

Press Contacts:

Nicole Tintle ntintle@ailey.org / 212-405-9084

Mia Ortega mortega@ailey.org

AILEY II

AILEY II, THE NEXT GENERATION OF DANCE, RETURNS TO THE JOYCE THEATER MARCH 17-22

**New York Engagement Highlights Emerging Talent in Four World Premieres and Two Programs—
*New Works and Legacy/Future***

Tickets Now on Sale!

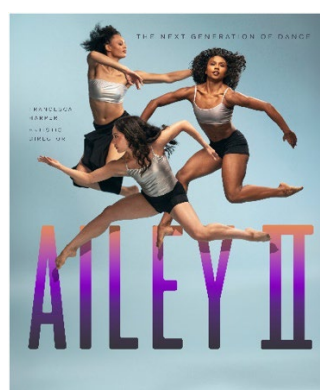


Photo Credits (L to R): Ailey II's Jada Ammons, Xavier Logan, and company in Chalvar Monteiro's *Berry Dreamin'*.

Ailey II 2025-2026 season image of Jennifer M. Gerken, Jordyn White, and Carley Cruzat Brooks. All Photos by Nir Arieli. **Please credit photos.**

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NEW YORK – JANUARY 6, 2026 — [Ailey II](#), the acclaimed second company to [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#), returns to The Joyce Theater, March 17–22 as part of the company's 2025-26 world tour. Led by Artistic Director [Francesca Harper](#), the country's most talented young dancers bring their "off-the-charts-energy" across eight-performances to New York audiences. Two dynamic programs will feature 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**, and a beloved classic by **Alvin Ailey**.

This season boasts four exhilarating world premieres that display the versatility of the Ailey II dancers: **Renée I. McDonald's** intense [Likes vs Life](#), a trio depicting the overwhelming pressures of social media in our lives; **Rena Butler's** athletically powered [In Session](#), a coming-of-age portrait of young people finding themselves through rebellion and community; **My'Kal Stromile's** endearing [Third Person Point of View](#), an exploration of the yearning and heartache in relationships; and **Chalvar Monteiro's** [Berry Dreamin'](#) set to the music of the late Chuck Berry. The company will also perform **Alvin Ailey's** beloved classic [Streams](#) in the *Legacy/Future* program.

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 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**, Ailey II is forging a new path for modern dance—one that's inclusive, experimental, and transformative.

"We are thrilled to return to The Joyce Theater for Ailey II's season celebrating 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 our New York audience members 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.

Alvin Ailey’s *Streams* is an abstract exploration of bodies in space, danced to a percussion score by Miloslav Kabelac. Alvin Ailey’s highly structured yet fluid compilation of solos, duets, and group choreography reflects the formal, meditative mood of Kabelac’s music. While there is no narrative, the movement and music arouse distinct thoughts and feelings, evoking images and sensations inspired by bodies of water—from a gentle brook to a turbulent ocean—that correlate to the changing tides within us.

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**.

The Joyce Theater engagement opens on **Tuesday, March 17 at 7:30pm** with **New Works**, a testament of the company’s mission of showcasing daring new choreographic talents. Following the **Wednesday, March 18** performance at 7:30pm, there will be a post-show discussion with artists from Ailey II. The limited engagements will run for eight shows only!

Tickets starting at \$17 are on sale now and can be purchased at ailey.org/aileyiiny or by phone at 212-242-0800. Detailed schedule below.

The **New Works** program is approximately two hours long with two intermissions, and the **Legacy/Future** program is approximately an hour and 30 minutes with one intermission. *Programming and casting are subject to change.*

New Works:

Berry Dreamin’ / Third Person Point of View, Likes vs Life / In Session

Tuesday, March 17 at 7:30pm

Thursday, March 19 at 7:30pm

Saturday, March 21 at 2pm

Saturday, March 21 at 7:30pm

Sunday, March 22 at 7:30pm

Legacy/Future:

Streams, Third Person Point of View / In Session

Wednesday, March 18 at 7:30pm

Friday, March 20 at 7:30pm

Sunday, March 22 at 2pm

Explore the profound legacy and impact of Alvin Ailey with [*Portrait of Ailey*](#), an eight-part documentary series available for free on [AILEY.org](#) or [PBS LearningMedia](#). Created by Ailey II Artistic Director Emerita [Sylvia Waters](#), *Portrait of Ailey* uses rare historical film and still images as well as 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](#).

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

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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About Ailey II

Ailey II—the second company of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater—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 and 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 is forging a new path for modern dance—one that's inclusive, experimental, and transformative. For more information, visit [ailey.org/aileyii](#).

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