



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater returns to Chicago

By: Ramona Meadors

March 8, 2025



Watch here:

<https://abc7chicago.com/post/alvin-ailey-american-dance-theater-returns-auditorium-chicago-loop/15984308/> (3:39)

Chicago native and dancer for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Solomon Dumas, speaks with ABC 7 about The Company's engagement this weekend at The Auditorium.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, one of the world's most popular dance companies, returns to The Auditorium, Chicago's landmark stage at 50 E Ida B. Wells Drive, in four performances only, Friday-Sunday, March 7-9, 2025 as part of a coast-to-coast 2025 United States tour in a season celebrating the life and legacy of Artistic Director Emerita Judith Jamison (1943-2024). Led by Interim Artistic Director Matthew Rushing, the passionate spirit and extraordinary technique of Ailey's dancers will be showcased in two exciting programs featuring a trio of Chicago premieres alongside compelling new productions and beloved Ailey Classics including Alvin Ailey's must-see signature masterpiece *Revelations*. Tickets start at \$39 and are now available at auditoriumtheatre.org or by calling The Auditorium's Ticket Service Center at 312-341-2300.

Chicago's own Vernard J. Gilmore will celebrate his farewell hometown engagement with Ailey, taking his final bow after 28 seasons with the Company. Currently the longest tenured Company member, the Englewood native began his professional dance training at Curie Performing and Creative Arts High School before receiving a scholarship to The Ailey School, performing with Ailey II, and joining Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1997.

In addition to the inspiring finale of *Revelations* for all performances, the programs for the 2025 Chicago engagement of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater are as follows:

Friday, March 7 at 7:30pm & Sunday, March 9, at 3pm

Grace (1999, Chicago Premiere of 25th anniversary production) Set to Duke Ellington's classic "Come Sunday," Peven Everett's hit "Gabriel," and the irresistible pulse of Fela Kuti's Afro-Pop, Ronald K. Brown's spellbinding work 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. Here, the secular and sacred meet in a tour-de-force connecting African and American dance.

Finding Free (2024, Chicago Premiere) by former Company member Hope Boykin who returns to explore personal freedoms in this collaboration with pianist Matthew Whitaker who is composing an original score. This insightful work uses Boykin's movement-language and Whitaker's jazz- and gospel-influenced music to examine the challenges and restrictions throughout life's peaks and valleys that propel the journey forward.

*Friday only: Special Opening Night excerpt of *Cry* as a tribute to Ms. Jamison.

Cry excerpt (1971) Alvin Ailey choreographed the solo ballet, *Cry*, as a birthday present for his mother; it went on to become an enduring work of American art. First danced by the legendary Judith Jamison, an excerpt of this powerful work dedicated to "all black women everywhere - especially our mothers" will be performed on the opening night program (Friday, March 7) as a tribute to Ms. Judith Jamison, the beloved Company dancer and Artistic Director Emerita who passed away in late 2024.

Saturday, March 8 at 1pm & 7:30pm

Sacred Songs (2024, Chicago Premiere) by Matthew Rushing features music used in the original 1960 premiere of Alvin Ailey's seminal *Revelations* but later omitted when the piece was edited into the current version that has captivated audiences for decades. Drawing inspiration from the roots of Mr. Ailey's most venerated and consummate creation, this stirring new work will resurrect and reimagine those spirituals-with the collaboration of musical director Du'Bois A'Keen-as an offering to our present need for lamentation, faith, and joy.

Treading (1979, Chicago Premiere of new production) by Elisa Monte is a sculptural, mesmerizing duet featuring fluid, intricate movements that combine with Steve Reich's evocative music to create an aura of mystery and sensuality.

Many Angels (2024, Chicago Premiere) by Lar Lubovitch in his first premiere for the Company, features the native Chicago choreographer's renowned lush choreography and musicality set to Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 5. *Many Angels* is inspired by a question posed by 13th century theologian St. Thomas Aquinas, "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?," illustrating that some questions have no logical response but are understood as a question of faith.

Culminating each program will be Alvin Ailey's must-see American masterpiece *Revelations*, acclaimed around the world for sending hearts soaring and lifting audiences to their feet with its perfect blend of reverent grace and spiritual elation. Since its debut in 1960, *Revelations* has been moving audiences with its powerful storytelling and soul-stirring music, evoking timeless themes of determination, hope, and transcendence. An intimate reflection of Mr. Ailey's childhood memories of growing up in the South and attending services at Mount Olive Baptist Church in Texas, *Revelations* pays homage to the rich cultural heritage of the African American community and explores the emotional spectrum of the human condition.

2025 Chicago program & performance schedule

Friday, March 7 at 7:30pm & Sunday, March 9, at 3pm

*Grace, Finding Free, Cry** (excerpt), *Revelations*

*Friday only: Special Opening Night excerpt of *Cry* as a tribute to Ms. Jamison.

Saturday, March 8 at 1pm & 7:30pm

Sacred Songs, Treading, Many Angels, Revelations

In addition to these four public performances, the Company will present two student matinees at The Auditorium, reaching thousands of youths with an inspiring program of Ailey Classics on Thursday, March 6 and Friday, March 7 at 11am.