



# ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contacts

Christopher Zunner: czunner@alvinailey.org / 212-405-9028

Lauren Morrow: lmorrow@alvinailey.org / 212-405-9079

THE JOAN WEILL CENTER FOR DANCE 405 WEST 55TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10019-4402 PH 212.405.9000 FX 212.405.9001 WWW.ALVINAILEY.ORG

CULTURAL  
AMBASSADOR  
TO THE WORLD

Robert Battle, Artistic Director Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director Bennett Rink, Executive Director

Alvin Ailey, Founder Judith Jamison, Artistic Director Emerita

## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR ROBERT BATTLE ANNOUNCES EXCITING HIGHLIGHTS TO ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER'S LINCOLN CENTER SEASON JUNE 14 – 18

**Season Kicks Off with Free Jazz Dance Class on the Plaza – Wednesday, June 14**

**Ailey Spirit Gala Benefit Includes a One-Night-Only Live Performance of *Moonlight x Ailey*,  
Ailey's Homage to the Oscar-Winning Film – Thursday, June 15**

**Special Family Matinee Performance Followed by Dancer Q&A – Saturday, June 17**

**Seven-Performance Engagement Culminates on Father's Day – Sunday, June 18**

**Former Ailey Virtuoso Clifton Brown Returns to the Company!**

*Tickets starting at \$25 are on sale now*

**New York – May 11, 2017** – Artistic Director Robert Battle announces a variety of exciting happenings in connection with [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Lincoln Center season at the David H. Koch Theater June 14 – 18](#). In addition to three diverse programs featuring recent favorites and the company premiere of Battle's *Mass*, the season will include an array of **uplifting activities for all ages**, the return of acclaimed dancer **Clifton Brown**, a special **Ailey Spirit Gala** performance of *Moonlight x Ailey*.

The engagement opens on **Wednesday, June 14 with a FREE Jazz Dance Class on the Josie Robertson Plaza at 6pm**. Ailey Extension instructor Jeffrey Bynum will teach a heart-pumping outdoor class for all ages and levels, sure to get participants excited for the jazz-infused **Musical Inspirations** performance at 7:30pm (see page 2 for programming details). This public event also kicks off **NYC Dance Week (June 15 – 24)**, a citywide celebration during which Ailey Extension will offer three **FREE dance and fitness classes** each day for new students.



2015 Ailey Extension Class on the Josie Robertson Plaza at Lincoln Center. Photo by Naya Samuel.



AAADT's Clifton Brown in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*. Photo by Nan Melville.

The opening also marks the return of renowned dancer **Clifton Brown** to the Ailey stage. Brown became known as a virtuoso during his time in the Company (1999-2011), earning critical praise and a New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award. Upon returning to the company, he will dazzle with his inimitable range, starting with iconic roles in Alvin Ailey's masterpiece *Revelations*, which closes each program. Brown's grace and versatility will be on full display from his lyricism and depth taking center stage in "I Wanna Be Ready," to his dynamism and prowess leaving audiences breathless in "Sinner Man."

On **Thursday, June 15**, the **Ailey Spirit Gala** benefit brings together all parts of the organization with performances by young [AileyCampers](#), talented students from [The Ailey School](#), rising stars of [Ailey II](#), and the incomparable members of [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#). Guests will be treated to a one-time-only live performance of [Moonlight x Ailey](#), an homage to the Oscar-winning film *Moonlight*, choreographed by Robert Battle to Nicholas Britell's evocative score. The dance film short features Ailey dancer [Jamar Roberts](#) and The Ailey School students Christopher Taylor and Jeremy T. Villas. Following a rousing [Revelations](#) finale featuring an expanded cast, a festive soirée takes place on the promenade. The Ailey Spirit Gala honors Stephen J. Meringoff, Vice Chair of Ailey's Board of Trustees. Gala Co-Chairs are Lynne and Anthony M. Carvette, Almaz and Marc S. Strachan, and Daria L. and Eric J. Wallach. Tickets are available at [alvinailey.org/ailey-spirit-gala](http://alvinailey.org/ailey-spirit-gala) or by calling 212-405-9031.



AAADT's Jamar Roberts in *Moonlight x Ailey*. Still from film directed by Anna Rose Holmer.  
**Ctrl + click to view video.**

Other special events this season include weekend matinees that are perfect for bringing the family together to experience the magic of Ailey. The 2pm **Family Matinee** on **Saturday, June 17** is followed by a special Q&A session with the dancers, and the season culminates with **Father's Day** performances at 3pm and 7:30pm on **Sunday, June 18**.

