

Images Available Upon Request

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## Ailey II to Perform at Wave Hill Tuesday, June 21

Bronx, NY, June 16, 2022—A public garden and cultural center in the Bronx overlooking the Hudson River, Wave Hill is pleased to be able to offer performances by [Ailey II](#), the second company of the world-renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, on the first day of summer, Tuesday, June 21.



Ailey II is universally renowned for merging the spirit and energy of the country's finest dance talent with the passion and creative vision of today's most outstanding emerging choreographers. The company will perform *Freedom Series* on Wave Hill's Great Lawn, overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, at 5PM and 7:30PM.

Choreographed by Ailey II Artistic Director Francesca Harper, *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, lighting design by Abby May and a score featuring a blend of acoustic and electronic sounds by a dozen different artists, *Freedom Series* takes unexpected twists and turns that bridge tender moments to its intrinsic ferocity.

"Wave Hill is so thrilled to be partnering with Ailey II on this presentation," commented Wave Hill's Director of Arts, Gabriel de Guzman. "Connecting the audience with our natural surroundings, this interactive dance performance provides an embodied experience of the landscape in a way that can only happen here. This intersection of art, community and nature is at the core of Wave Hill's unique programming, and Ailey II has been an ideal collaborator."

"We are delighted to collaborate with Gabriel de Guzman and the team at Wave Hill," said Ailey II Artistic Director Francesca Harper. "When I first witnessed the space, its beauty emulated a dreamscape and reminded me of the power in manifesting our dreams. I have created a transformative, interactive experience for the audience through which they are guided and inspired by the dancers of Ailey II to move and transport their minds and bodies to new personal heights."

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Francesca Harper, choreographer and Artistic Director of Ailey II, began her professional dance career with Dance Theater of Harlem. She was a member of William Forsythe's Ballett Frankfurt from 1991-1999, where she became a principal dancer in 1994. She has performed on Broadway in productions that include *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. In 2014, she debuted her critically acclaimed one-woman show, *The Look of Feeling*, as a writer, actor, dancer and vocalist. 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 founded in 2005.



*From left, Ailey II's B. Thomas, H. Richardson, J. Mitchell. Photo by Nir Arieli*

The Ailey II sold-out performances open a summer season of performing arts at Wave Hill, including our long-beloved **Sunset Wednesdays** series (July 13–August 3) and a **Citywide Dance Party** (August 6). These five events celebrate the **Festival of New York** ([festivalofny.com](http://festivalofny.com)). On August 11, Wave Hill presents Isaac Pool's *Horizon Lies*, a site-specific performance in the Aquatic Garden, which will be part of a special evening of programming.

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

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### **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](http://www.alvinailey.org/ailey-ii).

### About Wave Hill

A 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill's mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.

The Performing Arts Program at Wave Hill is supported in part by the Lily Auchincloss Foundation; Michael J. Shannon; and the Cathy and Stephen Weinroth Commissioning Fund for the Arts. Wave Hill Incorporated is an independent non-profit cultural institution governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The City of New York owns the buildings and grounds of Wave Hill. With the assistance of the Bronx Borough President and Bronx representatives in the City Council and State Legislature, Wave Hill's operations are supported with public funds through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; the National Endowment for the Arts; and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



**HOURS:** Open all year, Tuesday–Sunday, 10AM–5:30PM.

**ADMISSION TO THE GROUNDS:** \$10 adults, \$6 students and seniors 65+, \$4 children 6-18. Free Thursdays. Free to members, children under 6. For current safety protocols and other information about visiting Wave Hill, please be sure check the website prior to visiting.

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete directions at [wavehill.org](http://wavehill.org).

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