



ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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CULTURAL
AMBASSADOR
TO THE WORLD

Alvin Ailey, Founder Robert Battle, Artistic Director Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director
Judith Jamison, Artistic Director Emerita Sharon Gersten Luckman, Executive Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER CELEBRATES ROBERT BATTLE'S INAUGURAL SEASON AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR WITH NOVEMBER 30TH OPENING NIGHT GALA BENEFIT

*First Lady Michelle Obama and Iman Serve as Honorary Chairs
Special Tribute Performance by R&B Artist John Legend
Honoring Kimberly B. Davis President of The JPMorgan Chase Foundation*

(New York) October 6, 2011 – Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will kick-off a five-week New York season on November 30th with a star-studded gala benefit at New York City Center that begins an exciting new era led by Artistic Director Robert Battle. Honorary Chairs for the special evening are **First Lady Michelle Obama** and the legendary model **Iman**.

Nine-time Grammy Award-winner **John Legend** will join Ailey's Alicia Graf Mack in an **exclusive live performance of "If It's Magic,"** choreographed by Artistic Director Emerita Judith Jamison to the timeless music of Stevie Wonder. Legend, a long-time Ailey fan, stated, "Like millions of others, I've always been moved by Ailey's performances and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to be a part of bringing this touching dance to life through the music of one my greatest inspirations, Stevie Wonder."

Attendees will also enjoy the company premiere of modern dance master **Paul Taylor's *Arden Court***, a one-night-only performance of **Lar Lubovitch's duet *Prelude to a Kiss***, and **Alvin Ailey's masterpiece *Revelations***, with live music and a cast of 50. "Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is not only one of the world's most popular dance companies, but a cultural treasure that renews your spirit with each performance," said Iman, one of the evening's Honorary Chairs. "I can't wait to see the curtain go up on Ailey's extraordinary dancers and share in a moment of true revelry."

The benefit will honor **Kimberly B. Davis, President of The JPMorgan Chase Foundation**, for all of J.P. Morgan's wonderful support of Ailey's educational and community programs over the years. The event's co-chairs are **Simin & Herb Allison, Kathryn & Kenneth Chenault, Agnes & Gerald Hassell, Linda & Sandy Lindenbaum, Sharon C. Taylor** and **Joan & Sandy Weill**.

The 2011-12 season marks an historic moment as Robert Battle takes the helm as only the third Artistic Director in the Company's 53-year history, following the illustrious Judith Jamison and founder Alvin Ailey himself. "I'm honored by the great responsibility to lead this magnificent Company," Robert Battle said. "The Gala Benefit is the perfect opportunity to support and celebrate Ailey's vital legacy as we begin to journey in exciting new directions."

Proceeds from the Gala will benefit Ailey's educational programs, including scholarships and innovative outreach programs. For benefit tickets to the gala performance and dinner-dance in the Hilton New York Grand Ballroom, attended by prominent figures in the worlds of entertainment, business, philanthropy and politics, please call (212) 405-9031. For a schedule of the performances through January 1st, or for tickets, starting at \$25, visit www.alvinailey.org, www.citycenter.org, call CityTix (212-581-1212), or visit the New York City Center box office.

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For additional press materials or photos, visit pressroom.alvinailey.org or [click here](#) for full details on the season

Opening Night Gala Benefit Sponsors: Simin & Herb Allison; American Express; BNY Mellon; Linda & Sandy Lindenbaum; Prudential Financial, Inc.; and Joan & Sandy Weill and The Weill Family Foundation.

Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation acknowledges the following for the special support of the Opening Night Gala Benefit: Prudential Financial, Inc. and Wells Fargo are the co-sponsors of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's New York Season Diageo for providing the spirits for the Gala dinner-dance following the performance

About Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

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. Founded by Alvin Ailey, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle, whom Judith Jamison chose to succeed her on July 1, 2011. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 23 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents, promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition. 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 The 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.AlvinAiley.org.

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