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PIA CATTON  
ON DANCE

*On Good,  
Uneven Ground  
For Dance*



**ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER** On March 1, the Ailey company is officially opening up its big new building: the Joan Weill Center for Dance. There will be much fanfare and many tributes — as there have been already.

But the best part about this dance building is how the general public can use it. Starting this month, the company will offer classes in a huge variety of disciplines: ballroom, hip-hop, West African, pilates, yoga, “Yogilates,” Cuban Salsa, Argentine Tango, Afro-Caribbean, Capoeira, Horton fundamentals, and ballet. Prices range from \$14 to \$17.

The classes won’t be taught by the dancers. But there will be some former dancers heading the classes. And choreographer Rennie Harris will be teaching a hip-hop workshop later this spring. Cyndi Lee, owner of OM Yoga, will be teaching, as will Jonathan Urla, who created “Yogilates.”

The idea behind the class offerings — officially known as “The Ailey Extension” — is based on Alvin Ailey’s belief that dance comes from the people. According to Sharon Gersten Luckman, executive director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the company has long wanted to offer classes, but it never had the space before now.

The classes are also convenient for the parents of children attending the Ailey school on Saturdays. The parents were so eager for classes that the company started up West African, yoga, and pilates earlier than originally planned. “They begged for it,” said Ms. Gersten Luckman of the parents. “I said, ‘Okay, they begged for it. Let’s see if they really go.’ And they have.”

For class schedules or more information, call the Ailey Extension hotline: 212-405-9023.