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(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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