

THE NEXT
GENERATION
OF DANCE

FRANCESCA
HARPER
ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR

ALLEY II



AILEY II

Francesca Harper, Artistic Director

Sylvia Waters, Artistic Director Emerita

Alvin Ailey, Founder

Company Members

Carley Brooks, Meredith Brown, Jennifer M. Gerken, Alfred L. Jordan II,
Xavier Logan, Kiri Moore, Corinth Moulterie, Xhosa Scott,
Kayla Mei-Wan Thomas, Darion Turner, Eric J. Vidaña, Jordyn White

Shay Bland, Rehearsal Director

Apprentices

Kamani Abu, Naia Neal, Adanna Smalls, Kaleb K. Smith

Bennett Rink, Executive Director

Ailey II gratefully acknowledges the generous support provided by
The Glorya Kaufman Dance Foundation.

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment
of any kind during performances is strictly prohibited.

Programming and casting subject to change.

Company Story

Ailey II—The Next Generation of Dance—is AILEY’s second company.

Founded in 1974 as the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, Ailey II has advanced Alvin Ailey’s vision by giving early-career dancers the vital experience of transitioning from training as a student to becoming a professional dancer. Ailey II dancers bring their technical mastery and emotional depth to works by the most daring established and emerging choreographers. Just as Mr. Ailey envisioned, the company continues to expand the audience for dance through global touring and community-based performances.

Sylvia Waters, the company’s first artistic director, was personally chosen by Mr. Ailey and led the company for 38 seasons. In September 2021, Francesca Harper became artistic director. Ms. Harper—a former student at The Ailey School who has choreographed for both AILEY companies—guides Ailey II with her unique perspective, paying homage to Mr. Ailey’s legacy while taking the company in bold, new directions.

Under Ms. Harper’s direction, Ailey II is forging a new path for modern dance—one that’s inclusive, experimental, and transformative.



Ailey II with Artistic Director Francesca Harper and Rehearsal Director Shay Bland. Photo by Nir Arieli.

The Program

LUMINOUS (2023)

Choreography by Francesca Harper
Choreographic Assistants: Tim Stickney,
Rachel Yoo, Raven Joseph
Music by Nona Hendryx*
Costume design Elias Gurrola
Lighting design by Tsubasa Kamei

The Company

Francesca Harper's *Luminous* has been made possible, in part, by a commissioning grant from the O'Donnell-Green Music and Dance Foundation.

Additional support has been provided by Kim van Doorn.

* "Testimony" performed by Sweet Honey in the Rock, written by Ferron, courtesy of Nemesis Publishing.
"Angelica" by Duke Ellington and John Coltrane, courtesy of Sony Music Publishing.
"Philadelphia Morning" by Bill Conti, courtesy of EMI Music Publishing.



Ailey II in Francesca Harper's *Luminous*. Photo by Nir Arieli.

-INTERMISSION-

JOHN 4:20

(2023)

Please be advised that strobe lights and haze are used in this piece.

Choreography by Baye & Asa

Music by Jack Grabow*

Costume design by Noble Spell and Heather Craig

Lighting design by Ethan Saiewitz

Carley Brooks, Jennifer M. Gerken, Xavier Logan,
Corinth Moulterie, Kayla Mei-Wan Thomas, Jordyn White

Baye & Asa is a company creating movement art projects directed & choreographed by Amadi 'Baye' Washington & Sam 'Asa' Pratt. Hip Hop & African dance languages are the foundation of our technique. The rhythms of these techniques inform the way we energetically confront contemporary dance & theater. We've presented our work at The Joyce Theater, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, Pioneer Works, The 92nd Street Y, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Jacob's Pillow, ODC, Blacklight Summit, Battery Dance Festival, and were selected as one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" for 2022. Our film work has won numerous awards and has been presented internationally.

The creation of *John 4:20* is supported by Robert A. Press, M.D., and Wendy & Doug Kreeger.

* "Broken Hearted Melody" written by Hal David & Sherman Edwards, courtesy of BMG Rights Management.

"Doe Deer" written by Ethan Kath, courtesy of Universal Music Publishing.

