

THE AILEY SCHOOL

OFFICIAL SCHOOL OF ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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THE AILEY SCHOOL NAMES TRACY INMAN AND MELANIE PERSON AS CO-DIRECTORS

LONG STANDING FACULTY MEMBERS HAVE OVER 20 YEARS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

(New York) August 26, 2010 – Today, the Ailey organization announced that Tracy Inman and Melanie Person have been named Co-Directors of The Ailey School. Since the passing of Denise Jefferson, the beloved long-time Director of The Ailey School, Inman and Person have served as Acting Co-Directors. Both have long-standing careers with the Ailey organization and have previously been Co-Directors of The Junior Division and Associate Directors of The Ailey School.

“Tracy and Melanie have been an invaluable part of The Ailey School over the past decade, working closely with Denise Jefferson and sharing her loving dedication to our educational mission,” stated Artistic Director Judith Jamison. “Denise and I agreed that they are well-prepared to guide The Ailey School’s legacy of excellence and build upon our tradition of training young well-rounded dancers.”

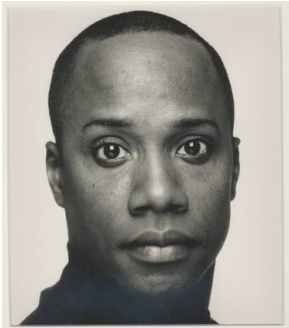
Inman’s history with the Ailey organization began in 1981 when he auditioned and was awarded a scholarship to study at The Ailey School. Two years later, he was selected by Sylvia Waters to become a member of Ailey II and in 1989, was invited by Judith Jamison to join The Jamison Project. After Jamison became Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in December 1989, Inman followed her and enjoyed a five-year career with the Company. He began teaching the Horton technique at The Ailey School in 1999, was named Co-Director of The Junior Division in 2001, and Associate Director of The Ailey School in 2009. “Since my time as a student at The Ailey School, under Denise’s direction, I have been groomed and nurtured,” Inman shared. “I’ve always believed this was a special place and it’s where I really grew up, both professionally and personally. I’m grateful for this terrific opportunity to be a positive influence in our students’ lives, following the inspiring example set for me by Ms. Jamison, Ms. Waters and Ms. Jefferson.”

In the fall of 1999, Denise Jefferson asked former Dance Theatre of Harlem dancer Melanie Person to join The Ailey School faculty as a ballet instructor. Shortly after being named Co-Director of the Junior Division in 2000, she became chair of the ballet department and joined Ms. Jefferson on the School’s annual audition tours across the nation. “Denise Jefferson taught me that directorship is not about the four walls of an office, but how you connect with people beyond them,” acknowledged Person. “Tracy and I will join in upholding the high standard that Ms. Jefferson set for this prestigious training institution, furthering the opportunities for gifted students from all backgrounds to benefit from the extensive programs at The Ailey School.”

“Both Melanie and Tracy have a deep understanding of the unique needs of the young developing dancer and the talent, experience, and commitment to be wonderful Directors of The Ailey School,” affirmed Executive Director Sharon Gersten Luckman. “I am proud of their past accomplishments and confident in their future leadership of Ailey’s world-renowned center for dance education.”

As Co-Directors, they will continue to supervise the Junior Division, which has tripled in size in the past decade. Mr. Inman will be responsible for the Fellowship and Certificate programs, Pace Actors classes, and the Professional Performing Arts School (PPAS) partnership. Ms. Person will oversee both the U.S. and International Independent Study programs. Ana Marie Forsythe has been named Director of the Ailey/Fordham BFA program, which she helped initiate, through her planned retirement from that program on June 30, 2011. After that time, Melanie Person will assume responsibility for the Ailey/Fordham BFA program as part of her Co-Director duties. Ms. Forsythe, a noted expert on the Horton technique, will continue her long affiliation with The School by remaining chair of the Horton department, a teacher of technique class, and the leader of Horton Pedagogy instruction programs for dance educators from around the globe.

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Tracy Inman. Photo by George Larkins

Tracy Inman is a native of Washington, D.C. and a graduate of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts where he majored in music. 1981, He changed his artistic course from music to dance and moved to New York City where he auditioned and was awarded a scholarship to study at The Ailey School. After completing two years of study as a scholarship student, Tracy was invited to join Ailey II by Artistic Director, Sylvia Waters.