Throughout the engagement, audiences have the opportunity to see the versatility of the Ailey dancers on three exciting programs. **Musical Inspirations** (6/14 eve, 6/17 mat) features two works celebrating jazz legends during their centennials – Battle's [Ella](#), set to Ella Fitzgerald's scatting, and Billy Wilson's [The Winter in Libson](#), a rhythmic and colorful celebration of Dizzy Gillespie – as well as the company premiere of Battle's *Mass*, an ensemble work set to a score by John Mackey performed by six percussionists onstage. **Global Voices** (6/16 & 6/18 eve) features Mauro Bigonzetti's [Deep](#), set to the soulful music of rising global stars Ibeyi; and Johan Inger's [Walking Mad](#), a daring take on Maurice Ravel's *Boléro*. The **Bold Visions** (6/17 eve, 6/18 mat) program features Ailey dancer Hope Boykin's [r-Evolution, Dream.](#), inspired by the speeches and sermons of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., set to new music by Ali Jackson (Jazz at Lincoln Center) and narration by Tony Award winner Leslie Odom, Jr. (*Hamilton*); and MacArthur "Genius" Kyle Abraham's [Untitled America](#), about the impact of incarceration on African-American families.

Click [here](#) for the complete Lincoln Center season programming announcement.

**Tickets for the Lincoln Center engagement starting at \$25 are on sale now** at the David H. Koch Box Office, by phone at 212-496-0600, and online at [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org). For further information about discounts for groups, students, and Ailey's tour performances, please visit [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org). **The program schedule is detailed below.**

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater gratefully acknowledges the support of Diageo.**

**Delta Air Lines is the Official Airline of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's New York Spring Season.**

**Wells Fargo is the Opening Night Sponsor of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's New York Spring Season.**

**The World Premiere of *Untitled America* is made possible by Denise R. Sobel and Tikkun Olam Foundation, Inc.**

**The creation of *Untitled America* is supported by commissioning funds from New York City Center.**

**Generous support for *Untitled America* is also provided, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.**

**The creation of *r-Evolution, Dream.* is supported by commissioning funds from The Music Center.**

**The 2017 spring season is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.**



(L to R) AAADT's Danica Paulos, Solomon Dumas, and Company in Mauro Bigonzetti's *Deep*. Photo by Paul Kolnik; AAADT in Billy Wilson's *Winter in Lisbon*. Photo by Teresa Wood taken at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; AAADT's Linda Celeste Sims. Photo by Andrew Eccles. AAADT's Chalvar Monteiro, Ghrai DeVore, Jamar Roberts in Kyle Abraham's *Untitled America*. Photo by Paul Kolnik; **CTRL+ CLICK ON PHOTOS FOR HI-RES DOWNLOAD** - Please Credit Photos

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**  
**June 14 – 18, 2017 at Lincoln Center's David H. Koch Theater**  
**20 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY (Columbus Avenue at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street)**  
**(212) 496-0600 / [www.davidkochtheater.com](http://www.davidkochtheater.com)**

**Programming – Subject to Change**

**Musical Inspirations:** *The Winter in Lisbon / Mass / Ella, Revelations*

Wednesday, 6/14 at 7:30pm, Saturday, 6/17 at 2:00pm\*

**The Ailey Spirit Gala:** Performances by AileyCamp, The Ailey School, Ailey II & Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, incl. *Revelations*