"Mariana, Mariana" written by Ruy Guerra and Edu Lobo, courtesy of Atlas Music Group.

"Rhinstone Cowboy" performed by Madvillain, courtesy of Kobalt Music Publishing.



Ailey II's C. Brooks, K. Thomas, J. Gerken in Baye and Asa's *John 4:20*. Photo by Nir Arieli.

-INTERMISSION-

REVELATIONS

(1960)

Choreography by Alvin Ailey

Music: Traditional

Décor and costumes by Ves Harper

Costumes for “Rocka My Soul” redesigned by Barbara Forbes

Lighting by Nicola Cernovitch

Pilgrim of Sorrow

I Been 'Buked The Company
Music arranged by Hall Johnson*

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel Alfred L. Jordan II, Carley Brooks,
Meredith Brown
Music arranged by James Miller+

Fix Me, Jesus Kayla Mei-Wan Thomas, Xhosa Scott
Music arranged by Hall Johnson*

Take Me to the Water

Processional/Honor, Honor Darion Turner, Carley Brooks,
Xavier Logan, Kamani Abu
Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts

Wade in the Water Kiri Moore, Alfred L. Jordan II,
Jordyn White
Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts
“Wade in the Water” sequence by Ella Jenkins.
“A Man Went Down to the River” is an original composition by Ella Jenkins.

I Wanna Be Ready Corinth Moulterie
Music arranged by James Miller+

Move, Members, Move

Sinner Man Xavier Logan, Darion Turner, Xhosa Scott
Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts

The Day is Past and Gone The Company
Music arranged by Howard A. Roberts and Brother John Sellers

You May Run On The Company
Music arranged by Howard A. Roberts and Brother John Sellers

Rocka My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham The Company
Music adapted and arranged by Howard A. Roberts

* Used by arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc., publisher and copyright owner.

+ Used by special arrangement with Galaxy Music Corporation, New York City.

**All performances of *Revelations* are permanently endowed by a generous gift
from Donald L. Jonas in celebration of the birthday of his wife, Barbara,
and her deep commitment to Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.**



Ailey II in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*. Photo by Nir Arieli.

FRANCESCA HARPER, Artistic Director

Francesca Harper began her professional dance career with Dance Theatre of Harlem. She was also a member of Ballet Frankfurt from 1991-1999 under the direction of William Forsythe, and she has performed on Broadway in productions including *Fosse*, *All Shook Up*, *The Color Purple*, *Sweet Charity*, and *Sophisticated Ladies*, and was nominated for Best Actress in a Musical by Broadway.com for her role as Billie Holiday in *Lady Day* at Emerson's Bar and Grill. Ms. Harper created her first play, *50 minutes with Harriet and Phillis*, produced by Anna Deavere Smith, with her aunt, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Margo Jefferson, and Paul Miller, a.k.a DJ Spooky. In 2014, she debuted her critically acclaimed one-woman show, *The Look of Feeling*, as a writer, actor, dancer, and vocalist. She is also the writer, producer, composer, and narrator of the documentary film *To Lillian* (2021). Ms. Harper has choreographed works for companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Dance Theater of Harlem, Hubbard Street II, and Tanz Graz, as well as The Francesca Harper Project, which she had founded in 2005. Her television and film credits include appearances on *Boardwalk Empire*, *Late Night with David Letterman*, and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. She served as ballet consultant for the motion picture *Black Swan* and was featured in *Zinnias – The Life of Clementine Hunter*, directed by Robert Wilson. In 2013, Ms. Harper received a Living History Award during Black History Month from Long Island University and the Innovation and Technology Award for her choreography for Fashion Week with designer Louis Vuitton. She also served as co-director and choreographer for the musical *Rose's War* and as movement director for Tommy Hilfiger and Zendaya for their fashion show at the Apollo Theater in 2019. Ms. Harper was the creator and directorial consultant for 16 world premiere virtual films. Her latest works include a new creation for Wendy Whelan, Associate Artistic Director of New York City Ballet, and poet Marc Bamuthi Joseph. Currently, Ms. Harper is engaged as Executive Producer with Sony Pictures on a series in development, and recently she received her Masters of Fine Arts degree from Goddard College.

