A must-see for all young people, the company that changed the face of modern dance continues to inspire audiences the world over. This unforgettable presentation includes the signature piece, *Revelations*, which combines stirring renditions of American Negro spirituals and Ailey's recollections of his own boyhood. The program will also include demonstrations of dance technique, and excerpts from new repertory, performed by the extraordinary multi-racial ensemble of dancers celebrated for their youthful energy, precision, and spirit.

*Teacher’s Guide For*

**ALVIN AILEY® AMERICAN DANCE THEATER**
Dear Teacher,

Thank you for taking the time to bring your students to Tilles Center.

Never has there been a more important time for creativity and innovation in education. Bringing students to live performance helps them to view the world through a new lens, to use their senses in different ways and to appreciate a wide array of art forms and different cultures.

This season marks the 24th year of bringing K-12 students to Tilles Center’s school-time matinee series. We are proud to offer professional performances of the highest caliber of artistic excellence. Each program is carefully chosen to both educate and entertain students. We are honored to welcome over 13,000 students through our doors each year.

In order to give your group the richest experience possible, please read and share this guide with all teachers and students who will attend the performance. Additional study guides can be downloaded from tillescenter.org.

Thank you again for your support. See you at the theater!

Elliott Sroka
Executive Director

Stephanie Turner
Director of Arts Education

Deborah Robbins
Assistant Director of Arts Education

Emily Lembo
Arts Education Associate
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OBJECTIVES OF THE PERFORMANCE

This performance serves to:

- Introduce students to the environment of a professional performing arts center;
- Expose students to a live performance with high caliber performers;
- Maximize students’ enjoyment and appreciation of the performing arts;
- Help students develop an understanding of the arts as a means of expression and communication.

This teacher’s guide is designed to extend the impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, experiential activities, and further reading that can promote learning across the curriculum. This program can be incorporated into study addressing the Learning Standards for the Arts as stipulated by the N.Y. State Education Department. Detailed information is available at: www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/arts/pub/artlearn.pdf.

Learning Standards for the Arts (Dance):

Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.

Dance: Students will perform set dance forms in formal and informal contexts and will improvise, create, and perform dances based on their own movement ideas. They will demonstrate an understanding of choreographic principles, processes, and structures and of the roles of various participants in dance productions.

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
Students will become knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

Dance: Students will know how to access dance and dance-related material from libraries, resource centers, museums, studios, and performance spaces. Students will know various career possibilities in dance and recreational opportunities to dance. Students will attend dance events and participate as appropriate within each setting.

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

Dance: Students will express through written and oral language their understanding, interpretation, and evaluation of dances they see, do, and read about. Students will acquire the critical vocabulary to talk and write about a variety of dance forms.

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts
Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

Dance: Students will know dances from many cultures and times and recognize their relationship to various cultural, social, and historic contexts. Students will recognize that dance is performed in many different cultural settings and serves many functions in diverse societies.
ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE AT TILLES CENTER

Main Stage at Tilles Center seats 2,200 people. Hillwood Recital Hall seats 500 people. When you attend a performance at Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, there are a few things you should remember.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE
- Groups will be seated in the theater on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Tilles Center cannot reserve seats for school performances.
- Plan to arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to the show.
- Performances cannot be held for late buses.
- C. W. Post Public Safety will direct buses to parking areas.
- Remain seated on the bus until instructed to unload.
- Shows generally last one hour.

ENTERING THE THEATER
- Please stagger chaperones throughout the group to help keep students in line and moving quickly to the seating area.
- Groups are directed into the theater in the order that they arrive.

GETTING SEATED
- Upon entering the theater for seating, ushers will direct students and teachers row by row. It’s possible that classes may be split up into two or more rows. With adequate adult supervision, a group split into two or more rows should have enough chaperones to ensure safety.
- Please allow ushers to seat your group in its entirety before making adjustments. This allows us to continue seating groups that arrive after you. You are free to rearrange students to new seats and to go to restrooms once the group is seated.

ENJOY THE SHOW
So that everyone can enjoy the performance:
- There is no food or drink permitted in the theater or lobby areas.
- Photography and audio/video recording is not permitted during the performance.
- Please turn off (or leave behind) all ipods or MP3 players, pagers, cell phones. The devices may interfere with the theater’s sound system and ringing, alerts, etc are extremely disruptive to both the audience and the performers.
- Please do not talk, whisper, shuffle or rattle papers or candy wrappers during the performance.
- Please do not leave and re-enter the theater during the performance. There is no intermission so make sure you visit the restroom prior to the start of the show.
DISMISSAL
• A Tilles Center representative will come onstage following the performance to provide directions for dismissal. Please remain seated until you have received these directions.

Please Note:

⇒ CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 4 WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IN THE THEATER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES – PLEASE MAKE CHAPERONES AWARE OF THIS POLICY.

⇒ TILLES CENTER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REMOVE STUDENTS (UNDER SUPERVISION OF THEIR TEACHER OR CHAPERONE) FROM THE VENUE SHOULD THEY BE OF INAPPROPRIATE AGE OR A DISRUPTION TO THE PERFORMANCE.

⇒ FOOD AND DRINK ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE LOBBY AREAS OR THE THEATER. UNFORTUNATELY, WE CAN NOT PROVIDE SEATING IN THE BUILDING FOR STUDENTS TO EAT BAGGED LUNCHES.

Thank you and enjoy the show!
YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

TO THE TEACHER:
The audience is a very important part of the performance. Please talk to your students about what it means to be an audience member and how a “live” performance is different from TV and movies. Please share the following information with your students prior to your visit to Tilles Center. Some performances may involve audience participation so students should be prepared to behave appropriately, given the nature of the performance and the requests of the artists on the stage.

