

# AILEY II

## **AILEY II, THE NEXT GENERATION OF DANCE, 2025-2026 WORLD TOUR LED BY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FRANCESCA HARPER**

**Bold New Season of Dance Features Four World Premieres by  
Rena Butler, Renée I. McDonald, Chalvar Monteiro and My’Kal Stromile**

**NEW YORK — September 4, 2025 —** [Ailey II](#), the acclaimed second company to [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#), is inspiring audiences on a **39-city world tour now through April 11, 2026**, with performances spanning from Kingston, Jamaica to Miami, Florida to Baltimore, Maryland. The 2025-2026 repertory features four compelling world premieres by emerging and established choreographers including former Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Ailey II member **Chalvar Monteiro, Rena Butler, Renée I. McDonald, and My’Kal Stromile**.

For more than five decades, Ailey II has merged the spirit and energy of the country’s best early-career dance talent with the passion and artistry of today’s most outstanding and emerging choreographers. Founded in 1974 as a bridge between [The Ailey School](#) and the professional dance world, the company embodies Alvin Ailey’s pioneering mission to nurture the next generation of talented artists and reach audiences around the world by making dance accessible to all. Under Artistic Director [Francesca Harper](#)’s direction, Ailey II is forging a new path for modern dance—one that’s inclusive, experimental, and transformative.

“This season is a celebration of artistic voices that push boundaries and inspire transformation while honoring Alvin Ailey’s timeless vision,” said Francesca Harper. “The four works I’ve commissioned speak to identity, connection, and the bold possibilities of movement today. I am excited for audiences far and near to witness these 12 exceptional dancers bring their creative passion and virtuosity to the stage.”

[In Session](#) by choreographer **Rena Butler** is a collective portrait of coming of age, where the tension between conformity and rebellion shapes the action of maturation. The work explores how individuals navigate the process of finding themselves while moving within—and against—the collective, challenging the notion that growth requires uniformity and asserting instead that no student needs to be the same. Through layered physicality and communal rhythm, *In Session* reveals the nuanced journey of self-discovery within a community.

Social media can contribute to anxiety, depression, comparison, pressure to be perfect, external validation, loneliness, bullying, and finding joy in the downfall of others. In **Renée I. McDonald**’s work [Likes vs Life](#), three dancers wrestle with these powerful forces, the need to connect, and the desire to escape.

In the world premiere work [\*Berry Dreamin'\*](#), former Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Ailey II member **Chalvar Monteiro** centers the music, personality, and soul-stirring lyricism of Chuck Berry, the father of rock 'n' roll. This piece aims to reimagine the rich origin story for a star on the rise—the journey to adulthood and the moving target that is human connection against a day-dreamy, subconscious landscape that gives birth to our wildest dreams. The creation of *Berry Dreamin'* is commissioned by Dance St. Louis in celebration of Chuck Berry's centennial.

Choreographer **My'Kal Stromile's** [\*Third Person Point of View\*](#) begins in medias res—Latin for “in the midst of things.” We enter a non-traditional, three-person relationship in its fully functioning form: fluid, intricate, and quietly intimate. We then rewind to the beginning of the relationship, and what the audience sees is two people deeply attuned, and a third seeking entry, admiration, and a place to belong. As the title suggests, the piece invites the audience to witness from the outside, observing a relationship as it unfolds without ever being directly addressed.

In addition to these four world premieres, Ailey II's touring repertory also includes **Baye & Asa's** [\*John 4:20\*](#), an expanded duet the choreographers originally created in 2018; **Francesca Harper's** [\*Luminous\*](#), paying homage to five decades of Ailey II; a solo excerpted from **Judith Jamison's** [\*Divining\*](#), her first choreographic work for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1984; **Houston Thomas' *Down the Rabbit Hole***, a work inspired by *The Matrix* film series exploring how technology weaves into the fabric of daily life; and enduring classics by Alvin Ailey, such as his signature must-see American masterpiece, [\*Revelations\*](#).

Ailey II welcomes four new dancers—[Kamani Abu](#), [Jada Ammons](#), [Christian Butts](#), and [Adanna Smalls](#)— who join the eight returning members: [Carley Cruzat Brooks](#), [Meredith Brown](#), [Jennifer M. Gerken](#), [Xavier Logan](#), [Xhosa Scott](#), [Darion Tuner](#), [Eric J. Vidaña](#), and [Jordyn White](#).

Chosen by Alvin Ailey to guide and develop Ailey II after its inception in 1974 until she stepped down in 2012, Ailey II Artistic Director Emerita [Sylvia Waters](#) conceived and directed [\*Portrait of Ailey\*](#), an eight-part documentary series available for **free** on [AILEY.org](#) or [PBS LearningMedia](#). The exceptional series combines rare historical film and still images with contemporary footage to create a sweeping narrative of Mr. Ailey as a performer, choreographer, celebrity, teacher, social activist, arts advocate, and the creator of an enduring institution. Ms. Waters' dedication to mentoring generations of dancers, as well as preserving and sharing Mr. Ailey's legacy, has garnered her a [2025 Dance Teacher Award](#).