Thursday, 6/15 at 7:00pm

**Global Voices:** *Deep / Walking Mad / Revelations*

Friday, 6/16 at 8:00pm, Sunday, 6/18 at 7:30pm

**Bold Visions** *r-Evolution, Dream. / Untitled America / Revelations*

Saturday, 6/17 at 8:00pm, Sunday, 6/18 at 3:00pm

\*Family Matinee - followed by a post-performance Q&A session with the dancers

**CALENDAR LISTING INFORMATION**

**Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**, beloved as one of the world's most popular dance companies, **will present a seven-performance engagement at Lincoln Center's David H. Koch Theater June 14 – 18, 2017**. Led by Artistic Director Robert Battle, Ailey's acclaimed dancers will perform a diverse repertory by seven choreographers featuring recent premieres and the Company debut of Battle's ensemble work *Mass*. In addition to *Mass*, performed to live music, the **Musical Inspirations** program celebrates jazz legends during their centennials with Billy Wilson's *The Winter in Lisbon*, a tribute to Dizzy Gillespie, and Robert Battle's *Ella*, set to Ella Fitzgerald's "Airmail Special." **Global Voices** includes dynamic pieces by European choreographers Mauro Bigonzetti (*Deep*, with music by Ibeyi) and Johan Inger (*Walking Mad*, a daring take on Ravel's Bolero). **Bold Visions** shines a spotlight on society with Hope Boykins' *r-Evolution, Dream.*, inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Kyle Abraham's *Untitled America*, examining the impact of incarceration on African-American families. Each program closes with the always uplifting finale of *Revelations*. **The Ailey Spirit Gala** benefit performance on **Thursday, June 15** features the world-renowned Ailey dancers, and appearances by the rising stars of Ailey II, gifted dancers from The Ailey School, and talented students from AileyCamp, followed by a soiree on the promenade. **Performance tickets starting at \$25 go on sale on Monday, April 3** and can be purchased at the David H. Koch Box Office, by phone at 212-496-0600, or online at [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org). Student tickets *may* be available on the day of the performance for \$15 at the box office with a valid student ID (one per student – subject to availability). On Saturday, June 17, bring the whole family to enjoy the matinee and stay afterward for a free Q&A with the Ailey dancers in the theater. Additional discounts for groups of 10 or more are now available by phone 212-405-9082 or e-mail [groupsales@alvinailey.org](mailto:groupsales@alvinailey.org). For further information about Ailey's performances, please visit [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org).

**PRESS:**

For additional press materials, please visit the links below or [pressroom.alvinailey.org](http://pressroom.alvinailey.org).

- [Photo/Video Document](#)
- [Sizzle Reel For Broadcast](#)
- [Electronic Press Kit](#)

## **COMPANY PREMIERE**

***Mass*** (2004 / 2017 Company Premiere)

**Choreography by Robert Battle**

**Music: John Mackey**

*Mass* features a score by John Mackey, who has collaborated on multiple occasions with Robert Battle – including his 2015 world premiere *Awakening* – performed live onstage by six percussionists. Commissioned for The Juilliard School in 2004, the movement in this work showcases Mr. Battle’s signature ritualistic choreography. According to Robert Battle, “The genesis of this work came to me while seeing Verdi’s *Requiem*. I found myself utterly absorbed in the intricacies of how the choir moved as a unit. I began creating the movement you will see by deconstructing the chorus.”

## **2016-17 SEASON PREMIERES & NEW PRODUCTIONS**

***Deep*** (2016 World Premiere)

**Choreography by Mauro Bigonzetti**

**Music: Ibeyi**

Mauro Bigonzetti’s *Deep* is set to the soulful music of Ibeyi, twin sisters who sing in English and Yoruba (“Ibeyi” is the Yoruba word for twins). Bigonzetti’s first work for the Company was 2008’s *Festa Barocca*. He is known for his seamless integration of classical and modern techniques, and has been praised for his fresh and inventive sensibility.

***Untitled America*** (2016 World Premiere)

**Choreography by Kyle Abraham**

**Music: Laura Mvula, Raime, Traditional**

In this haunting work, MacArthur “Genius” Kyle Abraham shines a light on the impact of the prison system on African-American families. Developed over three seasons, the work features interviews by those impacted by incarceration. Laura Mvula’s touching “Father, Father,” the traditional spiritual “No More My Lord,” contemporary music by Raime, and other musical compositions underscore Abraham’s distinct movement style and signature avant-garde aesthetic. Wendy Perron of *Dance Magazine* praised the first installment of *Untitled America* by saying, “This is something our culture should be looking at...Kudos to Ailey—and Abraham—for keeping the revelations relevant.”

***r-Evolution, Dream***. (2016 World Premiere)

**Choreography by Hope Boykin**

**Music: Ali Jackson**

Veteran Company member Hope Boykin was inspired by the sermons and speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to create *r-Evolution, Dream*. After immersing herself in this historical material after a visit to the Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta, during Ailey’s U.S. tour. Convinced of the timely relevance of the messages, she staged the large ensemble work that melds creative storytelling, new music composed by Ali Jackson (Jazz at Lincoln Center), and historic and original writings narrated by Tony Award winner Leslie Odom, Jr. (*Hamilton*).