BEING AN AUDIENCE MEMBER:
A theater is an energetically charged space. When the “house lights” (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, everyone feels a thrill of anticipation. By discussing appropriate audience behavior as a class ahead of time, the students will be much better equipped to handle their feelings and express their enthusiasm in acceptable ways during the performance.

Audience members play an important role—until an audience shows up, the performers are only rehearsing! When there is a “great house” (an outstanding audience) it makes the show even better, because the artists feel a live connection with everyone who is watching them. The most important quality of a good audience member is the ability to respond appropriately to what’s happening on stage... sometimes it’s important to be quiet, but other times, it’s acceptable to laugh, clap, or make noise!

GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBERS KNOW THESE KEY WORDS:

**Concentration:** Performers use concentration to focus their energy on stage. If the audience watches in a concentrated, quiet way, this supports the performers and they can do their best work. They can feel that you are with them!

**Quiet:** The theater is a very “live” space. This means that sound carries very well, usually all over the auditorium. Theaters are designed in this way so that the voices of singers and actors can be heard. It also means that any sounds in the audience - whispering, rustling papers, or speaking - can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. This can destroy everyone’s concentration and spoil a performance. Do not make any unnecessary noise that would distract the people sitting around you. Be respectful!

Keep in mind that sometimes the performers will request the audience to take part in the action by coming on stage, asking questions, or calling out answers. At these times, it is appropriate to respond in the manner in which you are directed. Above all, listen to the performer(s) on stage and follow directions.
Respect: The audience shows respect for the performers by being attentive. The performers show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their best possible work. Professional actors and musicians always show up for work ready to entertain you. As a good audience member, you have a responsibility to bring your best behavior to the theater as well. Doing so shows respect for the actors—who have rehearsed long hours to prepare for this day—and the audience around you.

Appreciation: Applause is the best way for an audience in a theater to share its enthusiasm and to appreciate the performers. In a musical or opera, it is not usually acceptable to applaud in the middle of a song. However, it is appropriate to applaud after each song has finished.

If the program is of classical music, applaud at the conclusion of the entire piece, not between movements.

At the end of the performance, it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain drops or the lights on stage go dark. During the curtain call, the performers bow to show their appreciation to the audience. If you really enjoyed the performance, you might even thank the artists with a standing ovation!

Common Sense: The same rules of behavior that are appropriate in any formal public place apply to the theater. If audience members conduct themselves in orderly, quiet ways, with each person respecting the space of those around him or her, everyone will be able to fully enjoy the performance experience.
**ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE**

**REVELATIONS**
Alvin Ailey’s enduring work *Revelations* is a masterpiece, the embodiment of the choreographer’s style and emotional power. These emotions have resonated with the estimated 21 million people worldwide who have seen *Revelations* since its premiere in 1960, making the dance one of the most performed works of the twentieth century.

Inspired by Alvin Ailey’s experiences in the Baptist church of his Texas childhood, *Revelations* has become a spiritual journey for audiences of all faiths and cultures. The dance builds in waves, accumulating slowly in power from tenderness to excitement, tension to humor to joy. Set to a poignant score of traditional gospel music and spirituals, it combines dramatic abstract movement and recognizable theatrical characters.

*Revelations* is divided into three sections: “Pilgrim of Sorrow,” with dances of meditation and prayer; “Take Me to the Water,” a scenario of baptism; and “Move, Members, Move,” focusing on sin, chastisement, and joy. When the curtain rises for the opening of *Revelations*, a mass of dancers stand in a pool of light, their upraised arms and movements speaking of reaching out, of pain, and of sorrow. In the next segments, the themes of sin and atonement, prayer and forgiveness are explored, with a processional leading into the ritual of a traditional baptism, with a rippling “river” and clapping congregants. The final section suggests a rollicking, exultant church service with members greeting each other, commenting on the sermon, and joining together in a stomping, jubilant celebration.

With its beautifully modulated choreography and emotional expression of African-American culture, *Revelations* has become a contemporary classic. Dance critic Deborah Jowitt speaks of this classicism in her book *Time and the Dancing Image*, as she compares *Revelations* to *Swan Lake* and the mythic work of choreographer Martha Graham. “In the enduringly popular *Revelations*, Ailey has created black archetypes that answer to the Siegfrieds and Odettes of ballet or the Greek heroines of Martha Graham—the desperate man in flight; the suave, sharp-footed dude who can turn on a dime, who’s never at a loss; the laborer; the prisoner or sinner yearning for freedom, for release; the damaged innocent; the goddess out of Africa (like the great Judith Jamison).” Yet even beyond the artistic and cultural vision of *Revelations*, the classicism of the work comes from the universal emotions expressed in the dance.

Ailey’s piece has continued to move audiences for over four decades, and its striking originality is still evident today as new audiences join new generations of dancers in the rousing finale danced to “Rocka My Soul in The Bosom of Abraham.” “The dance is for everybody,” Ailey once said. “I believe that the dance came from the people and that it should always be delivered back to the people.”

Educational materials provided, in part, by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.
THE REVELATIONS FILM

Celebrating Revelations at 50, a short film by Emmy Award winning producer and director Judy Kinberg, will be shown before each performance of Revelations. With rare footage of Alvin Ailey and selections from a new interview with Judith Jamison, the film introduces the history and significance of the ballet over the last half century.

