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Alvin Ailey Dance Theater brings storied history to L.A.

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For nearly 70 years, the famed Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has been showcasing Black talent and culture through dance. The troupe, which features Afro Latino talent and dance elements, is bringing its robust program to L.A. this week.

Founder Alvin Ailey's technical approach to dance combined modern dance, ballet and jazz — among other dance forms — in an attempt to blur the traditional boundaries of the dance world.

Part of the organization's mission was not only to uplift African American storytelling through movement, but to also highlight Black culture from across the globe.

In 2025, the Ailey Theater celebrated Afro Caribbean culture through its production of "Jazz Island," choreographed by Maija García. Channeling her Cuban roots and intensive research on Caribbean folklore tradition, García crafted a 25-minute show inspired by author Geoffrey Holder's nonfiction book "Black Gods, Green Islands," which highlighted the rhythms and energies of the Afro Caribbean diaspora.

Sebastian Garcia, a 10-year dance professional in his first year with the Ailey Theater, told The Times he was especially impressed with the level of care that the company put toward prepping that show, which extended beyond the physical mechanics of the performance.

"Maija was very adamant about really having conversations about understanding the Caribbean style and the Black experience through the Caribbean lens, which was really refreshing," Garcia told The Times.

"There are many aspects of everyone that are being woven together here at Ailey to create art and to give back to the audience."

Over the years, the Ailey Theater has performed at prestigious venues, such as the White House, embarked on a 10-country tour of Africa for the U.S. State Department in 1967, performed in the USSR in 1970 and toured China in 1985.

The company has also graced the opening ceremonies of the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City and even performed at 3 a.m. on New Year's Day for the prince of Morocco in 1978.

From March 25 to 29, the New York City-based theater's traveling companies will perform a series of shows at downtown L.A.'s the Music Center. While the Ailey classics "Revelations" and "Grace" have been mainstays of the company's repertoire, the L.A. performances will also include newer numbers, such as "Blink of an Eye," "A Case of You," "Difference Between," "The Holy Blues" and "Embrace."