***Ella*** (2008 / 2016 Company Premiere)

**Choreography by Robert Battle**

**Music: Ella Fitzgerald**

Originally created as a solo, this high-energy comical dance was reinvented as a duet by the Ailey company for its 2016 Opening Night Gala benefit, “An Evening of Ailey and Jazz” – in anticipation of the legendary singer Ella Fitzgerald’s centennial in April 2017. Using a live concert recording of Fitzgerald performing the song “Airmail Special,” *Ella* matches the iconic singer’s virtuosic scatting with lightning-fast, articulated movement in an irresistible tour-de-force that leaves audiences (and the dancers) breathless.

***Walking Mad*** (2001 / 2016 Company Premiere)

**Choreography by Johan Inger**

**Music: Maurice Ravel, Arvo Pärt**

Revered Swedish choreographer Johan Inger’s *Walking Mad* is his first work for Ailey. Set to the driving sounds of Ravel’s much-loved *Boléro* as well as music by minimalist master Arvo Pärt, the rousing 28-minute work for 9 dancers grips audiences throughout, bringing waves of emotion – first laughter, then tears. Full of wit and laced with an unsettling edge of madness, the piece employs a long, movable wall that can also be viewed as a symbol of the barriers people construct in their relationships. According to Inger, “The famous *Boléro* from Ravel, with its sexual, almost kitschy history, was the trigger point to make my own version. I quickly decided that it was going to be about relationships in different forms and circumstances. I came up with the idea of a wall that could transform the space during this minimalistic music and create small pockets of space and situations. *Walking Mad* is a journey in which we encounter our fears, our longings and the lightness of being.”

[The Winter in Lisbon](#) (1992 / New Production 2016)

**Choreography by Billy Wilson**

**Music: Dizzy Gillespie**

*The Winter in Lisbon* is a sizzling, sensuous ballet celebrating four decades of Dizzy Gillespie's brilliant music. Choreographed in 1992 by Billy Wilson, the work pays tribute to Mr. Gillespie, the consummate jazz musician, creating an atmosphere in which the dancers challenge, tease and romance against a backdrop of rhythm and color. Wilson's exuberant, playful ballet was conceived in celebration of Gillespie's birthday after Artistic Director Emerita Judith Jamison was approached by the musician's management to create a dance for his music. Confident in Wilson's ability to blend his eclectic ballet and modern dance training with the boisterous sound of Gillespie's music, Jamison commissioned him to bring the project to life. "It's a celebration of life," explains Ailey's Associate Artistic Director Masazumi Chaya, who restaged the work. "It's fun, it's full of energy, it's about life going on."

#### **SIGNATURE MASTERPIECE**

[Revelations](#) (1960)

**Choreography by Alvin Ailey**

**Music: Traditional Spirituals**

More than just a popular dance work, *Revelations* has become a cultural treasure, beloved by generations of fans and acclaimed as a must-see for all. **Alvin Ailey's** signature masterpiece is a tribute to his heritage. Using African-American spirituals, the work fervently explores the places of deepest grief and holiest joy in the soul. Seeing *Revelations* for the first time or the hundredth can be a transcendent experience. Audiences cheer, sing along, and dance in their seats from the opening notes of the plaintive "I Been 'Buked" to the rousing "Wade in the Water" and the triumphant finale, "Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham."

***All Programming – Subject to Change***

#### **ABOUT ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER**

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recognized by U.S. Congressional resolution as a vital American "Cultural Ambassador to the World," grew from a now-fabled March 1958 performance in New York that changed forever the perception of American dance. Founded by Alvin Ailey, recent posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation's highest civilian honor, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle, whom Judith Jamison chose to succeed her on July 1, 2011. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 25 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents, promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition. In addition to being the Principal Dance Company of New York City Center, where its performances have become a year-end tradition, the Ailey company performs annually at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County in Miami, The Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley, CA and at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark (where it is the Principal Resident Affiliate), and appears frequently in other major theaters throughout the United States and the world during extensive yearly tours. The Ailey organization also includes Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), one of the most extensive dance training programs in the world; Ailey Arts in Education & Community Programs, which brings dance into the classrooms, communities and lives of people of all ages; and The Ailey Extension (2005), a program offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of Ailey's permanent home—the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the dance capital of the world—named The Joan Weill Center for Dance, at 55<sup>th</sup> Street at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue in New York City. For more information, visit [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org).

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