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ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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JUDITH JAMISON TO BE HONORED AT WHITE HOUSE DANCE SERIES PRESENTED BY FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA

AILEY DANCERS AND STUDENTS TO JOIN IN SEPTEMBER 7TH CELEBRATION OF DANCE

(New York) – September 2, 2010 - First Lady Michelle Obama has announced the Administration's first event celebrating dance - The White House Dance Series: A Tribute to Judith Jamison – on Tuesday, September 7th. A legendary American dancer, choreographer and cultural icon, Jamison will be honored as she begins her final season as Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, a position she has held for over two decades. The tribute will include dance workshops for students from around the country and a tribute featuring performances by a diverse cross-section of American dance.

"I'm so happy to be living in an era with a First Lady who understands that, just as the White House is 'the People's House', the arts too, are for everyone," shared Judith Jamison. "As Alvin Ailey always said, 'Dance came from the people, and should always be delivered back to the people!' What is most meaningful is that Mrs. Obama chose to honor not only me, but to recognize what is truly one of our greatest cultural expressions and treasures; dance. I'm filled with pride at this moment."

During the 5:00pm tribute performance, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's acclaimed and applauded Linda Celeste Sims will perform an excerpt of Alvin Ailey's 1971 *Cry*, the tour-de-force solo that made Jamison an international dance star. The inspiring finale will be Alvin Ailey's timeless masterpiece *Revelations*, called a must-see for all people. Lauded as an American classic, *Revelations* will also be celebrated, 50 years after its creation, with special performances on a 25-city U.S. Tour that begins at New York City Center in December. Performances will also feature Paul Taylor Dance Company, Billy from Billy Elliot the Musical, The Washington Ballet, Super Cr3w, and New York City Ballet. It will be directed by Damian Woetzel, former principal dancer at the New York City Ballet and member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

In continuing the Administration's focus on supporting the arts and arts education, students from dance schools around the country, including The Ailey School, will participate in workshops prior to attending the early evening performance. Ailey's Co-Director of Arts In Education and Community Programs and former Ailey Company member, Nasha Thomas-Schmitt, will teach choreographic highlights from *Revelations* and excerpts from *Revelations: An Interdisciplinary Approach*; an innovative curriculum-based workshop that uses dance to teach language arts and history in the public schools. Other dance companies will lead workshop segments focusing on their genre.

"We are thrilled that the White House is celebrating the diversity of dance in America and its important role in educating young people," stated Sharon Gersten Luckman, Ailey's Executive Director. "Since our first State Department tour in 1962, Ailey has always inspired and united people around the world. We are so proud of our role as an American cultural ambassador, and are grateful for this opportunity to join in celebrating dance - front and center on the national stage!"

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JUDITH JAMISON

Judith Jamison has been artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for over 2 decades. One of the most renowned figures in modern dance, she was Mr. Ailey's muse for whom he created the tour-de-force solo *Cry* and other enduring roles. As a highly regarded choreographer, Ms. Jamison has created works for many different companies. She is also an author, whose autobiography was edited by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Ms. Jamison is the recipient of a primetime Emmy Award, the Kennedy Center Honors, and the National Medal of Arts, and she was named in *TIME*'s 2009 list of the world's 100 most influential people. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's 2010-11 season, Judith Jamison's final as Artistic Director, begins at New York City Center on December 1st. Tickets are available starting September 7th at the New York City Center Box Office, through CityTix® at (212) 581-1212 or online at www.alvinailey.org or www.nycitycenter.org.



AAADT in *Revelations* by Alvin Ailey. Photo by Andrew Eccles

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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 1958 New York performance that changed American dance. Now led by Judith Jamison, joined by artistic director designate Robert Battle, the Company has performed for an estimated 23 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents, including two historic residencies in South Africa, celebrating the African-American cultural experience and the American modern dance tradition. The Ailey organization also includes; Ailey II (1974), a second company of young dancers and choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), extensive dance training programs; Ailey Arts in Education & Community Programs, bringing dance into classrooms and communities; and The Ailey Extension, dance and fitness classes for the general public at Ailey's home – The Joan Weill Center for Dance in New York City—the nation's largest building for dance. For more information, visit www.alvinailey.org.