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Artistic Director  
Robert Battle



PHOTOS BY ANDREW SCODES

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Alicia Graf Mack and Amar Roberts.

## COMING HOME

Miami talents bring vision and energy to Alvin Ailey Dance Theater.



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Jamar Roberts.

When Alvin Ailey Dance Theater comes to the Adrienne Arsht Center in February, there will be more reasons for Miami audiences to cheer than the always thrilling excitement of watching the internationally celebrated company dazzle and delight.

Miami's own Robert Battle is the company's artistic director — only the third person to head the company since it was founded in 1958. The dancer and choreographer from Liberty City took over as head of the company in 2011, after being personally selected by Judith Jamison. The slate of programs coming to the Arsht will also showcase Miami native Jamar Roberts. Roberts graduated from the New World School of the Arts, trained at the Dance Empire of Miami, and joined the company in 2002.

"I am excited to return to my hometown with a cornucopia of choreographic treasures, and the performances of inspiring Ailey artists like fellow Miamian Jamar Roberts," says Battle. "Coming to Miami makes everything feel connected. When I return, it's more than just being part of wonderful performances; it's a reminder to stay humble."

Ailey's sixth annual Miami engagement includes the premiere of multi-award-winning British choreographer Wayne McGregor's "Chroma," created for The Royal Ballet. "This will be the first time a modern dance company has done this work," says Battle.

"Chroma" is one of the new works being performed by the company that Battle

says will "make audiences sit up and look at the company in a different way." However, there is importance to keeping the sense of the historic and celebrating what Alvin Ailey stands for that remains in every piece, according to the artistic director. He says he remains vigilant in preserving the storied place that Alvin Ailey Dance Theater maintains in dance history, while continuing to "push the envelope."

Modern dance innovator Bill T. Jones's joyful tour-de-force "D-Man in the Waters (Part 1)" is a classic of modern dance — a celebration of life and the resiliency of the human spirit that guides audiences through loss, hope, and triumph. Celebrated dance storyteller Ronald K. Brown's "Four Corners," which Alvin Ailey Dance Theater is presenting as a world premiere this season, brings to life the vision of four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds. The American classic, Alvin Ailey's rousing masterpiece, "Revelations" rounds out the program. More than a popular dance work, "Revelations" — which uses African-American spirituals, song-sermons, gospel songs, and holy blues — has become a cultural treasure.

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"Audiences will find these works accessible," says Battle. "Alvin Ailey's spirit, his approach, was always about the spirit of openness and inclusiveness, which has been part of the company's mantra since the beginning. And Miami audiences are some of the best because when we perform here, the response and enthusiasm is irrigating — there is no separation between what's happening on stage and the audience. It's a magical energy." ■

See *Fanfare*, page 96, for performance information.