THREE BLACK KINGS

Three Black Kings was the last major work written by Duke Ellington. As he lay dying in his hospital bed in 1974, he gave his son, Mercer, final instructions on how it was to be completed and orchestrated. The first movement with its African rhythmic motifs, depicts Bal-thazar, the Black king of the Nativity; the second is concerned with Solomon, King of Israel; and the third celebrates, with warm “down-home” feeling, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ellington’s good friend whose triumphs are celebrated in the inspiring finale. Sophisticated, lush and alluring, Ellington’s music became part of a legendary collaboration with Alvin Ailey and left an indelible mark on American dance. At its premiere, The New York Times noted “…with its crescendo of gospel rhythms and its expressionist symbols of marches and martyrdom...moves the spectator” and The Daily News hailed the work as “An intensely moving vision...”
ABOUT SPIRITUALS

The songs used in Revelations are called spirituals. These are folk songs describing personal religious experiences. When Africans were brought to America as slaves, they lost their traditional music as well as their freedom. They added African chants, rhythms and harmonies to the Christian songs they learned and created spirituals. Today, people sing spirituals to raise their spirits, strengthen their faith, and create a sense of community. There are two kinds of spirituals:

1. SORROW SONGS
Sorrow songs are sung slowly and sadly and tell of the heavy burden of slavery and the belief that better days are coming.

2. JUBILEES
Jubilees are faster, upbeat songs based on bible stories celebrating victory and joy.

Spirituals came to serve many purposes for the slaves:

• **Work**—Singing spirituals made work less boring and set a rhythm for actions like picking or digging. Slave owners liked the singing because it made the slaves more productive.

• **Worship**—At night, after the owners were asleep, the slaves would go out into the woods (their invisible church) and worship. Spirituals were a big part of their religious ceremony.

• **Entertainment**—At the end of a long day, slaves would often sing spirituals for relaxation.

• **Code Songs**—Communication through spirituals, often helped slaves escape. For example, a hidden message in the song “Deep River” led to a meeting at the river. “Wade in the Water” warned an escaped slave to go into the river so bloodhounds couldn’t follow his scent.
ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for 21 million men, women and children in 48 states, 71 countries, and six continents, earning the company a reputation as important ambassadors of American culture. The power, passion, and commitment of the company’s work has provided unparalleled theatrical experiences for audiences since Ailey formed his company in 1958. From humble beginnings in a performance at New York’s 92nd Street YMHA, Alvin Ailey and his dancers have gone on to change the perception of modern dance, American dance, and African-American dance. The company continues to promote the uniqueness of black cultural expression and to preserve and enrich American’s modern dance heritage.

Ailey created 79 works over his lifetime, yet maintained that his company was not exclusively a repository for his work. Ailey’s tradition of presenting important works of the past as well as commissioning new one continues. More than 200 works by more than 70 choreographers have been performed by the Ailey company. Master choreographers Talley Beatty, Donald McKayle, Pearl Primus, Katherine Dunham, John Butler, Billy Wilson, Twyla Tharp, Maurice Béjart and Ulysses Dove are represented in the Ailey Repertory. In recent years, leading choreographers of today, including Donald Byrd, Judith Jamison, Lar Lubovitch, Elisa Monte, Brenda Way, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Rennie Harris, Robert Battle, and David Parsons have created new dances for the company.

Following its first U.S. State Department tour in 1962, the company has maintained an extensive touring schedule. Highlights include the first tours of the United Soviet Socialist Republics, the People’s Republic of China, and two historic returns to South Africa.

Since Ailey’s death in 1989, Judith Jamison, Ailey’s muse and longtime star, has served as artistic director of the company. She continues his legacy with a special focus on the development of new choreographers and arts-in-education initiatives. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater was featured at the 1996 Summer Olympics, and 2002 Winter Olympics and performed Sweet Release by Judith Jamison for the inaugural Lincoln Center Festival in 1996. Speaking in her autobiography, Dancing Spirit, Jamison says, “I hope I’m a continuation of Alvin’s vision. He has left me a road map. It’s very clear. It works.”

In 2005, the company acquired a new home, a state-of-the-art-facility with studios, “black box” theater, school, and offices. It is the largest facility in the United States dedicated exclusively to dance, and ensures that the Ailey organization will continue to serve as a vital artistic, educational and cultural center for future generations. The new building, named the Joan Weill Center for Dance, is located at 55th Street and 9th Avenue in Manhattan. In early March 2005, the Ailey Company hosted a public dedication of their new home with an array of celebratory housewarming festivities.

Educational materials provided, in part, by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.
ABOUT THE FOUNDER, ALVIN AILEY

Alvin Ailey is internationally renowned as a superb choreographer, dancer, and teacher whose leadership and vision created one of the major arts institutions of our time. It includes the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, The Ailey School, The Ailey Extension and Ailey Arts In Education and community programs, and is the legacy of Ailey’s lifetime of work in dance.

Ailey’s philosophy of dance continues to serve as inspiration and model to artists, students, and audiences of all nationalities and backgrounds. His work has greatly broadened the appeal of concert dance, drawing new dance audiences in large numbers. He was the first choreographer to move freely between modern dance and ballet, creating dances for major ballet companies in addition to his own company. He was also one of the first modern company directors to acquire a repertory, adding to his own dances the work of Lester Horton, Glen Tetley, and legendary black choreographers: Katherine Dunham, Donald McKayle, Pearl Primus, and Talley Beatty.

Born in Texas in 1931, Alvin Ailey’s early life was focused around the Baptist church. From these roots came many of his early works, including his masterpiece, Revelations. Intrigued by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, which he saw on a school trip, Ailey started dance training in Los Angeles with legendary teacher Lester Horton. Horton’s studio welcomed a multiracial group of dancers who came to study Horton’s dynamic, demanding technique and perform his choreography. After Horton’s death in 1953, Ailey performed on Broadway and in New York companies. During this time he envisioned building a dance company that would draw on the American modern dance heritage and the uniqueness of black cultural expression.

