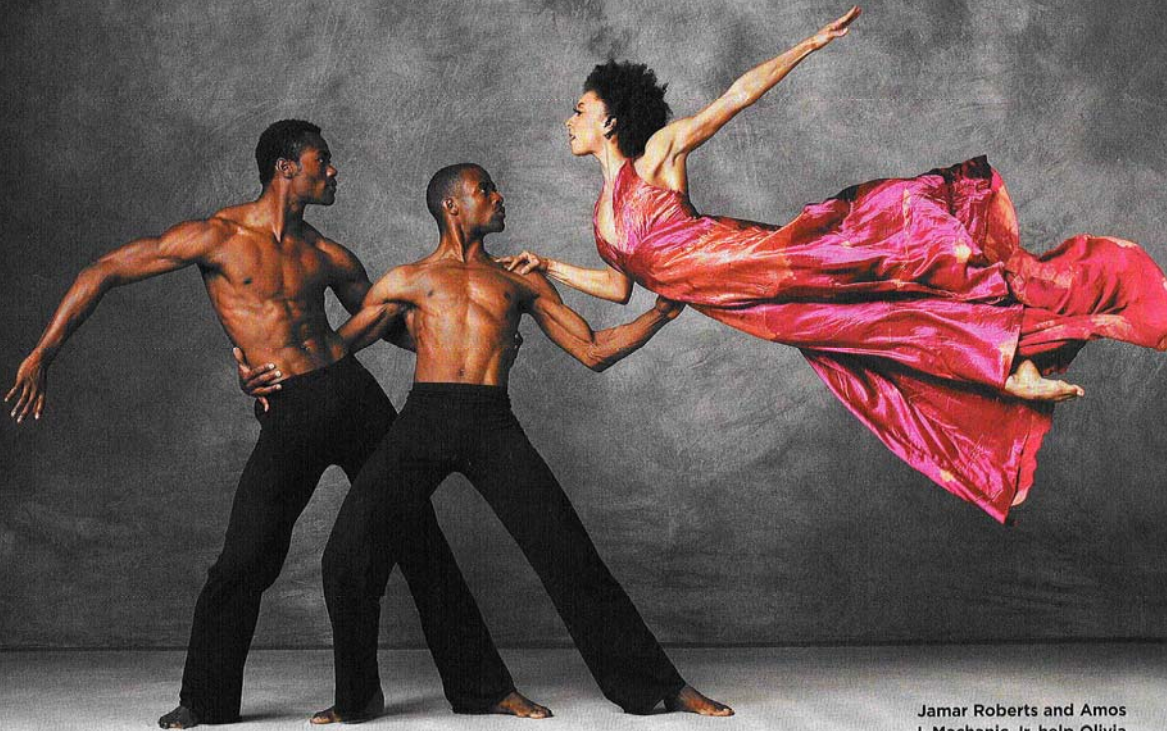


## POINTS OF INTEREST

NOTABLE AMERICAN DESTINATIONS AND HAPPENINGS



Jamar Roberts and Amos J. Machanic Jr. help Olivia Bowman defy gravity at the Alley studio in 2007.

## The Soul Man of Modern Dance

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** On March 30, 1958, an ensemble of nine African-American dancers cobbled mostly from Broadway shows debuted a work at New York City's Young Men's Hebrew Association, a low-cost venue for up-and-coming artists. Choreographed by 27-year-old dancer Alvin Ailey, *Blues Suite* echoed the bawdy music halls of his native Texas. It redefined modern dance, adding energy, robustness and physicality to traditional restrained moves. Two years later, Ailey unveiled *Revelations*, a three-part work set to the spirituals he remembered from Southern black churches. Borrowing from ballet, jazz and ethnic dance, Ailey created his own style, recruiting dancers capable of everything from ballet arabesques to acrobatic contortions. *Revelations* would become the signature piece of the New York City-based Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, which has performed for some 21 million people worldwide.



Alvin Ailey, 1955

A new Library of Congress exhibition marking the company's 50th anniversary includes photographs, costume sketches, performance memorabilia and a short film highlighting key performances. Most of the documents are culled from the library's 30,000-item Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation Archive, acquired in 2006 and accessible to the public. After the show closes on September 6, it travels to the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles for exhibit October 4 to April 6, 2009.

The dance company itself will offer free performances and classes this August in several New York City neighborhoods. That gesture would have delighted Ailey, who died in 1989 at age 58 and whose troupe is now under the direction of the former principal dancer Judith Jamison. After all, Ailey once said "Dance came from the people" and "it should always be delivered back to the people." BY MEGAN GAMBINO

