The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts presents

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
Robert Battle, Artistic Director
Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director

Seven Dynamic Programs Spotlight
11 Diverse Works and Four D.C. Debut Works

February 7–12, 2017
In the Kennedy Center Opera House

(WASHINGTON)—Making its annual Kennedy Center appearance, the famed Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater returns to the Opera House stage with seven performances, February 7–12. Led by Artistic Director Robert Battle, the Company’s performances include a company premiere, four D.C. debuts, two new productions, and a total of 11 works by a range of distinct choreographers. The company’s engagement is part of JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy, the Kennedy Center’s yearlong programming initiative marking the 100th anniversary of John F. Kennedy’s birth and legacy, inspired by five ideals frequently attributed to America’s 35th President: Courage, Freedom, Justice, Service, and Gratitude. Alvin Ailey’s legacy as a cultural ambassador and the bold and breathtaking works in the company’s repertory champion the ideal of freedom, embodying the spirit of President Kennedy’s vision for America.

Of the works being performed, Washington, D.C. premieres include Deep by Mauro Bigonzetti, Untitled America by Kyle Abraham, r-Evolution, Dream by Hope Boykin, and Ella by Robert Battle. Known for his seamless integration of classical and modern techniques, Mauro Bigonzetti’s Deep melds European, American, and African cultures set to the soulful
music of the rising global stars Ibeyi, the French-Cuban twin sister duo. Developed and completed over the last two years, MacArthur “Genius Grant” winner Kyle Abraham’s haunting three-part work, Untitled America, shines a light on the impact of the prison system on African-American families. Longtime company member, Hope Boykin’s r-Evolution, Dream., inspired by the sermons and speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a large ensemble work that melds creative storytelling, new music composed by Ali Jackson (Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra), and historic and original writings with narration recorded by Tony Award® winner Leslie Odom, Jr. (Hamilton). Robert Battle’s Ella, a rarely performed homage to Ella Fitzgerald has been re-staged on the company as a duet in celebration of the centennial of her birth in April 2017. Set to the legendary vocalist's recording of “Air Mail Special,” Ella matches the iconic singer's virtuosic scatting with lightning-fast, articulated movement in an irresistible tour-de-force.

This season includes company premiere Walking Mad by Johan Inger. The esteemed Swedish choreographer’s first work for the company is set to Ravel’s much-loved Boléro as well as music by minimalist Arvo Pärt and employs a long, movable wall that can also be viewed as a symbol of the barriers people construct in their relationships.

New productions include The Winter in Lisbon by Billy Wilson and Masekela Langage by Alvin Ailey. Paying tribute to four decades of renowned jazz musician Dizzy Gillespie, Billy Wilson’s 1992 work, restaged for the 2017 centennial of Gillespie’s birth, creates an atmosphere in which the dancers challenge, tease, and pursue romance against a backdrop of rhythm and color. Masekela Langage, a rarely-seen Ailey masterpiece, is set to the music of South American jazz composer and trumpeter Hugh Masekela. Drawing parallels between the era of South African apartheid and the race-induced violence of 1960s Chicago, the work premiered during Ailey’s first season at Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) in 1969, and was revived for Ailey’s return to the venue during the Company’s 50th anniversary in 2008. Returning favorites include After the Rain by Christopher Wheeldon, Exodus by Rennie Harris, Robert Battle’s Awakening, his first new work since becoming artistic director in 2011.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will begin its annual engagement at the Kennedy Center with an Opening Night Gala Benefit on February 7, 2017. Proceeds from the Gala will support
Ailey’s Washington, D.C. programs, including the creation of new works, arts-in-education activities and scholarships to talented young dance students from the D.C. area to attend The Ailey School in New York City. Alvin Ailey’s American masterpiece *Revelations* will be performed as the finale for all seven programs. The company will also take part in a mini-performance for students as part of the Kennedy Center’s educational programming on February 9.