Ailey’s vision began to take shape in 1958 with the founding of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the first performances of his choreography. From the beginning, his work received rave reviews. Over the next decade, Ailey choreographed many of his landmark dances, led his company on national and foreign tours, and created dances for leading ballet companies around the world.

Recognizing the need to train young dancers in a variety of styles such as modern, ballet, jazz, West African, tap, and ethnic techniques, Ailey formed his school, the American Dance Center, in 1969. With a gifted group of scholarship students from the school, he organized the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble in 1974. Alvin Ailey received many honors during his lifetime, including the Kennedy Center Award, the United Nations Peace Medal, and modern dance’s most prestigious prize, the Samuel Scripps American Dance Festival Award. With his death in 1989, the direction of the Ailey organization was passed, at his request, to the great Ailey dancer Judith Jamison.
Judith Jamison was appointed Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in December, 1989 at the request of her mentor, Alvin Ailey, who personally chose her to succeed him before his untimely death. A native of Philadelphia, she studied with Marion Cuyjet, was discovered by Agnes de Mille and made her New York debut with American Ballet Theatre in 1964. She became a member of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1965 and danced with the company for 15 years to great acclaim. Recognizing her extraordinary talent, Mr. Ailey created some of his most enduring roles for her, most notably the tour de force solo, Cry.

After leaving the Company in 1980, Ms. Jamison appeared as a guest artist with ballet companies all over the world and starred in the hit Broadway musical Sophisticated Ladies. In 1988, she formed her own company, The Jamison Project; a PBS special depicting her creative process. *Judith Jamison: The Dancemaker*, aired nationally the same year.


Ms. Jamison is an author whose autobiography, *Dancing Spirit*, was edited by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and published by Doubleday in 1993. She is the recipient of many awards and honorary degrees, including a prime time Emmy Award and an American Choreography Award for Outstanding Choreography in the PBS "Great Performances: Dance In America" special, *A Hymn for Alvin Ailey*, and an honorary doctorate from Howard University. In December 1999, Ms. Jamison was presented with the Kennedy Center Honor, recognizing her lifetime contributions to American culture through the performing arts. In 2001, she received the Algur H. Meadows Award from Southern Methodist University and was presented with a National Medal of Arts, the most prestigious award presented to artists in the United States. In 2003, she received the “Making a Difference” Award by the NAACP ACT-SO. In 2004, Ms. Jamison received the Paul Robeson award from the Actors’ Equity Association in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the performing arts and commitment to the right of all people to live in dignity and peace. In 2007, she was awarded a Bessie Award for her lifetime commitment to the preservation and development of dance and the arts.
Today, Judith Jamison presides over the artistically and fiscally vibrant Ailey organization. Her presence has been a catalyst, propelling the organization in new directions – the development of the Women's Choreography Initiative; performances at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games and the 2002 Cultural Olympiad in Salt Lake City where she carried the Olympic torch during the relay prior to the opening ceremonies; and two unprecedented engagements in South Africa. In recent years, she led the company to historic performances at the 2005 White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia and the 2006 Les étés de la danse de Paris festival in Paris, France. Ms. Jamison has continued Mr. Ailey's practice of showcasing the talents of emerging choreographers from within the ranks of the company. As Artistic Director of The Ailey School, official school of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, she has helped to implement a multicultural curriculum including the dances of West Africa and South India. She is an advocate for education in the arts and was a guiding force in establishing the B.F.A. program between The Ailey School and Fordham University, which offers a unique combination of world-class dance training and a superior liberal arts education. Following the tradition of Alvin Ailey, Ms. Jamison is dedicated to asserting the prominence of the arts in our culture, spearheading initiatives to bring dance into the community and programs that introduce children to the arts. She remains committed to promoting the significance of the Ailey legacy--dance as a medium for honoring the past, celebrating the present and fearlessly reaching into the future. The move to Ailey's permanent home in 2004, a state-of-the-art building located at 55th Street and 9th Avenue, was the realization of a long-awaited dream.
THE DANCE

The influence of African Americans in American dance has been enormous; they have had an impact on nearly every aspect of dance, past and present—including social, street, modern hip-hop, and Broadway theater. This influence has its roots in African dance and the very unique role of dance in African society.

In African communities, dance is used as a routine part of life, and every African child attends ritual and recreational events, singing and dancing along with the community. The value of dance as an essential art is woven into the African heritage of African Americans. Even today, African dance in America educates, entertains, and expresses historical, cultural, and social ideologies.

African-American influences in social dance were felt in the late 19th and early 20th century in dances such as the “Cake Walk” (a dance based on a march with intricate steps, originally performed by African-Americans with the prize of a cake for the best performers), the “Charleston” (a fast rhythmic dance of the 1920s, characterized by kicking and by twisting of the legs from the knee down), and the “Lindy” (a lively swing dance for couples). The development of jazz dance and tap by African Americans paralleled the rise of jazz music, and influenced America’s musical theater. During this period, it was difficult for African Americans to train or perform in more established dance forms, particularly in classical ballet. However, with modern dance—America’s indigenous dance—the racial barriers were not as pronounced. Some modern dance choreographers, including Anna Sololow and Lester Horton, employed multiracial casts of dancers. Lester Horton trained the young African-American dancer Alvin Ailey.

Movement is a language as rich and expressive as written or spoken word. People throughout the world understand much of this language. Because we understand and use the language of movement so naturally, we are often unaware of the many ways we use it to communicate.