SYLVIA WATERS, Artistic Director Emerita, Ailey II

Sylvia Waters was personally selected by Alvin Ailey in 1974 as Artistic Director of Ailey II and led the company for 38 years. She attended The Juilliard School, where she worked with Donald McKayle's company, and with a young Hava Kohav—who later became an actress and Academy Award nominee—performing very often to widely populated audiences of the entire New York Dance community at the YMHA. After receiving her B.S. from Juilliard, she moved to Paris, where she appeared regularly on television. She toured in the European company of *Black Nativity* and worked with Michel Descombey, then director of the Paris Opera Ballet, as well as Milko Šparemblek. She also performed in Donald McKayle's

European production of *Black New World* and worked with Maurice Béjart's company performing in Brussels and at the Summer Olympics in Mexico City. In 1968, Ms. Waters joined Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and toured with the Company until assuming leadership of Ailey II. She has received honorary doctorates from the State University of New York at Oswego and The Juilliard School, and she has served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Ms. Waters is a recipient of the Legacy Award as part of the 20th Annual IABD Festival, Syracuse University's Women of Distinction Award, a *Dance Magazine* Award, and a "Bessie" Award.

SHAY BLAND, Rehearsal Director

Shay Bland is from Englewood, NJ. She began her formal dance training at The Ailey School in 2007 where she was a scholarship student in the Junior Division. She is a graduate of the Professional Performing Arts School (PPAS), and has danced with several companies including Ailey II, Elisa Monte Dance, Nimbus Dance Theater, Von Howard Project, Francesca Harper Project, Ray Mercer Collective, Kachal Dance, and The Metropolitan Opera Ballet. Ms. Bland has worked on projects on and off-Broadway including *The Visitor* (off-Broadway) as associate choreographer, and as assistant choreographer for the 13-time nominated Broadway show *Hell's Kitchen*. She was also lead choreographer for Nebraska High School Theater Academy (NHSTA) in conjunction with Omaha Performing Arts. As an educator, Ms. Bland serves as a faculty member at Pace University, The Ailey School, Manhattan Youth Ballet, and Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts (EMIA).

AILEY II WHO'S WHO

CARLEY BROOKS (Chicago, IL) received her training at TDA Prep under the direction of Preston Miller and Jacqueline Green. Her studies include summer dance intensives with Jacob's Pillow, Nederlands Dans Theater, and Dance Theatre of Harlem. Ms. Brooks is currently a senior in the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program. She has performed works by Alvin Ailey, Jiří Kylián, Ronald K. Brown, Hope Boykin, Marco Goecke, Jennifer Archibald, and Christopher L. Huggins. Her performance highlights include Geoffrey Holder's *Douglas* with Dance Theatre of Harlem and Alvin Ailey's *Memoria* during AILEY's New York City Center season in 2023. This is Ms. Brooks' first season with Ailey II.

MEREDITH BROWN (Asheville, NC) began her dance training at a local studio in her hometown. She studied at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and she is a recent graduate of the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program, where she performed in Alvin Ailey's *Festa Barroca* and *Memoria* during AILEY's 2022 and 2023 New York City Center seasons. Ms. Brown also danced in Hope Boykin's *Chasing the Spirit* at Jazz at Lincoln Center. She worked with Madison Hicks' "The Moving Forward Collective," and she is an alumna of the Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Program, where she worked with Sidra Bell, Rena Butler, and Antoine Vereecken. This is Ms. Brown's first season with Ailey II.

JENNIFER M. GERKEN (Houston, TX) began her dance training at age six. In 2016, she was accepted into Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. In 2019, Ms. Gerken received the Mary Martha Lappe Dance Scholarship, and performed in an excerpt of *Appalachian Spring* by Martha Graham in the roles of the Bride and Follower. She was a student in the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program where she graduated in 2023. Ms. Gerken has performed works by William Forsythe, Mark Caserta, Ethan Colangelo, José Limón, and Paul Taylor. This is her first season with Ailey II.

