

AILEY EXTENSION COMMEMORATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A SUITE OF WORKSHOPS CELEBRATING TWO DECADES OF “GIVING DANCE BACK TO THE PEOPLE”

Celebration Kicks off with FREE COMMUNITY CLASS led by Director of Ailey Lisa Johnson-Willingham April 4

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION with Live DJ Unites Ailey Extension Students, Instructors, and Staff April 5

**Cry Workshop with Nasha Thomas Honors Life and Legacy of Artistic Director Emerita Judith Jamison
on What Would Have Been Her 82nd Birthday May 10**

**Additional Workshops Throughout the Year Led by Dynamic Instructors Spotlight the Variety of Ailey
Extension’s Class Techniques and Offerings for All**



Judith Jamison in Alvin Ailey’s Cry. Photo by Jack Mitchell. © Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation Inc. and Smithsonian Institution; West African Dance Family Class at Ailey Extension. Photo by Coal Rietsenbach; Workshop with Lisa Johnson-Willingham at Ailey Extension. Photo by Danica Paulos

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(NEW YORK) April 1, 2025 – Since April 4, 2005, Ailey Extension has opened its doors for people of all ages and experience levels to feel the vibrant energy of its spectacular dance and fitness classes; and this month the program is kicking off its official 20th anniversary celebration with a free dance workshop and community party inviting everyone to get moving with AILEY.

The official celebration weekend begins on **Friday, April 4 at 7pm** with a free [20th Anniversary Community Workshop](#) led by Director of Ailey Extension and former Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Company member [Lisa Johnson-Willingham](#). Participants will delve into the basics of Horton – the foundational technique of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater – as well as other contemporary and modern-inspired movement. On **Saturday April 5 at 6pm** a free [20th Anniversary Celebration](#) brings together Ailey Extension students, instructors, staff, and former faculty for a special community-oriented party featuring music by DJ Bizzy.

The anniversary weekend closes out with an open level [Latin Fusion Masterclass with Lyrik Cruz](#) on **Sunday, April 6 at 3pm**. The choreographer and Chita Rivera Award nominee will teach a blend of salsa, mambo, cha cha, jazz, hip hop, and house dance, focusing on execution and performance quality with a touch of Latin body movement, isolations, and fancy footwork.

Ailey Extension will continue to celebrate its 20th anniversary throughout the year with a series of workshops led by past and present Ailey Extension instructors as well as esteemed guest artists. Dance lovers can look forward to a variety of workshops expanding on the many modern, contemporary, street styles, ballet, world dance and fitness techniques provided at Ailey Extension.

On **Saturday April 19 at 1pm** bring the whole family to get down during in a [West African Dance Family Workshop](#) featuring live drumming. Led by world-renowned instructor **Maguette Camara**, this beginner-friendly workshop will teach participants the basic rhythms and movement of the technique.

The annual [World Dance Celebration Performance Workshop](#) begins **April 21**, inviting dancers of all levels – from absolute beginner to experienced – to come together and gain invaluable training while discovering the extraordinary performer inside of them. Participants can choose from Afro-Brazilian, Afro-Cuban, Afro'Dance, Bhangra/Bollywood, Contemporary Indian, Dancehall, Dunham, NY Style Mambo, salsa, and West African techniques and receive individual attention during rehearsals to help improve their quality of movement. Over the course of eight weeks each group will rehearse original choreography to perform in front of family and friends during multiple showcases at the Ailey Citigroup Theater on **June 20 and 21**.

On **Saturday, May 10 at 3pm** Ailey Extension presents a [Cry Workshop with Nasha Thomas](#) where participants will learn excerpts of the famous three-part solo from one of the former Ailey dancers who have performed the piece. [Cry](#) was choreographed by Alvin Ailey as a birthday present for his mother and went on to become an enduring work of American art. The famous piece dedicated to “all Black women everywhere – especially our mothers” was first danced by the legendary Judith Jamison and propelled her to international stardom in the dance world. Hosted on what would have been her 82nd birthday, the timing of this workshop also coincides with the anniversary of the original premiere of the piece (May 9, 1971) and a special Mother’s Day performance featuring a unique excerpt of the famed work at NJPAC in Newark, NJ to culminate [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s 2025 US Tour](#) on May 11 during AILEY’s season celebrating the life and legacy of AILEY Artistic Director Emerita Judith Jamison.

[Afro Flow Yoga](#) returns to Ailey Extension for two workshops on **Saturday, May 31 and Sunday, June 1 at 2:30pm**. Co-founders **Leslie Salmon Jones and Jeff W. Jones** will lead students through a 90-minute integrated, embodied practice that combines yoga with live, healing music, and dances from the African Diaspora.

To commemorate the anniversary Ailey Extension has also debuting a special [20-class card](#) allowing frequent students to enjoy weekly classes at a discounted rate of \$20 per class. The 20-class card is available for purchase starting April 1 and expires three months from the date of purchase.