Modern dance, created in America about 100 years ago, is a younger art form than ballet or folk dance. Ballet began primarily in France in the 1500s and 1600s and for almost 500 years ballet dancers have performed classical ballet’s traditional steps and movements. Ballet choreography emphasizes symmetry and repetitive patterns, and dancers hold their bodies straight, attempting to give the illusion of weightlessness. Known for its invention and non-
traditional attitude, modern dance developed in the 20th century. Its vocabulary expanded the standardized movements of ballet and included everyday actions like walking, running and falling. Each modern dance company has its own style and unique movement vocabulary according to the artistic director’s creative talents.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is a repertory company, which means that it performs dances by different choreographers, including many by its founder. Ailey developed his unique style of choreography after observing movement of all kinds, than combining the movements he found most engaging. Whatever the particulars, all dances contain the principles of choreography: putting movements together artfully in interesting, thought-provoking or inspiring ways.

**Horton Technique**
Created by Lester Horton, this is a technique that explores how many different ways the body can move. Horton named these movements “studies.” Some of the studies are for balance, some for strengthening and some for working on the swinging action of the body. In the Horton technique, the dancer uses as much space as possible: turning, bending and jumping sideways, backwards and even upside-down. The shapes created are clear and linear. The quality of the movement is lyrical and includes varied dynamics. The Horton technique gives a feeling of strength and energy.

**Dunham Technique**
Created by Katherine Dunham, this technique is a blend of the Caribbean, West African and Afro-American folk patterns of movement and rhythms. The original dance patterns have been preserved, but the dances have been slightly modified in keeping with modern dance form. The technique also employs the styles of ballet, modern dance, jazz and basic folk patterns.

**Graham Technique**
A dance technique created by Martha Graham that is based on the principle of contraction and release, movement that is similar to the act of breathing, creating a current of energy through the body. The back appears rounded in a contraction and the chest is lifted in a release. Movement itself is dramatic and expressive.
African Americans in Dance: Some Pioneers
As much as Alvin Ailey is acknowledged as a pioneer, other artists and teachers set the stage for his contributions.

Probably the finest American scholar of African dance, Pearl Primus (1919-1994), trained first as a modern dancer. She devoted her life to studying and performing the dances of Africa. A spectacular dancer known for her jumps and percussive high energy, Primus is also remembered for her eloquent choreographic statements about race.

A student of Lester Horton, Donald McKayle (1930-) emerged as a gifted choreographer who has worked with modern dance companies, on Broadway, in television, and in theatrical revues.

A veteran performer with Katherine Dunham’s troupe, Talley Beatty (1923-1995) has had his choreography in the repertory of many companies including the Boston Ballet, Ballet Hispanica of New York City and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He also had a long and fruitful collaboration with Duke Ellington.

Contemporary African-American Choreographers
The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has been fertile ground for nurturing contemporary African-American choreographers. These choreographers are providing the next chapter in the rich history of African-American contributions to American dance.

Some of them produced their first works for the Company, while others brought highly developed styles to the Ailey repertory. Donald Byrd, who often mixes classicism and a love of jazz into provocative choreographic statements, has credited Alvin Ailey for giving him his first break when Ailey hired him to choreograph a piece called Shards for the company. The passion, political statements and dazzling physicality of Bill T. Jones have made him one of the most important contemporary choreographers. Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, with her strong commitment to creating a community of artists working within a neighborhood community, challenges the Ailey dancers to explore social issues and gender roles. Ronald K. Brown has melded a modern dance vocabulary to elements of African dance in a choreographic voice notable for its deep feeling. And, Robert Battle, who has made a name for himself as one of the most intriguing young American modern dance choreographers, has created several pieces for the Ailey as well as for other companies and his own company, Battleworks.

Educational materials provided, in part, by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.
ALL DANCE HAS THE SAME THREE BASIC BUILDING BLOCKS:

**SPACE**
the whole design and use of the place in which a dance unfolds

**TIME**
a measurable period during which movement or dance occurs
Dance makes the passage of time felt by dividing it into anything from complex, rhythmic patterns to periods of long, unbroken stillness

**ENERGY**
the amount or force of the movement, also sometimes referred to as the color or texture of the movement

Educational materials provided, in part, by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

AAAADT in Alvin Ailey's Revelations. Photo by Nan Melville.
**The Music**

**Spirituals** are folk songs sung both in church and informally outside of the church which describe events in the bible or personal religious experiences. You may have heard spirituals in church, and you may also know spirituals that have become part of America’s common social and musical language.

Spirituals trace their origins to Africa, and although they have evolved over time, many remain unchanged for over 300 years. Beginning in the 1700s, Africans were brought to the United States on slave ships with profound results historically, culturally and musically. Many enslaved people left no record of their lives; however, their music traveled across the continent introducing African chants, drums and rhythms to America, where they have deeply influenced the growth of American music.

Most Africans were forced to abandon their native religions and convert to those practiced in the New World. Many embraced the new religions, which offered a better place—heaven—after this life on earth. In Louisiana, which was settled by the Spanish and the French, slaves converted to Catholicism. In Virginia, South Carolina, Alabama and Georgia, settled by the English, the Methodist and Baptist churches were strong. Since these congregations allowed singing in their services, the slaves were able to incorporate their own love of song into their newfound faiths. Out of this mingling of slave culture and Protestant culture came the songs called “spirituals.”

There is much evidence that slaves learned to give double meaning to the religious songs they sang. Quite a few Negro spirituals contain messages that white slave masters did not know about. These were often called “sorrow songs” because they expressed the deep suffering the slaves endured and their yearning for redemption and peace in heaven.

