

# AILEY II

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## AILEY II CELEBRATES GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY SEASON AT THE JOYCE THEATER

APRIL 9 – 14

New York Engagement Features Premieres of Artistic Director Francesca Harper's *Luminous* and Baye & Asa's *John 4:20*

*Tickets Now on Sale!*



Ailey II in Francesca Harper's *Luminous* and Ailey II with Artistic Director Francesca Harper. All Photos by Nir Arieli.

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**NEW YORK – March 5, 2024** — Fresh on the heels of a successful world tour, [Ailey II](#), the celebrated second company to [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#), returns to The Joyce Theater from April 9 – 14 with a golden anniversary celebratory program. During the eight-performance engagement their “dynamic movement and dazzling technique” will shine in premieres by Artistic Director [Francesca Harper](#) and the exciting duo of [Baye & Asa](#), Amadi ‘Baye’ Washington and Sam ‘Asa’ Pratt, alongside repertory favorites and revered classics by beloved founder Alvin Ailey, William Forsythe, and Artistic Director Emerita Judith Jamison.

For half a century, Ailey II has merged the spirit and energy of the country's best early-career dance talent with the passion and creative vision of today's most outstanding and emerging choreographers. Founded in 1974, the company embodies Alvin Ailey's pioneering mission to establish an extended cultural community that provides dance performances, training, and community programs for all people. Under the leadership of [Sylvia Waters](#), who served as artistic director for 38 seasons, Ailey II flourished into one of the most popular modern dance companies, providing a bridge between [The Ailey School](#) and the professional dance world. On its 50th anniversary, Ailey II continues to thrive, with artistic director Francesca Harper bringing a fresh dimension to the company as she propels a beloved tradition forward.

“We could not be more excited to continue the year-long celebration of 50 years of Ailey II at The Joyce,” said Francesca Harper. “As we commemorate this milestone, it was important to me that the New York season programming recognize the rich history of the company as well as its legacy shaping the future. This desire is embedded in the fabric of my second work for the company, *Luminous*. I am confident New Yorkers will be deeply moved and feel revitalized by the most talented up-and-coming dancers in the nation.”

The stage will spring to life with **Francesca Harper's** [Luminous](#), a work paying homage to five decades of Ailey II and the artists who have paved the way for future generations. Underscored by an original composition and vocals by Nona Hendryx, the work weaves iconic moments of the past into a tapestry of the periods when the company influenced the cultural landscape. These stories and memories testify to the continuing commitment of Ailey II under Harper to break boundaries, push artistic limits, advocate for social change, and highlight the power of community.

**2023 Dance Magazine Harkness Promise Award recipients Baye & Asa's [John 4:20](#)** expands a duet the choreographers originally created in 2018. The piece began as an interrogation of their shared history and divergent identities as New Yorkers, as male dancers, and as a White American and a Black American. Through the personal dynamics of their brotherhood they address the larger political landscape of their upbringing. The new iteration of *John 4:20* captures relationships, friends, and siblings in a group of new bodies struggling to show the reality of violence and the necessity for empathy.

The engagement will also include **William Forsythe's** captivating work [Enemy in the Figure](#) (excerpt); new productions of [Ailey Highlights](#), a collection of excerpts from three classics choreographed by **Alvin Ailey** between 1958 and 1972; and **Judith Jamison's** [Divining](#), a solo excerpted from her first major work as a choreographer for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, created in 1984 at the request of her mentor, Alvin Ailey. Set to a score of North African, Central African, and Latin rhythms, *Divining* builds on African dance idioms to create a striking, pulsating modern dance work.

The rising stars of the second company come from near (Queens native [Patrick Gamble](#) and Brooklyn native [Corinth Moulterie](#)) and far (Dutch dancer [Maggy van den Heuvel](#)), and New Yorkers have eight chances to see why *The New York Times* declares, "There's nothing like an evening spent with Ailey II." **Tickets starting at \$12\*(including fees) are on sale now and** can be purchased online at [www.joyce.org](http://www.joyce.org) or by calling JoyceCharge at 212-242-0800. \*\$12 tickets are available by phone only. For more information, visit [www.alvinailey.org/engagement/ailey-ii-joyce](http://www.alvinailey.org/engagement/ailey-ii-joyce).

Program is approximately one hour and 52 minutes, including two intermissions.

***Divining, Ailey Highlights / Enemy in the Figure, John 4:20 / Luminous***

Tuesday, April 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10 at 7:30 p.m.\*

Thursday, April 11 at 8 p.m.

Friday, April 12 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, April 13 at 2 p.m.

Saturday, April 13 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, April 14 at 2 p.m.

Sunday, April 14 at 7:30 p.m.

*\*Post-performance Curtain Chat*

*Programming and casting are subject to change.*

In advance of The Joyce season, Ailey II will join legendary companies whose founders made **the 92nd Street Y their home for a landmark 150th Anniversary celebration on March 12** at the Kaufmann Concert Hall. The company will perform an Ailey Classics program which includes excerpts of [Blues Suite](#), the ballet that launched the sensational Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. When Alvin Ailey and a small group of African-American dancers took the stage at the 92nd Street Y on March 30, 1958, the engagement was for one night only, but it turned out to be the start of a new era in the arts. Tickets for this once-in-a-lifetime, only-at-92NY event inspired by the past and transforming the future can be purchased [here](#).

[Ailey Extension](#) invites dancers of all experience levels to learn from Francesca Harper when she leads a contemporary masterclass on **Saturday, March 16 at 4pm**. Harper will lead students through repertoire featured in Ailey II's upcoming season at The Joyce Theater. This immersive workshop is designed to ignite joy in movement while honing your technique and discovering the depth of your artistic voice. For more information and to sign up, please visit [here](#).

Visit [here](#) for more information on Ailey II. To enjoy a variety of digital content, follow Ailey II on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Press can visit [pressroom.alvinailey.org/ailey-ii](http://pressroom.alvinailey.org/ailey-ii) for bios, hi-res downloadable photos and b-roll.

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**Francesca Harper's *Luminous* has been made possible, in part, by a commissioning grant from the O'Donnell-Green Music and Dance Foundation.**

### **About Ailey II**

Ailey II—Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's second company—is universally renowned for merging the spirit and energy of the country's best early-career dance talent with the passion and creative vision of today's most outstanding and emerging choreographers. Founded in 1974 as a bridge between The Ailey School and the professional dance world, Ailey II embodies Alvin Ailey's pioneering mission to establish an extended cultural community that provides dance performances, training, and community programs for all people. Ailey II flourished into one of the most popular dance companies in the country under the leadership of Sylvia Waters from 1974-2012, combining a rigorous touring schedule with extensive community outreach programs. With Artistic Director Francesca Harper at the helm, Ailey II continues to thrive as she brings a fresh dimension to this beloved company. For more information, visit [www.alvinailey.org/ailey-ii](http://www.alvinailey.org/ailey-ii).

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