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

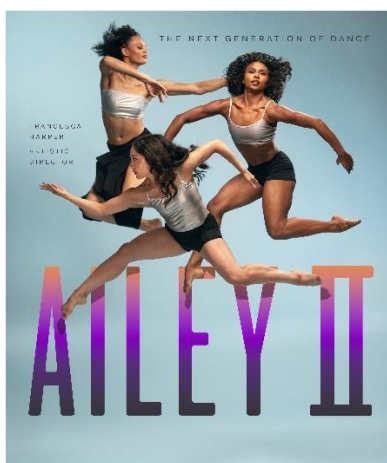


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The creation of *Berry Dreamin'* is supported, in part, by commissioning funds from Dance St. Louis.

The creation of *Berry Dreamin'* is supported by Kim van Doorn.

The creation of *In Session* is supported by Robert A. Press M.D.

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## 2025-2026 Tour Schedule

(As of 08.12.2025)

### 2025

|            |                                 |                                                                                     |
|------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aug. 23    | Bridgetown, Barbados            | Frank Collymore Hall                                                                |
| Aug. 26    | Port of Spain, Trinidad         | Queen's Hall                                                                        |
| Aug. 30-31 | Kingston, Jamaica               | Little Theatre                                                                      |
| Sept. 26   | Radford, VA                     | College of Visual & Performing Arts / Radford University                            |
| Sept. 28   | Richmond, KY                    | Eastern Kentucky University's Center for the Arts                                   |
| Sept. 30   | Columbus, OH                    | Davidson Theatre at The Riffe Center Theatres                                       |
| Oct. 3     | Jasper, IN                      | Jasper Arts Center                                                                  |
| Oct. 7     | Pittsburgh, PA                  | August Wilson African American Cultural Center                                      |
| Oct. 9     | Lewisburg, PA                   | Weis Center for the Performing Arts / Bucknell University                           |
| Oct. 10    | Huntingdon, PA                  | Juniata College, Halbritter Center for the Performing Arts / Rosenberger Auditorium |
| Oct. 12    | Mamaroneck, NY                  | Emelin Theatre for the Performing Arts                                              |
| Oct. 14    | Red Bank, NJ                    | Count Basie Center for the Arts                                                     |
| Oct. 15    | Easton, PA                      | Williams Center for the Arts / Lafayette College                                    |
| Oct. 17    | Torrington, CT                  | Warner Theatre / Oneglia Auditorium                                                 |
| Oct. 18    | New Haven, CT                   | Shubert Theatre                                                                     |
| Oct. 21    | Kingston, Ontario, Canada       | Kingston Grand Theatre                                                              |
| Oct. 23    | St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada | First Ontario Performing Arts Centre                                                |
| Oct. 25    | Glen Ellyn, IL                  | McAninch Arts Center                                                                |
| Oct. 28    | Wilmington, NC                  | Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts                                         |
| Oct. 30    | Elizabeth City, NC              | Robinson Auditorium, Fine Arts Center, Elizabeth City State University              |
| Nov. 1     | Baltimore, MD                   | Murphy Fine Arts Center / Morgan State University, Gilliam Concert Hall             |

## **2026**

|            |                    |                                                                         |
|------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan. 9     | Miami, FL          | Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts / Knight Concert Hall     |
| Jan. 15    | Beaver Creek, CO   | Vilar Performing Arts Center                                            |
| Jan. 16    | Lone Tree, CO      | Lone Tree Arts Center                                                   |
| Jan. 19    | Salt Lake City, UT | Kingsbury Hall / University of Utah                                     |
| Jan. 22-23 | Ketchum, ID        | Argyros Performing Arts Center                                          |
| Jan. 26    | Chico, CA          | Laxson Auditorium / California State University Chico                   |
| Jan. 28    | Modesto, CA        | Gallo Center for the Arts / Mary Stuart Rogers Theater                  |
| Jan. 30    | Fresno, CA         | Tower Theatre for the Performing Arts                                   |
| Feb. 1     | Malibu, CA         | Lisa Smith Wengler Center for the Arts at Pepperdine / Smothers Theater |
| Feb. 6     | Chandler, AZ       | Chandler Center for the Arts                                            |
| Feb. 11    | Starkville, MS     | Bettersworth Auditorium, Lee Hall / Mississippi State University        |
| Feb. 12    | Meridian, MS       | MSU Riley Center                                                        |
| Feb. 14    | Helena, AR         | Lily Peter Auditorium / Phillips Community College                      |
| Feb. 17-18 | Asheville, NC      | Wortham Center for the Performing Arts                                  |
| Feb. 20    | Boone, NC          | The Schaefer Center for the Performing Arts                             |
| Feb. 23    | Kirksville, MO     | Fine Arts Center / Truman State University                              |
| Feb. 26    | Rockford, IL       | Coronado Theatre                                                        |
| Apr. 10-11 | St. Louis, MO      | Touhill Performing Arts Center                                          |

### **About Ailey II**

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