Spirituals were also a way for the slaves to communicate with each other—to plan meetings, help escaped slaves, and remind one another that there was hope for freedom. The spiritual “Deep River,” for example, was sung to announce a meeting at the river:

\[
\text{Deep river} \\
\text{My home is over Jordan, yes} \\
\text{Deep river, Lord,} \\
\text{I want to cross over into camp ground.}
\]

When a slave ran away and the master discovered his absence, the other slaves on the plantation might sing “Wade in the Water.” Slaves on neighboring plantations would hear the song and take it up, and the runaway, wherever he was, would know that he should take to the river so the bloodhounds would not be able to follow his scent:

\[
\text{Wade in the water, wade in the water.} \\
\text{Children, god going to trouble the water.}
\]
It is no accident that after the Underground Railroad began, slaves in the south took to singing a spiritual called “The Gospel Train.” The Underground Railroad was a route from the south to Canada and freedom, a route marked by homes that would take in runaways and provide them with places to sleep, food, clothing and help in traveling to the next “station.” Part of the spiritual went,

The gospel train is coming
I hear it just at hand—
I hear the car wheels moving,
And—rumbling thro’ the land.
Get on board, children,
Get on board.

While the slaves used their drums and drum-like sounds and songs to work against their masters and for their own freedom, they mostly made music to make life more bearable, to restore their spirits, to inspire courage, and to enjoy the little free time they had. They sang work songs while they labored, creating songs about picking cotton, harvesting sugarcane, and loading and unloading ships on the docks. In this they were not very different from other groups of workers who shared a tradition of music and singing, for example English and Irish sailors sang sea chanteys as they worked.

African slaves had a unique form of singing, known as call-and-response that allowed individuals to make up new verses that were then answered by the group which acted like a chorus. This call-and-response form evolved and became a deep expression of joy and suffering which we now know as gospel music.

Educational materials provided, in part, by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.
DEEP RIVER LYRICS

Deep river,
My home is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord,
I want to cross over into campground.

O don’t you want to go
To that gospel feast,
That promised land
Where all is peace?
O don’t you want to go
To that promised land,
That land where all is peace?

Deep river,
My home is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord,
I want to cross over into campground.

WADE IN THE WATER

Wade in the water,
Wade in the water children.
Wade in the water
God’s gonna trouble the water

Who’s all those children all dressed in Red?
God’s gonna trouble the water.
Must be the ones that Moses led.
God’s gonna trouble the water.

What are those children all dressed in White?
God’s gonna trouble the water.
Must be the ones of the Israelites.
God’s gonna trouble the water.

Who are these children all dressed in Blue?
God’s gonna trouble the water.
Must be the ones that made it through.
God’s gonna trouble the water.

Discuss the role of social dances and folk dances in various cultures. Ask students to describe or demonstrate social dances or folk dances that are traditional in their cultures. In which cultures does dance play a highly important role? Why?

An important element of dance is the use of the body as a sculptural shape. Focus the students’ perception of this idea by asking each one to bring in three pictures of a single body creating a shape (sports pages, news photos, and advertisements are good photo sources). Using the pictures, arrange a sequence of three or four photos. Challenge students to make the shapes in the photos with their bodies. Have a group of students make one shape, and then each shape sequentially. How can a group organize itself so everyone moves together? Does the sequence of shapes begin to create a flow of movement, or are the transitions between shapes difficult? Are certain sequences especially satisfying? Why?

To explore the concept of working together as an ensemble, try a simple “mirroring” exercise. Ask students to find a partner. Designate one person in each pair as the leader, the other as the “mirror reflection.” As the leader in each pair moves (limit choices to hands, arms, head, and upper back), the “mirror” acts as the leader’s reflection, following the leader exactly. Note that very slow, smooth movement helps the mirror stay precisely with the leader. Exchange places so that the leader becomes the mirror, and vice versa. Slow, sustained accompanying music helps students to focus. If the exercise is done well, it is impossible to see which person is leading. An excellent exercise for developing concentration, mirroring also helps students understand the non-verbal sensitivity dancers need to work on stage with other people.

Each of the dances of the Ailey repertory seems to have its own movement personality. An integral part of that personality is the music to which the dance is set. The Ailey Company uses a wide range of music, from Caribbean folk music to contemporary classical music, from Duke Ellington orchestral arrangements to spoken words. Let the class discover how certain music inspires particular movement. Bring in three or four very different types of music (e.g., ethnic music, classical music, popular music with lyrics, or “sound” backgrounds). Ask the students first to express the feeling of the music with crayons, markers, or paints. Encourage them to let color, line, and texture show the music, rather than representational drawing. Next, ask the students to express the feeling of the music with movement. Does the music inspire gentle or bold movements? Does the music make the body travel in space or move in place? Does the music inspire smooth movements or sharp, angular ones? Discuss the movement responses to the music. How are the responses related to the drawings? How do preconceived ideas about the music color responses to it?
Much of dance movement onstage comes from everyday movement. This real life movement is often transformed or exaggerated when it becomes dance movement. This transformation produces stylized movement that is recognizable, yet different. Trying this process of stylizing movement will help the students understand how the movements they do everyday form the basis for dance.

Have the class pick a category of everyday movements (e.g., ways of saying “hello,” sports movements, getting-ready-in-the-morning movement). Choose a single movement from the category, such as waving the arm “hello.” Make the arm wave larger than usual so that it becomes an arc, taking the whole body out in space. Next, try the arm wave in very slow motion. Finally, try the arm wave while doing a turn with the whole body. The arm wave has just become stylized, like much dance movement. Discuss if you can still identify the movement as an arm wave. Also, observe if the wave takes on a new or different look from its original form. Select another movement (e.g. a handshake, a football toss). Stylize the movement in the same three ways as above: large, slowly, turning. Alert students to spot examples of everyday movements in the dance performance.