ALFRED L. JORDAN II (Memphis, TN) began his dance training at the age of 12 at a local studio in his hometown. He later studied at The Ailey School as a scholarship student where he performed in Alvin Ailey's *Bird Live* during AILEY's 2021 New York City Center gala. Mr. Jordan has worked with choreographers including Amy Hall Garner, Francesca Harper, Stephanie Batten Bland, Judine Somerville, and William Forsythe. This is his second season with Ailey II.

XAVIER LOGAN (Atlanta, GA) trained at Dancemakers of Atlanta. He is currently a senior at The Juilliard School, and has worked with choreographers including Sidra Bell, Sharon Eyal, Jamar Roberts, Bobbi Jene Smith, and Or Schraiber. He also performed works by Camille A. Brown and Johannes Wieland. Mr. Logan has been featured on television in *The Vampire Diaries*, *Dance Moms*, and *So You Think You Can Dance*. In 2023, his work *Welcome To The J(U)* premiered as the first ever hip-hop dance to appear on Juilliard's mainstage, and he was named one of *Teen Vogue* & GLAAD's "20 Under 20" rising stars. This is Mr. Logan's first season with Ailey II.

KIRI MOORE (Culpeper, VA) began her dance training in Virginia at the Orange School of Performing Arts, and continued to study in Philadelphia, PA at The Rock School for Dance Education. She is a graduate of The Ailey School Certificate Program where she performed in Alvin Ailey's *Memoria* during AILEY's 2021 and 2022 New York City Center season. Ms. Moore has also performed works by Amy Hall Garner, William Forsythe, Francesca Harper, Andrea Miller, Bradley Shelver, and Robert Battle. This is her second season with Ailey II.

CORINTH MOULTERIE (Brooklyn, NY) graduated from Brooklyn High School of the Arts, where he began his formal dance training, while also studying at Harlem School of the Arts. He has trained at MOVE|NYC|'s Young Professionals Program, Juilliard Summer Dance Intensive, Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts, and at The Ailey School as a Scholarship student. Mr. Moulterie has worked with choreographers, including Jeroboam Bozeman, Francesca Harper, Earl Mosley, Jermaine Spivy, Spenser Theberge and Leyland Simmons, and performed in Alvin Ailey's *Memoria* during AILEY's 2022 New York City Center Season. This is his second season with Ailey II.

XHOSA SCOTT (Durham, NC) was raised in Virginia where he began dancing with The School of Richmond Ballet's outreach program, Minds in Motion. He continued training at Baltimore School for the Arts, and attended summer intensives including the Bolshoi Ballet Academy, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and The Juilliard School. After graduating high school under the School of American Ballet, Mr. Scott attended The University of Virginia where he majored in Art History with a minor in Anthropology. While at The Ailey School in the Scholarship Program, he performed works by choreographers including Ronald K Brown, Amy Hall Garner, Ray Mercer, and Darrell Grand Moultrie. This is Mr. Scott's first season with Ailey II.

KAYLA MEI-WAN THOMAS (Cleveland, OH) began her dance training in Las Vegas, NV at Nevada Ballet Theatre, and continued to study in Cleveland, OH at Cleveland School of the Arts. She graduated summa cum laude from the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program in 2022 with a double major in Digital Technologies and Emerging Media. In 2020, she was the recipient of the Denise Jefferson Memorial Scholarship. Ms. Thomas has performed works by Alvin Ailey, William Forsythe, Francesca Harper, Andrea Miller, Robert Battle, Hope Boykin, and Helen Simoneau. This is her second season with Ailey II.

DARION TURNER (Clayton County, GA) began his dance training at AileyCamp Atlanta and attended Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts. He studied as a scholarship student at Atlanta Ballet, Eagles Landing Dance Center, and in The Ailey School's Summer Intensive. Mr. Turner is a graduate from the Certificate Program at The Ailey School and worked with choreographers Darrell Grand Moultrie, Christopher L. Huggins Anthony Burrell, Amy Hall Garner, Ronald K. Brown, Norbert De La Cruz, and Brandi Lewis. He also performed works by Robert Battle, Geoffrey Holder, and danced in Alvin Ailey's *Memoria* during AILEY's 2022 New York City Center season. This is his first season with Ailey II.

