



BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING 30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE BROOKLYN, NY 11217—1486

*****Press/Critic Invitation*****

**World premiere from renowned choreographer
Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, AILEY's 2025-26 Artist in Residence,
and Company dancers Samantha Figgins, and Chalvar Monteiro
debuts June 5 at BAM**

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

June 5, June 6, and June 7 at 7:30pm, and June 8 at 3pm

The Holy Blues, (World Premiere) by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Samantha Figgins, and Chalvar Monteiro

Treading (1979, new production 2024) by Elisa Monte

Grace (1999, new production 2024) by Ronald K. Brown

Revelations (1960) by Alvin Ailey

Jun 5—8

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

30 Lafayette Ave

Brooklyn, NY

The company that shattered every boundary of American dance returns to Brooklyn with another unforgettable spring program that includes *The Holy Blues*, a world premiere from renowned choreographer **Jawole Willa Jo Zollar** in collaboration with the Company's long-time dancers **Samantha Figgins** and **Chalvar Monteiro**. Zollar recently completed 40 years at the helm of Urban Bush Women and is AILEY's 2025/26 Artist in Residence. Also featured is **Elisa Monte's** *Treading*, a mesmerizing duet set to music by **Steve Reich**, **Ronald K. Brown's** *Grace*, a spellbinding dance journey to the promised land, and **Alvin Ailey's** visceral classic *Revelations*. This program is the culmination of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's 2024—2025 season celebrating the life and legacy of Artistic Director Emerita, **Judith Jamison**.

Ailey's long-standing relationship with BAM began in 1969 when the trailblazing choreographer established The Ailey School in Brooklyn and presented his company's first BAM performances. The company remains a vital force in New York City—and across the globe.

The Holy Blues

The Holy Blues takes its title from remarks in Alvin Ailey's journal in which he wrote, "My roots are also in the Gospel church, the Gospel churches of the south where I grew up...holy blues—paeans to joy, anthems to the human spirit." This genre encompasses gospel music and the blues, the sacred and the secular. Both walk with us in times of trouble and strife, serving as passages to the divine.

The Holy Blues is inspired by the ring shout and “the door of no return”, which function as both metaphors and an account of the lived experience of past generations. Dionne Brand states in her book *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*, “This door is not mere physicality. It is a spiritual location. It is also perhaps a psychic destination. Since leaving was never voluntary, return was, and still may be, an intention, however deeply buried. There is as it says no way in; no return.”

Treading

When Elisa Monte's sculptural, mesmerizing duet was first performed at New York City Center in 1981, *The New York Times* declared, “*Treading* gives lovers of fine dancing much to marvel at.” The couple in Monte's ballet come together in fluid, intricate movements that combine with Steve Reich's evocative music to create an aura of mystery and sensuality.

Grace

Ronald K. Brown's spellbinding *Grace* is a fervent tour-de-force depicting individuals on a journey to the promised land. Described by *The New York Times* as “astounding, something to be sensed as well as seen” and “the return of a truly remarkable work,” this spiritually charged work is a rapturous blend of modern dance and West African idioms. As in many of Brown's works, the movement alternates fluidly between extremes, with eruptions of power coupled with lightness. A serene solo for an angel-like figure in white gives way to fireball intensity as 12 dancers resembling contemporary warriors execute Brown's whirling, pounding choreography—arms and legs slicing the air and fingers pointing to the sky.

Brown's varied music choices closely reflect the heart of the work, with the spiritual grounding of Duke Ellington's “Come Sunday,” the contemporary yet timeless house music vibe of Peven Everett's “Gabriel,” and the West African and African American traditions of Fela Kuti's Afropop beats.

Revelations

Performed to negro spirituals, song-sermons, gospel songs, and holy blues, Alvin Ailey's *Revelations* fervently explores the places of deepest grief and holiest joy in the soul.

More than just a popular dance work, it has become a cultural treasure, beloved by generations of fans. Seeing *Revelations* for the first time or the hundredth can be a transcendent experience, with audiences cheering, singing along, and dancing in their seats from the opening notes of the plaintive “I Been 'Buked” to the rousing “Wade in the Water” and the triumphant finale, “Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham.”

Mr. Ailey said that one of America's richest treasures was the African American cultural heritage—“sometimes sorrowful, sometimes jubilant, but always hopeful.” This enduring classic is a tribute to that tradition, born out of the choreographer's “blood memories” of his childhood in rural Texas and the Baptist Church. Since its premiere in 1960, the ballet has been performed continuously around the globe, transcending barriers of faith and nationality, and appealing to universal emotions, making it the most widely seen modern dance work in the world.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recognized by U.S. 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. Founded by Alvin Ailey, the posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation's highest civilian honor. Before his

untimely death in 1989, Mr. Ailey named Judith Jamison as his successor, and for 21 years she led the Company to unprecedented success. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 25 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents—as well as millions more through television broadcasts, film screenings, and online platforms—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 Ailey company performs annually at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; 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 United States and the world during extensive yearly tours. The Ailey organization also includes Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), 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 (2005), a program offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of Ailey's permanent home—the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the dance capital of the world—named The Joan Weill Center for Dance, at 55th Street at 9th Avenue in New York City. For more information, visit www.ailey.org.

For press tickets and information, contact Sarah Garvey at sgarvey@bam.org.

For press materials, including bios, b-roll, and photos, members of the media may visit pressroom.alvinailey.org.