

AILEY II

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AILEY II MAKES NYU SKIRBALL CENTER DEBUT MARCH 29 – APRIL 2

Annual New York Season Features Two Thrilling Programs and Premieres by Leila Da Rocha, Jae Man Joo, Bridget L. Moore, and Former Ailey Dancer Marcus Jarrell Willis



Left to right: Ailey II in Bridget L. Moore's *Sketches of Flames*. Ailey II's Jessica Amber Pinkett. Ailey II in Marcus Jarrell Willis' *Stream of Consciousness*.
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February 6, 2017 (New York, NY) – [Ailey II](#) makes its NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts debut March 29 – April 2, sharing two programs of premieres and returning favorites with audiences during its annual New York season. The 12 young dancers return to the New York stage after a 25-city world tour to share their artistry and prowess in an expansive repertory by emerging and established choreographers, including **Leila Da Rocha, Jean Emile, Jae Man Joo, Ray Mercer, Bridget L. Moore**, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater member **Jamar Roberts**, and former Ailey dancer **Marcus Jarrell Willis**.

Ailey II is universally renowned for merging the spirit and energy of the country's best young dance talent with the passion and creative vision of today's most outstanding emerging choreographers. Founded in 1974, the company embodies Mr. Ailey's pioneering mission of establishing 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 direction of Sylvia Waters during its first 38 years. With new Artistic Director Troy Powell at the helm, Ailey II continues to thrive as he brings a fresh dimension to this beloved company. Ailey II's annual touring schedule now stretches to Europe and beyond, and the company performs in over 30 cities each year. The company's 12 dynamic young dancers come from all over the country, including local talent [Khalia Campbell \(Bronx, NY\)](#), NYU alumnus [Jacoby Pruitt \(Miami, FL\)](#), and 2015 Princess Grace Award winner [Courtney Celeste Spears \(Baltimore, MD\)](#).

"We are thrilled to return to New York for our annual engagement, and to present our first season at NYU Skirball Center for the Arts," says Ailey II Artistic Director Troy Powell. "The two programs include diverse and powerful works that showcase the strength, grace, and versatility of these gifted young dancers."

The **All New** program includes three stunning 2016-17 world premieres: ***Circular***, ***Stream of Consciousness***, and ***Sketches of Flames***. Princess Grace Award-winning choreographer Jae Man Joo's [Circular](#) is a heartfelt conversation through movement. The Korean-born Joo's distinctive choreographic style – a blend of classical and contemporary ballet – is showcased in this large ensemble work that captures the full circle of human emotions. The melodic soundscape is by a diverse group of composers, including Denisov and Handel. [Stream of Consciousness](#), by former Ailey company member Marcus Jarrell Willis, gives physical life to our inner thoughts. Willis weaves six simple gestures into "the stream," the tumultuous monologue within each person's mind.

Set to a contemporary reimagining of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* by Max Richter, this work echoes the tension and poignancy of the music's ever-changing tides. In [Sketches of Flames](#), Bridget L. Moore fuses flamenco influences with her African-American and contemporary aesthetic to create a rapturous ensemble dance. Set to a series of passionate folk songs and drawing upon the writings of Federico García Lorca and others, each section of this eight-part work depicts a different facet of the joys and sorrows of love.

The **Contemporary Favorites** program showcases the passion and virtuosity of the young dancers in a 2016-17 world premiere, and three returning favorites from the 2015-16 season: *Meika*, *In & Out*, *Gêmeos*, and *Something Tangible*. In the colorful premiere duet [Meika](#), set to music by Max Richter and Isaac Albéniz, French choreographer Leila Da Rocha uses dance to counter the unrest caused by barbarism and violence. Building on the body's natural breathing rhythms, her movement takes on the push-pull of opposing energies to ultimately reach a message of peace. Choreographer and Ailey School alumnus **Jean Emile's** [In & Out](#) is a poignant work for eight dancers that gives an unflinchingly honest view of the ups and downs of contemporary life. Drawing on a mix of dance techniques, Emile brings a fresh approach, amplified by a varied score that includes music by Alva Noto, Alberto Iglesias, and Jun Miyake. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater dancer **Jamar Roberts** made his Ailey II choreographic debut in 2015 with [Gêmeos](#) (Portuguese for twins). Loosely based on the relationship of Roberts and his brother growing up as children – one a dancer, the other an athlete – Roberts illustrates the dynamic between contrasting personalities and how they evolve from hostility to harmony. Using music with heavy percussion, brassy horns, groovy bass guitar, and the commanding singing style of Afrobeat star Fela Kuti, Roberts perfectly captures the energy of youth in *Gêmeos*. Inspired by everyday emotions that awaken and bring color to the human spirit, choreographer **Ray Mercer** leads the ensemble cast into a series of vignettes that reflect sensations of love, passion, fear, and self-doubt in [Something Tangible](#). The work features a wide range of musical styles that include artists Max Richter, Ólafur Arnalds, Geoff Bennett, and an original score by Bongji Duma.

Come see why *The New York Times* hailed the 12 young dancers of Ailey II as “spectacular beings” who deliver “sparkling performances.” **Tickets are on sale beginning Tuesday, February 7**, starting at \$15 and can be purchased online at <http://nyuskirball.org>, by calling 888.611.8183, or at the NYU Skirball Center Box Office, located at 566 LaGuardia Place at Washington Square, Tuesday-Saturday 12:00-6:00pm and two hours before show time. Groups of 10 or more receive a discount on prime tickets. Visit www.alvinailey.org/group-sales or call 212-405-9082 for more details.

Both programs are approximately two hours, including two intermissions.

All New: *Circular / Stream of Consciousness / Sketches of Flames*
Mar 29 at 7:30pm
Mar 31 at 8:00pm
April 2 at 3:00pm and 7:30pm

Contemporary Favorites: *In & Out / Meika / Gêmeos / Something Tangible*
March 30 at 7:30pm
April 1 at 2:00pm and 8:00pm

The public can visit www.alvinailey.org/about/ailey-ii for more information. Press should visit pressroom.alvinailey.org/ailey-ii for additional information and downloadable materials.

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NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts is the premier venue for the presentation of cultural and performing arts events for New York University and lower Manhattan. NYU Skirball's mission is to showcase and support diverse and eclectic talent from around the world, while cultivating audiences for live performance through deeper engagement opportunities. For more information visit: www.nyuskirball.org.

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