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**AILEY II, THE NEXT GENERATION OF DANCE, RETURNS TO U.S. STAGES
LED BY NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FRANCESCA HARPER**

**National Tour February 14 – April 12
New York City Season March 23 – April 3**

**2022 Season Repertory Features World Premiere by Robert Battle
and Company Premieres by Francesca Harper and William Forsythe**

Tickets on Sale February 15 for Ailey Citigroup Theater Home Engagement



Left to right: Ailey II's Artistic Director Francesca Harper and Rehearsal Director Lakey Evans-Peña; Ailey II with Artistic Director Francesca Harper and Rehearsal Director Lakey Evans-Peña; Ailey II 2021-22 Poster Image. Brena Thomas, Hannah Richardson, Jamaris Mitchell. All photos by Nir Arieli.

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NEW YORK – FEBRUARY 1, 2022 — [Ailey II](#), merging the spirit and energy of the country's best early-career dance talent with the passion and creative vision of outstanding emerging and established choreographers, returns to stages across the country this winter. Ailey II Artistic Director [Francesca Harper](#)—an internationally renowned performer, choreographer, director, and multi-disciplinary artist—is nurturing new creative voices and propelling the Company forward during her [inaugural season](#). Trained at [The Ailey School](#) (and the daughter of the late Denise Jefferson, director of The Ailey School 1984-2010), Ms. Harper brings fresh perspectives to Mr. Ailey's legacy. Program highlights from the repertory for the national tour and the New York City season featuring four new works and one world premiere include dances by [Alvin Ailey](#), Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Artistic Director [Robert Battle](#), William Forsythe, Francesca Harper, Ailey company member Yannick Lebrun, and Andrea Miller.

"It is a privilege to return to the home that shaped me as an artist to accept the honor of leading Ailey II into its next era," said Artistic Director Francesca Harper. "Ailey II's mission lies in generating space for human narratives expressed through the strength, grace, and versatility of the next generation of gifted young dancers. As exemplified in this year's diverse repertory, I am looking forward to bringing in new choreographic voices and programming works that further an ongoing cultural dialogue and contribute to social transformation."

Inspired by her Ailey homecoming, **Francesca Harper's** [Freedom Series](#) travels through a landscape of memories creating a series of vignettes that embody and imagine a hybrid world where memory strives to influence the future. Depicted through this futuristic lens, and developed in collaboration with the Ailey II dancers, Harper's work examines identity and community. With costumes by designer Elias Gurrola and a score featuring a blend of acoustic and electronic sounds, *Freedom Series'* unexpected twists and turns bridge tender moments to its intrinsic ferocity. **Fly**, an excerpt of *Freedom Series*, will also be performed on select programs.

A group of dancers support a central woman, guiding her on a spiritual quest to find light in **Robert Battle's** new work, [Searchlight](#), inspired by the relationship of Ailey II Artistic Director Francesca Harper and her late mother, Denise Jefferson. With his signature musical sophistication, Battle juxtaposes the tension of Steve Reich's "It's Gonna Rain, Part II" with the healing quality of Renée Fleming and Christoph Eschenbach's "Nacht Und Träume, D.827," finding equilibrium between the extremes just as the dancers find perfect balance in motion.

Like Alvin Ailey before him, **Robert Battle** takes inspiration from his church background in this dance of rebirth that parallels the new life Ailey II is embarking on in its next era. In [Alleluia](#) (excerpt), Battle seamlessly meshes the foot stomping and hand gestures of the Baptist Church with classical Baroque idioms, setting seven dancers robed in white in a sustained burst of motion that builds to an ecstatic finale.

[Enemy in the Figure](#) (excerpt) is the intensely propulsive central section of **William Forsythe's** eponymous work. Originally created in Germany (1989) for his ensemble, Ballet Frankfurt, the full work has been performed in major venues across the globe. Thom Willem's percussive and rhythmically driving electronic score was the source of the work's choreographic invention and influenced the radical use of light and shadow in the original stage design. This excerpt puts the formidable dance skills of the Ailey II dancers on fine display, giving their craft and vitality an invigorating framework.

Ailey II's 2022 touring repertory will also include [Psükhe](#) by Andrea Miller, [Saa Magni](#) by Yannick Lebrun, Robert Battle's [Takademe](#) and [The Hunt](#), as well as [Revelations](#)—the must-see masterpiece by Alvin Ailey himself. Come see why *The New York Times* hailed the 12 young dancers of Ailey II as "spectacular beings" who deliver "sparkling performances."

Following the first leg of the U.S. tour, Ailey II returns to its home, The Ailey Citigroup Theater, for a highly anticipated **New York City season from March 23 – April 3**. Three programs of premieres and audience favorites includes a **Robert Battle 10th anniversary program**, celebrating his visionary leadership and Ailey journey, which began in 1999 choreographing *Mood Indigo* for Ailey II. Further programming details to be announced. **Tickets starting at \$59 go on sale February 15 at noon at www.alvinailey.org/aileyinnyc.**

Please visit pressroom.alvinailey.org/ailey-ii for bios, hi-res downloadable photos and b-roll. To enjoy a variety of digital content, follow Ailey II on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

2022 Tour Dates and Venues (subject to change)

February 14	Telluride, CO	Michael D. Palm Theatre 721 West Colorado Avenue, Telluride, CO
February 16	Boulder, CO	Mackey Auditorium Concert Hall, University of Colorado Boulder 1595 Pleasant Street, Boulder, CO
February 23	Carmel, CA	Sunset Cultural Center San Carlos Street, Carmel-By-The-Sea, CA
February 25	Santa Rosa, CA	Luther Burbank Center for the Arts 50 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa, CA
February 26	Modesto, CA	Gallo Center for the Arts 1000 I Street, Modesto, CA

March 3	Malibu, CA	Smothers Theatre, Pepperdine University 24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA
March 6	San Luis Obispo, CA	Performing Arts Center of San Luis Obispo 1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA
March 23- April 3	New York, NY	Ailey Citigroup Theater 405 West 55 th Street, New York, NY
April 8-9	Kansas City, MO	The Folly Theater 300 West 12 th Street, Kansas City, MO
April 12	Memphis, TN	The Buckman Performing & Fine Arts Center 60 Perkins Extended, Memphis, TN

Ailey II is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, as well as by American Express.

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 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.

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