Tracy is a former cast member of the Vienna, Austria company of *CATS*, and has performed in the Antwerp, Belgium company of *CATS* as well. Tracy was personally invited to join The Jamison Project in 1989 and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1990 by Ms. Judith Jamison. He toured nationally and internationally with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for five years working with choreographers such as Ulysses Dove, Jerome Robbins, Donald Byrd and Louis Johnson.

Following his five-year tenure with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, in 1999 Tracy began teaching the Horton technique at The Ailey School. Inman was named Co-Director of the Junior Division in 2001 where he along with Melanie Person grew the program from 350 students to its current enrollment of over 900 students. Mr. Inman serves as Director of the Ailey Athletic Boys Dance Program, is a faculty advisor, Rehearsal Director for Ailey/Fordham Student Dancers and conducts several auditions around the country for The Ailey School. In 2009, he was appointed Associate Director of The Ailey School and Co-Director in 2010.



Melanie Person. Photo by Martha Swope

Melanie Person was born in Greenville, North Carolina. She began her early dance training in Jackson, Mississippi at the age of six. Upon moving to Columbia, South Carolina a few years later, she continued her dance training at the Calvert-Brodie School of Dance while performing with the Columbia City Ballet. In the winter of 1976, by recommendation of her teacher Ann Brodie, Ms. Person auditioned for the Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) Summer Intensive and was offered a full scholarship. Upon completion of that summer program, she became an apprentice to the professional company and in 1979, became a full member after graduating from the Professional Children's School. For twelve years, Ms. Person performed with DTH traveling around the world performing a diverse repertoire. She later went on to earn her BA from SUNY Empire State College.

In the fall of 1999, Denise Jefferson invited her to join the PPAS ballet faculty at The Ailey School and later that year, in the spring of 2000, Ms. Jefferson appointed her as the Co-Director of the Junior Division alongside Tracy Inman. Shortly thereafter, Ms. Person was made Chair of the ballet department and President of the Emergency Fund for Student Dancers. Person has served as a judge for Seoul International Dance competition and Japan' Grand Prix. In 2009 she was named Associate Director of The Ailey School and most recently Co-Director with Tracy Inman after Jefferson's passing.



Ana Marie Forsythe. Photo by Dorothy Shi.

Ana Marie Forsythe received her formal dance training at the Newark Ballet Academy under Fred Danieli and her Horton training under Joyce Trisler. She began her professional career with the Garden State Ballet company at age 13 and with the Joyce Trisler Dance Company at age 14. She also performed with the Sophie Maslow Dance Company as well as her own company. Ms. Forsythe began teaching the Horton technique in the 1960's and has devoted more than twenty years to documenting the Lester Horton technique. She is an internationally-recognized master teacher of the technique and has been invited to teach in more than a dozen countries. In preservation of the Horton technique, she co-authored *The Dance Technique of Lester Horton*, and was artistic director of three Horton videos documenting this important modern dance technique. In 2010, Ms. Forsythe was named the Director of the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program at The Ailey School where she has taught since 1973 and has been the Chair of the Horton department since 1979. She conducts an annual Horton Pedagogy Workshop at The Ailey School each summer.

ABOUT THE AILEY SCHOOL

Guided by the belief that dance instruction should be made available to everyone, Alvin Ailey founded The Ailey School in 1969. The Ailey School offers aspiring dance students in its Professional Division and Junior Division Programs a curriculum of diverse dance training of the highest caliber and makes dance accessible to young people and adults through dance training, innovative community outreach, and arts in education programs.

The Ailey School offers one of the most extensive dance education programs in the world, training approximately 3,500 students and offering over 300 fellowships annually, as well as a pioneering Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program with Fordham University. Now under the direction of Tracy Inman and Melanie Person, The Ailey School has a faculty of 75 dance specialists and has attracted students from over 93 countries.

Many graduates from The Ailey School have gone on to careers with the Martha Graham Dance Company, the Mark Morris Dance Group, Ballet National de Espana and the Ailey Company itself. Over 85 percent of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's current members were trained at The Ailey School.