

## FOR AUDIENCES

[Community Calendar](#) | [Volunteering](#)

July 25 - August 14, 2019

### Clark Center Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Company: Clark Center NYC  
Venue: El Barrio Art Space PS 109  
Location: New York, NY

► [Share](#) | [Print](#) | [Download](#)



Clark Center NYC

#### THE FIRST AILEY DANCERS:

ELLA THOMPSON, NAT HORNE & DORENE RICHARDSON

Presented by Clark Center NYC in Association with El Barrio ArtSpace

Wednesday, August 14, 2019

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm (Doors open 5:30 pm)

El Barrio ArtSpace

215 E 99th St, New York, NY 10029

The Clark Center - A Seminal Space in the History of Dance in New York City

Alvin Ailey, referred to Clark Center as his 'ritual home'

On Sunday, March 30th, 1958 Alvin Ailey gave his first NYC concert at the 92nd St. Y where he debuted one of his signature pieces, 'Blues Suite'. Many of the best dancers in the city performed that day. Don't miss the opportunity to hear three of these amazing artists - Ella Thompson Moore, Nat Horne and Dorene Richardson - share memories of this auspicious (incredible) performance.

Jill Williams was affiliated with the Clark Center for over 15 years; first as a student and then as a member of the esteemed faculty. She studied with Thelma Hill, James Truitte, Charles Moore, Pepsi Bethel, Lenore Lattimore and Bertrand Ross. She was also trained by and worked with Kathy Stanford Grant in Pilates. For the past two years, she has been immersed in extensive research at the NYPL, and conducting oral histories for the project, Celebrate Clark Center. Jill worked as both a dance teacher and technology specialist for the NYC Department of Education and was the Director of Technology Programs for Teachers Network, designed to improve student learning by helping teachers to develop and integrate technology into classrooms. She has Masters of Arts Education from Columbia University Teachers College.

Ella Thompson Moore appeared in Alvin Ailey's first concert at the 92nd Street Y, NYC in 1958. She began her dance training in Washington, D.C. While attending Howard University and received a scholarship to the Katherine Dunham School in New York City where she studied dance with Syvilla Fort, Walter Nicks, where she met and married Charles Moore in 1960.

She appeared in ten Broadway shows. As a member of The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, she performed in the U.S., the Far East, and Australia. Ella later performed with Dances and Drums of Africa, her husband's company, in addition to assuming teaching and management duties and holding company rehearsals.

Nat Horne, was one of the original members of Alvin Ailey's company. He was present at the creation of "Blues Suite" and "Revelations"; two of the signature works of the company in the 50's and 60's. Nat was featured in both works.

Dancer, teacher, choreographer, director Nat taught at the Alvin Ailey School while at the same time, teaching and running The Nat Horne Musical Theatre and school on W. 42nd.. He had performed in 9 Broadway shows

Dorene Richardson, a New York native, began studying dance at the age of 13 at the New Dance Group. Her teachers included Donald McKayle, Muriel Manning and Jane Dudley, for whom she demonstrated. She went on to study at Juilliard and danced with small companies including Natanya Newman and Donald McKayle. She was the only dancer who performed in Alvin Ailey's two concerts at the 92nd Street Y, the first in 1958 and the next in 1960. Dorene taught at the Ailey school, and for 30 years, she taught at the New Dance Group.

#### About Clark Center for the Performing Arts

In 1959, Alvin Ailey was one of the gifted young artists who emerged in the late 1950's and early 1960's. This upsurge of talented, mostly

Black dancers and choreographers, eager to have their work seen on the concert stage, had little or no access to rehearsal space to create their work. According to Mr. Ailey, who referred to Clark Center as his 'ritual home,' "Dance grew like Topsy there. Clark Center was the only reason we were able to continue." Because Clark Center opened its doors to Mr. Ailey, he in turn provided others who followed with free rehearsal space and performing opportunities. For 30 years Clark Center trained dancers, encouraged emerging companies, and identified and developed new choreographic talent under the inspired leadership of Louise Roberts and Kathy Grant. Sadly, the center became the victim of gentrification and was forced to officially close its doors in 1989.

#### History - Clark Center for the Performing Arts

From its humble beginnings at the Westside YWCA on 8th Avenue in New York City, Clark Center for the Performing Arts was an incredible hub of artistic expression. Though we like to think of dance as the center of all of this activity, classes in theater, music and stagecraft were available for everyone – much like the Lester Horton School where Alvin Ailey began his dance career. Performances, often free or at very low-cost, by faculty and emerging choreographers continue to inspire us.

Reflecting on the myriad of great artists who passed through Clark Center's doors, one is struck by the enormous depth of talent that gathered there. Dancers of every discipline and level, musicians, actors, poets, writers, photographers, lighting designers and visual artists who found inspiration in our dance studios. Clark Center's earliest brochures and flyers included beautiful illustrations; often unaccredited. Somehow, this didn't seem to matter. What mattered was that all were given a welcoming space to make work.

---

Clark Center NYC  
215 E 99th Street  
New York, NY, 10029  
N/A  
<http://FREE>

---

Schedule  
July 25, 2019: 8:00pm, 8:00pm  
August 14, 2019: 6:00pm

---

[< back](#)

[previous listing](#) • [next listing](#)