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AILEY II ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND DANCE LEGEND SYLVIA WATERS TO RETIRE IN 2012 – TROY POWELL IS APPOINTED AS AILEY II ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE

NEW YORK, NY (August 25, 2011) – The Ailey organization today announced that one of the dance world's most deeply admired figures, Sylvia Waters, will retire on June 30, 2012, from her position as Artistic Director of Ailey II, the company of young dancers she has led for nearly four decades.

Chosen by Alvin Ailey to guide and develop Ailey II following seven years as a lead dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ms. Waters has trained generations of outstanding professional dancers, opened the door for many of today's most vital choreographers (including Robert Battle, now the Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater) and has brought Ailey II, which was founded in 1974, to prominence as one of the world's most popular and acclaimed touring companies.

To lead the company forward, Ms. Waters has named Troy Powell, the veteran Ailey dancer, teacher, choreographer and Ailey II Associate Artistic Director since 2003, to be her successor. In a decision enthusiastically endorsed by the Foundation's Board, Mr. Powell will immediately become Artistic Director Designate of Ailey II and will assume his new role as Artistic Director on July 1, 2012.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will pay tribute to Ms. Waters with a special performance on the evening of Sunday, December 11, as part of its five-week season at New York City Center. Ms. Waters will be honored with performances of Memoria by Alvin Ailey (the first work in which Mr. Ailey combined Ailey II with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater), Minus 16 by Ohad Naharin, Takademe by Robert Battle and Revelations by Alvin Ailey. Following her retirement from Ailey II, Ms. Waters will remain active in the Ailey organization, including leading The Ailey Legacy Residency, a new lecture, technique and repertory program for collegelevel students that looks definitively into the history and creative heritage of Alvin Ailey.

"There is simply no way to calculate the impact that Sylvia Waters has had on the Ailey organization—or for that matter on the dance world as a whole," stated Sharon Gersten Luckman, Executive Director of Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation. "For more than forty years, she has been an immense, benevolent influence on us all. She has mentored generations of young dancers and choreographers who have gone on to important careers—including the dynamic Troy Powell, who has worked so closely with Sylvia and now will take charge as her successor, ensuring a bright and strong future for Ailey II."

Robert Battle, Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, stated, "Like so many others, I began my connection with the Ailey organization through Sylvia Waters, when she invited me to choreograph for Ailey II. Like Judith Jamison, Sylvia is our teacher, our mentor, our touchstone of personal integrity—and one of our most important direct links to Alvin Ailey himself. I offer Sylvia my deepest gratitude. I congratulate Troy Powell on a new role that I know means the world to him, and that he richly deserves."

Sylvia Waters stated, "Mr. Ailey gave me the greatest gift imaginable when he created a second company and asked me to take charge of it. I have spent the past 37 years living with the energies and enthusiasms, the hopes and hurts, of some of the world's best young dancers and choreographers – memories I will always cherish. I'm excited to continue coaching, teaching master classes and conducting The Ailey Legacy Residency, and I can't wait to see all the new ways that Ailey II will flourish with Troy Powell's inspired leadership."

Troy Powell commented, "I'm so grateful that Mr. Ailey invited me to study at The Ailey School, after I participated in one of Ailey's outreach activities at my elementary school when I was nine. I've had the incomparable experience of being coached by and learning Revelations directly from Mr. Ailey, starting when I was 14, and of performing in Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater under Judith Jamison's direction. The most important part of my training, though, not just as a dancer but as a person, came during my time as a young professional under Sylvia Waters in Ailey II. That's where I got my real education: watching how Sylvia worked, following what she did, listening to everything she said. It's through Sylvia's example most of all that I've wanted to embrace and continue Alvin Ailey's legacy—and I feel blessed to have this opportunity."

Joan H. Weill, Chairman of the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, stated, "Ailey II is in many ways the vital connection running through everything we do, linking The Ailey School to Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and the Ailey organization to emerging choreographers, community programs and cities of all sizes around the country and the world. On behalf of the Board, I congratulate Sylvia and Troy on this thoughtful and well-managed transition, accomplished in the true Ailey spirit."

Ailey II's 2011-2012 tour will consist of performances in more than 25 cities across the United States and abroad, including a New York season from April 18 – 29, 2012 at The Ailey Citigroup Theater. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's New York City Center performances, led by Robert Battle in his inaugural season as Artistic Director, extend from November 30, 2011 – January 1, 2012, during which Sylvia Waters will be honored on December 11. Tickets starting at \$25 go on sale September 6. For further information, visit www.alvinailey.org.

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