Initiate an age-appropriate discussion about racism and the breaking of racial barriers to help students appreciate the ground-breaking work accomplished by Alvin Ailey. Like African Americans in other fields, artists have struggled for opportunities to train and perform in their art forms. Alvin Ailey, fortunately, encountered a unique teacher, Lester Horton, who helped many dancers past the barriers that existed in the 1940s. Another Horton student of Ailey’s era, Janet Collins, became the first African American classical ballerina. Invited to join the famed Ballet Russe in the 1940s, Collins was asked to use body make-up to appear “white.” She refused. Collins later joined the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. The recollections of artists of color provide a strong narrative about racial issues in the United States, past and present. Lead a discussion of these issues using Alvin Ailey’s life as an example.
In discussing a dance performance, it is often more productive to ask the question “What did you see in the dance?” or “What do you remember most strongly from the dance?” rather than “Did you like the dance?” The first two questions lead to observation or analysis of the performance, encouraging recall of details, while the third question encourages more judgmental responses. Although audience members respond positively and/or negatively to a dance, critique should come into play later in the discussion process. Discussion of which aspects of a dance remain in one’s memory often reveals the choreographic choices at the heart of a work. Have students describe a memorable moment from the dance in various ways—verbally, in writing, by drawing, or through movement.

Discussion: The Ailey performance can inspire a discussion about art and culture, especially for older students. Culture in this context represents the way of life of a group of people, including the customs, values, beliefs, stories, and artistic expressions. The Ailey Company is considered a cultural export or cultural ambassador for the United States. How does art transmit culture? Can the students find examples of cultural elements in the dances? How do these cultural elements represent America?

Communication: The dancers expressed various feelings and emotions through their movements. Use this idea to explore the possibilities of physical communication. Refer back to using the body as a sculptural shape in “Before the Performance,” Activity 4. Ask the students to think of the dances they saw. What feelings or emotions were expressed by the dancers?

Have students recreate a movement or moment from one of the dances which shows an emotion or feeling. Using that emotion (or another you might suggest) as a theme, ask the students to create an “Art Museum” filled with dramatic sculptures. Work in pairs, with one person as the “artist” and the other as the “clay.” Artists should mold their clay, using the face as well as the whole body, into a frozen statue that expresses the theme “emotion.” While the clay holds the molded shape, ask each artist to step away from his or her statue. Observe the choices made by the artists. How are the statues similar? What does this reveal about how we physically express emotions? Have students trade places so that the artist becomes the clay and vice versa.

Language Arts: The Ailey performance offers opportunities for language arts activities. Have each student make a list of action words and descriptive words generated by the performance or a particular part of the performance. Emphasize the descriptive aspect of the words (e.g., verbs like bend, bounce, twist, melt, explode; adjectives like smooth, trembling, open, linear, heavy.)
5. Ask students to write a review of the performance. First, consider two aspects of critical writing—description and opinion. An important function of a dance critic is the translation of movement images into written language. This translation is made by using descriptive language to paint a picture.
ELEMENTS OF DANCE

All dance has the same three basic building blocks:

- **space**—the whole design and use of the place in which a dance unfolds

- **time**—measurable period when movement or dance occurs. Dance articulates the passage of time through a myriad of movement patterns, from complex, rhythmic to long, unbroken stillness.

- **energy**—amount of force of the movement; sometimes referred to as the color, texture or dynamic of the movement

Dance productions incorporate some of these theatrical elements:

- **scenery**—environment or setting of a dance, created, for example, by painted flats, painted backdrops, back curtains, lighting and/or slides on a cyclorama (a white screen-like curtain at the back of the stage)

- **prop**—item the performer handles, such as a hat or pocketbook, used to create a sense of time and place

- **Score**—musical or sound accompaniment (may be created for the dance or may be pre-existing music or sound)

- **stage lights**—lights used to illuminate the stage, or an area of the stage, to suggest a mood or setting

- **backstage**—the area around and behind the stage where theater technicians work, and where dancers enter and exit the stage

A dance production requires many people in different roles, working together as a team:

- **choreographer**—artist who creates dances

- **composer**—creator of music

- **dancer**—artist who executes and gives meaning to the movements of a dance
artistic director—artistic leader of a dance company, who may or may not be a choreographer. S/he makes the decisions about hiring and casting the dancers, and about the repertory

rehearsal director—person responsible for coaching and rehearsing a dance after the choreographer creates the dance

designer—creator of the costumes, lights or sets for the production

stage manager—person who calls the cues (e.g., changes in lighting, raising and lowering curtains, moving scenery) and directs the theater technicians backstage

theater technicians (or technical crew)—those people responsible for the backstage technical activities (lighting, sets, curtains, and sound)
PLACES IN THE THEATER

lobby—this is the first place you walk into, where the audience waits before the show

box office—this is where audience members can buy tickets to shows

house—the auditorium or area where the audience sits

orchestra seats—seats nearest the stage

balconies—upper levels of seating

light booth and sound booth—located at the top of the balcony or toward the back of the house, the lights and sound for the production are controlled from these booths

stage—area where the performance takes place, often raised

wings—area to the right and left of the stage that the audience can’t see, sometimes scenery is stored here, and performers come on and off stage from here

dressing room—place where performers put on makeup, change clothes, and store their costumes for a show
GLOSSARY

arabesque—a ballet position where a dancer balances on one leg, raises and extends the other leg behind them, and stretches their arms forward

archetype—the original pattern or model of which all things of the same type are representations or copies

call-and-response—a style of singing in which the melody song by one singer is responded to or echoed

catalyst—an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action

chastise—to criticize severely

choreographer—a person who plans out dance movements to a piece of music

choreograph—to plan out dance movements to a piece of music

classical—of, or relating to the ancient Greek and Roman world and especially to its literature, art, architecture, or ideals (classical civilization)

congregant—a person in an assembly of people; especially for worship

contraction—the shortening and thickening of a functioning muscle or muscle fiber

contact improvisation—usually done as a duet or in a large group, the movement is improvised as each dancer follows the other’s movements and reacts to them. Dancers move in and out of physical contact while rolling, spiraling, supporting and falling.