On April 4, 2005, Ailey Extension officially opened its doors at the Joan Weill Center for Dance – New York’s largest building dedicated to dance – for people of all backgrounds to take open dance classes with world-renowned AILEY instructors. The program is proud to continue Alvin Ailey’s legacy to make dance accessible to all people and keep the global AILEY community connected through dance both at our home in New York City and virtually across the globe.

Additional workshops and events to mark 20 years of “giving dance back to the people” will be announced throughout the year. For more information on Ailey Extension, including how to sign up for a class or workshop, please visit ailey.org/classes.

FREE 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AT AILEY EXTENSION

20TH ANNIVERSARY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP with LISA JOHNSON-WILLINGHAM

Join us in celebrating Ailey Extension’s 20th anniversary with a free community workshop led by former Ailey dancer and Ailey Extension Director Lisa Johnson-Willingham. Students will be guided through a simple modern dance warm-up before delving into the basics of Horton, the foundational technique of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, as well as other contemporary and modern-inspired movement. All levels are welcome! **April 4 at 7pm**

20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Join us as we commemorate 20 years of Ailey Extension with a special community-oriented party on Saturday, April 5 from 6–9pm at the Ailey Studios. Live music entertainment will be provided by DJ Bizzy, and light fare will be served. Come celebrate with Extension students, instructors, staff, and former faculty! **April 5 at 6pm**

ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS AT AILEY EXTENSION

LATIN FUSION MASTERCLASS with LYRIK CRUZ (In-Studio)

Join choreographer and Chita Rivera Award nominee, Lyrik Cruz, for a masterclass on Latin fusion dance—a blend of salsa, mambo, cha cha, jazz, hip-hop, and house dance. Students will focus on execution and performance quality with a touch of Latin body movement, isolations, and fancy footwork while they work through Latin fusion combinations. This workshop is open to dancers of all levels. **April 6 at 3pm**

WEST AFRICAN FAMILY DAY WORKSHOP with MAGUETTE CAMARA (In-Studio)

Bring the whole family to AILEY for a West African dance class hosted by world-renowned instructor Maguette Camara. Participants will immerse themselves in African culture as they learn the basic rhythms and movement of technique. No dance experience is necessary! This class will feature live drumming. **April 19 at 1pm**

CRY WORKSHOP with NASHA THOMAS

Celebrate Mother's Day at AILEY as we honor [Judith Jamison](#) on what would've been her 82nd birthday with a Cry workshop taught by master teaching artist and the National Director of AileyCamp, [Nasha Thomas](#). Alvin Ailey choreographed [Cry](#) as a birthday present for his mother and dedicated it "to all Black women everywhere—especially our mothers." In the three-part solo, the dancer, clad in a white leotard and long ruffled skirt, brings the audience on a journey of bitter sorrow, brutal hardship, and ecstatic joy. This workshop is open to dancers of all levels ages 13 and up. **May 10 at 3pm**

AFRO FLOW YOGA with LESLIE SALMON JONES & JEFF W. JONES (In-Studio)

Join our circle for a 90-minute workshop as [Afro Flow Yoga](#)® returns to Ailey Extension! Afro Flow Yoga® co-founders Leslie Salmon Jones, her husband Jeff W. Jones will lead students through an integrated, embodied practice that combines yoga with live, healing music, and dances from the African Diaspora. Through the power of collective energy and the creation of sacred space, students will leave feeling empowered, energized, and renewed. Open to all levels and abilities. Please bring a yoga mat and water. **May 31 and June 1 at 2:30pm**

WORLD DANCE CELEBRATION PERFORMANCE WORKSHOPS

World Dance Celebration at Ailey Extension brings diverse communities together to share their rich cultural heritages from around the world. This eight-week student performance workshop is designed for all levels of dancers to gain invaluable performance training, improve their quality of movement, and discover the extraordinary performer inside of them. Dancers will receive individual attention in rehearsals and push the boundaries of their creative voice with original choreography from prominent Ailey instructors, culminating in performances at the Ailey Citigroup Theater. **Rehearsals begin week of April 21; Performances June 20 and 21**

**In-Studio classes and workshops from Ailey Extension take place at
The Joan Weill Center for Dance (405 W 55th Street)
Virtual classes and workshops from Ailey Extension take place on Zoom**

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About Ailey Extension

Since its inception in 2005, Ailey Extension has fulfilled Mr. Ailey's life-long commitment of bringing dance to everyone by offering "real classes for real people." Ailey Extension offers nearly 80 different dance and fitness techniques such as Horton, Ballet, Masala Bhangra, West African, Samba, Jazz, Zumba, House and Hip-Hop. Over 135,000 people have taken classes at Ailey's home, New York's largest building dedicated to dance, where dancers of all levels and walks of life can learn and be inspired – body, mind, and spirit! For additional press materials, including photos, videos, and class descriptions, visit pressroom.alvinailey.org.