The company has made frequent appearances at the Kennedy Center, dating back to the Center’s opening performance in 1971 when Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater participated in the world premiere performance of Leonard Bernstein’s *Mass*, choreographed by Ailey.

**Funding Credits:**

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*Explore the Arts is made possible by the Thomas W. Haas Foundation.*

**Ticket Information**

Tickets start at $39. Tickets can be purchased at the Kennedy Center box office or by calling Instant Charge at (202) 467-4600. Patrons living outside the Washington metropolitan area may dial toll-free at (800) 444-1324. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

**Performance Schedule**

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater  
Robert Battle, Artistic Director  
Masazumi Chaya, Associate Artistic Director  

(DC) – D.C. Premiere of a New Work from Ailey’s 2016-2017 Season  
(CP) – Company Premiere from Ailey’s 2016-2017 Season  
(NP) – A New Production of the Work
Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.
The Winter in Lisbon by Billy Wilson (NP)
Walking Mad by Johan Inger (CP)
Ella by Robert Battle (DC)
Revelations by Alvin Ailey

Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Deep by Mauro Bigonzetti (DC)
After the Rain by Christopher Wheeldon
Untitled America by Kyle Abraham (DC)
Revelations

Thursday, February 9, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
r-Evolution, Dream by Hope Boykin (DC)
Masekela Langage by Alvin Ailey (NP)
Revelations

Friday, February 10, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Deep
After the Rain
Untitled America
Revelations

Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 1:30 p.m.
Followed by a FREE Explore the Arts post-performance discussion
The Winter in Lisbon
Awakening by Robert Battle
Revelations

Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Exodus by Rennie Harris
Walking Mad
Revelations

Sunday, February 12, 2017 at 1:30 p.m.
The Winter in Lisbon
r-Evolution, Dream.
Revelations

About JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy
In the year leading up to the centenary of John F. Kennedy’s birth on May 29, 2017, the Kennedy Center, the living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, is re-imagining the very mission of the institution created in his name. Inspired by some of the key ideals he championed—Courage, Freedom, Justice, Service, and Gratitude—the Center is featuring special programming through the year that explores, challenges, and reflects the contemporary spirit of America. Guided by JFK’s legacy of idealism, hope, and empowerment, the Kennedy Center will serve as a creative catalyst and meeting place, inviting members of the public to engage directly with artists and ideas, and actively participate in the civic and cultural life of their country.
About Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recognized by U.S. Congressional resolution as a vital American “Cultural Ambassador to the World,” grew from a now-fabled March 1958 performance in New York that forever changed the perception of American dance. Founded by Alvin Ailey, a recent posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation’s highest civilian honor, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle, whom Judith Jamison chose to succeed her on July 1, 2011. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 25 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents, promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition. In addition to being the Principal Dance Company of New York City Center, where its performances have become a year-end tradition, the Ailey company performs annually at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County in Miami, The Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley, CA and at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark (where it is the Principal Resident Affiliate). The Company also appears frequently in other major theaters throughout the United States and the world during extensive annual tours. The Ailey organization also includes Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Albee School (1969), one of the most extensive dance training programs in the world, Ailey Arts in Education & Community Programs, which brings dance into the classrooms, communities and lives of people of all ages, and The Albee Extension (2005), a program offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of Ailey’s permanent home—the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the dance capital of the world—named The Joan Weill Center for Dance, at 55th Street at 9th Avenue in New York City. For more information, visit www.alvinailey.org.

The 2017 North American Tour is supported, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts. American Express is the lead funder of the new production of Masekela Langage. The World Premiere of Untitled America is made possible by Denise R. Sobel and Tikkun Olam Foundation, Inc. The creation of Untitled America is supported by commissioning funds from New York City Center. Generous support for Untitled America is also provided, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. The creation of r-Evolution, Dream is supported by commissioning funds from The Music Center. Southern Company is the proud sponsor of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Washington, D.C. Gala Benefit.

For additional press materials please visit the links below or pressroom.alvinailey.org.

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