dance—to move the feet and body rhythmically, usually in time to music

dancer—a person who moves their feet and body rhythmically, usually in time to music

duet—any performance by two people

dynamic—continuous and productive activity or change

ensemble—the united performance of an entire group

exultant—filled with or expressing great joy or triumph
improvisation—a process producing spontaneous movements stemming from a specific stimulus, such as sounds or colors, and how they relate to certain feelings or the environment. Improvisation is often a part of the choreographic process.

indigenous—having originated in and being produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment

initiative—to cause or facilitate the beginning of

jubilees—fast, upbeat songs based on Bible stories celebrating victory and joy.

meditation—to engage in contemplation or reflection

modern dance—a free style of theatrical dancing that developed in the early 20th century

multiracial—composed of various races

narrative—this style expresses a message or tells a story through movement. It shows the relationships between the performers' characters.

poignant—deeply affecting the feelings

post-modern—a form of modern dance which evolved in the 1960s and 70s, and departed from narrative theme. Post-modern experimented with new concepts and forms and is sometimes referred to as experimental or minimalist dance.

propel—a force to drive forward or onward

repertoire—a stock of musical or dramatic material that is known and can be performed

solo—any performance by one person

sorrow songs—sung slowly and sadly and tell of the heavy burden of slavery and the belief that better days are coming

spirituals—a religious song, especially one arising from African American culture

vignette—a short scene or moment, as from a play

work—a word that dancers use to refer to a dance; other words that are used in this manner are “piece,” “ballet” and “dance”
RESOURCES

STUDENT RESOURCES


TEACHER RESOURCES


WEBSITES
www.alvinailey.org
The official website of Alvin Ailey

http://www.vimeo.com/17307366
A video of “Celebrating Revelations at 50”

http://vimeo.com/10185543
A video clip of “Revelations”

http://vimeo.com/16904865
A video clip of “Three Black Kings”

DVD/VHS
A Tribute to Alvin Ailey, Kultur video (1997), VHS

Ailey Dances, Kutlur video (1982), VHS


Four, Dance Horizons (1986), VHS
Emergency Cancellations

Tilles Center Performance Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather

If schools throughout the area are closed due to inclement weather, Tilles Center performances will be cancelled. If, on the day prior to a performance, it appears that inclement weather may cause a performance to be cancelled, all schools will be called by our staff to alert them to this possibility. *Schools should be advised to call 516 299-3379 the morning of the performance to determine if a performance has been cancelled.* A message will be posted on this number by 6:30 AM indicating if the performance has been cancelled.

If a performance is cancelled, Tilles Center will attempt to reschedule performances on a date convenient to the majority of schools booked for the performance.
Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, on the C.W. Post campus of Long Island University in Brookville, New York, is Long Island’s premier concert hall. Under the leadership of Executive Director Elliott Sroka, Tilles Center presents over seventy events each season in music, dance and theater, featuring world renowned artists. The Center is also the theatrical home for many of Long Island’s leading arts organizations, including the Long Island Philharmonic.

Among the artists and organizations that have been presented by Tilles Center are the New York Philharmonic conducted by Kurt Masur, violinist Itzhak Perlman, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, New York City Opera National Company, Andrea Marcovicci, the Paper Bag Players, Wynton Marsalis, the MET Orchestra with James Levine and Patti LuPone.

Tilles Center has a 2,242 seat main hall and a 490 seat, more intimate Hillwood Recital Hall. The smaller theater features chamber music, cabaret, solos recitals, and theater productions for children and adults.

School Partnership Program
An intensive part of Tilles Center’s Arts Education program is the School Partnership Program, modeled on the highly acclaimed aesthetic education program that has evolved over a 30 year period at Lincoln Center. The Partnership is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning about the arts, applicable to all grade levels and academic disciplines. The Partnership inspires students and teachers to approach the arts with an open mind and to gain insights into the creative process. Attendance at professional performances at Tilles Center and viewing art works at museums is combined with experiential in-school workshops. Led by teaching artists and teachers, students explore their own artistic capabilities while strengthening essential skills – abstract thinking, teamwork, critical judgment, problem solving. Guided to a deeper level of understanding, students learn what to look for, and listen to, in a performance or work of art.

All new teachers who participate in the School Partnership Program attend an introductory course in Aesthetic Education, presented at Tilles Center for one week in the summer.

The 2010-11 School Partnership program will work with various K-12 public and private schools in Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island.

For information about the School Partnership Program and other performances visit our website: www.tillescenter.org or call (516) 299-2752.
2010-11 Partner Schools:
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Atkinson School, Freeport
Bayview Avenue School, Freeport
Columbus Avenue School, Freeport
Freeport High School, Freeport
Leo S. Giblyn, Freeport
New Visions, Freeport
Deasy Elementary School, Glen Cove
Gribbin School, Glen Cove
Landing School, Glen Cove
Portledge School, Locust Valley

Tilles Center’s Arts Education Advisory Panel was created in 2007 and is comprised of a diverse group of educators who have shown exceptional interest and commitment to Tilles Center’s School Partnership Program. Each member serves a two-year appointment on the panel and advises the Arts Education Department on the content of the program, study guides and resource materials, performance programming and curricular connections.

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Study Guides: content, design and editing
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