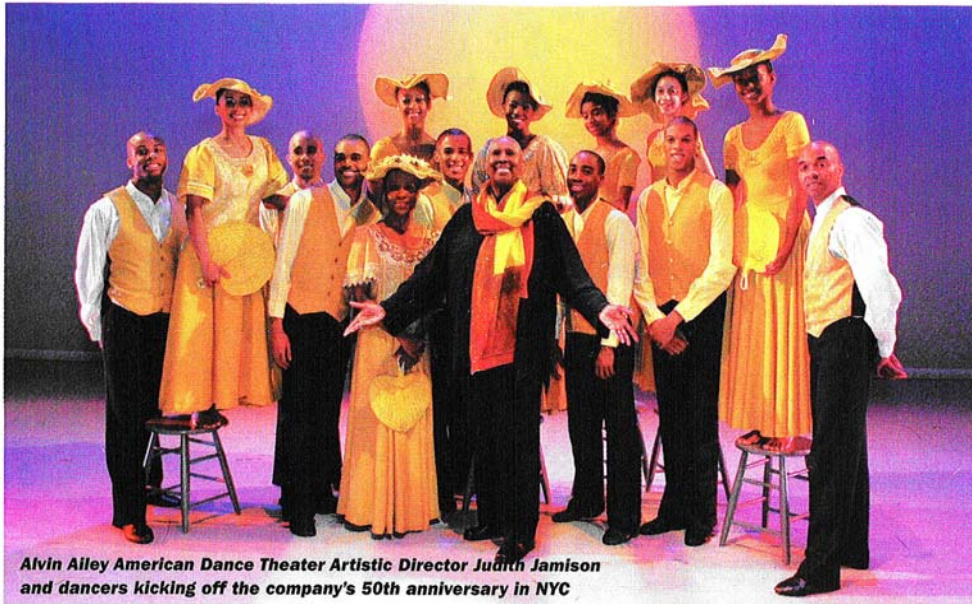


UP FRONT

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Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Artistic Director Judith Jamison and dancers kicking off the company's 50th anniversary in NYC

Golden Age

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater turns 50.

It ain't easy keeping a dance company alive and kicking for 50 years—and doing it with flying colors is cause for celebration! In March, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater launched its 50th Anniversary season, an 18-month extravaganza that will cross continents and mediums—and involve a few celebrity guests.

"Alvin used to say, 'Dance is for the people and by the people,'" AAADT Artistic Director Judith Jamison explained—and to the people it will go. The celebrations began with a faith-based anniversary event on Sunday, March 30.

Choirs throughout NYC (as well as in Philly and Rogers, TX) sang hymns from the iconic *Revelations*, commemorating Ailey's religious and spiritual heritage. In addition to national and international tours, film screenings and free classes throughout NYC, the Ailey Archive Exhibit opened at the Library of Congress in May and will move to Walt Disney Concert Hall in L.A. in October. Even more exciting: Congress officially recognized AAADT as a "vital American cultural ambassador."

If you want to take some Ailey home with you, now you

can—among the cool things going on sale this year are an Ailey Barbie (designed by Jamison herself), the photography book *Ailey Ascending: A Portrait in Motion*, and *A Young Ailey Dancer*, a book which chronicles an Ailey student's life (available in 2009).

Oh, and did we mention that the NYC season will kick off on December 3 with an Opening Night Gala—with honorary chair and honored guest Oprah Winfrey? The dancers will wear a special collection of custom gowns designed by Badgley Mischka. Can you say MOG? —Abigail