur dancers to explore a variety of genres including contemporary and classic Ailey choreography.

"I'm excited to see how different people teach and to look at how different people dance and to just absorb in as much as I can learn," dancer Jaelynn Selph said.

In 1958, company founder Alvin Ailey and a group of Young, Black modern dancers performed for the first time as members of Alvin Ailey and Company in New York.

In 1965, legendary performer and choreographer Judith Jamison debuted with the theater. She also served as artistic director for many years.

Dancer Tyra Outlaw, 18, said Jamison is an inspiration to her.

"I think for me, representation means a lot because when someone else who looks like you and has probably faced a lot more challenges than you have, it gives you hope that you also can do it," Outlaw said.

Those inspired by Jamison, who died last November, said she left a powerful mark on the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, and during the Ailey Experience, participants are learning parts of *Divining*, Jamison's first major work as a choreographer for the theater.

"It is a piece that anyone can do and it's easy and it's fun, because there's drums behind it and it makes you feel like you're doing a lot, even if you're not doing that much," Sims said.

Ailey Experience also has classes available on Sunday afternoon.

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will return to Chicago for performances at the auditorium theater from March 7-9.

Watch here: <https://wgntv.com/news/chicago-news/alvin-ailey-dance-theater-teaches-chicago/> (2:47)

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