ERIC VIDAÑA (Las Vegas, NV) is a graduate of the Las Vegas Academy of the Arts. He received his early dance training from The Nevada Ballet Theatre and continued studying at West Las Vegas Arts Center and Contemporary West Dance Theatre's Conservatory, under the direction of Bernard Gaddis and Avree Walker. Mr. Vidaña furthered his dance education as a Scholarship student at The Ailey School. He has performed works by choreographers including Alvin Ailey, Hope Boykin, Donald Byrd, Michelle Manzanales, Tommie Waheed Evan's, Milton Myers, Jeneane Huggins, Don Bellamy, Rennie Harris, Ronald K. Brown, and Christopher L. Huggins. This is his first season with Ailey II.

JORDYN WHITE (West Palm Beach, FL) graduated from Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts high school. She began her dance training at Raskin Dance Studio in Florida and attended summer intensives at Joffrey Ballet School, Modas Dance, and The Ailey School. Ms. White performed works by choreographers George Balanchine, Darrell G. Moultrie, Christopher L. Huggins, and Ronald K. Brown, and danced in Alvin Ailey's *Memoria* during AILEY's 2022 New York City Center season. She is a recent graduate of The Ailey School's Certificate Program, and the University of Florida with a BA in Psychology. This is Ms. White's first season with Ailey II.

APPRENTICES

KAMANI ABU (New Castle, DE) began his dance training at the age of 16 at a local studio in his hometown. He also trained in the summer intensive at BalletX. He is currently a senior in the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program, and has worked with choreographers including Jennifer Archibald, Tracy Inman, Darshan Bhuller, Gregory Dawson, and Maleek Washington. In 2023, Mr. Abu performed in Geoffrey Holder's *Douglas* with Dance Theatre of Harlem and in Alvin Ailey's *Memoria* during AILEY's New York City Center season. This is his first season as an apprentice with Ailey II.

NAIA NEAL (Aptos, CA) began her dance training at the age of seven at Dancenter, a local dance school in her hometown. She is currently a senior in the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program, where she received the 2023 Denise Jefferson Memorial Scholarship. Ms. Neal has performed works by choreographers Christopher L. Huggins, Hope Boykin, Johnathan Lee, Adam Barruch, Alison Cook Beatty, Darshan Singh Bhuller, and Ephrat Asherie. She also danced in Alvin Ailey's *Memoria* during AILEY's 2023 New York City Center season and at BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) in 2024. This is Ms. Neal's first season as an apprentice with Ailey II.

ADANNA SMALLS (Brooklyn, NY) began her dance training at the Abrons Arts Center/ Henry Street Settlement in New York City. In 2021, she graduated as an Ailey dance major from the Professional Performing Arts School, and she is a recent graduate of the Certificate Program at The Ailey School. Ms. Smalls has worked with choreographers and artists such as Clifton Brown, Norbert De La Cruz III, Ronald K. Brown, Aubrey Lynch, and NaTalia Johnson. She also performed in Alvin Ailey's *Bird Live* in 2021 and *Memoria* in 2022 during AILEY's New York City Center seasons. This is Ms. Smalls' first season as an apprentice with Ailey II.

KALEB K. SMITH (Dallas, TX) began his dance training at Dallas Black Dance Theatre Academy. He also studied at Dance Theatre of Harlem's summer intensive as a scholarship student. In 2022, Mr. Smith graduated from Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, and he is currently a student in the Certificate Program at The Ailey School. Mr. Smith has performed works by choreographers including Loris Anthony Beckles, Zach Ingram, Brandy Lewis, Ray Mercer, and Alvin Ailey. This is his first season as an apprentice with Ailey II.



Ailey II's Jennifer M. Gerken and Xhosa Scott. Photo by Nir Arieli.

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**In Memoriam*

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Ailey II. Photo by Nir Arieli.

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OPUS 3 ARTISTS: 212-584-7500 / www.opus3artists.com

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Ailey II's Kayla Mei-Wan Thomas. Photo by Nir Arieli.
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