

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Members Don't Get Weary **(World Premiere – 2017)**

Choreography: Jamar Roberts

Assistant to the Choreographer: Marion-Skye Brooke Logan

Music: John Coltrane

Costumes: Jamar Roberts

Lighting and Scenic design: Brandon Stirling Baker

Longtime Ailey star and recent “Bessie” Award winner Jamar Roberts makes his choreographic debut on the Company with *Members Don't Get Weary*, which he calls “a response to the current social landscape in America...an abstract look into the notion of one ‘having the blues.’” Roberts’s deep appreciation for jazz – an original African-American art form of jazz that he believes should be more widely celebrated – comes through in his use of saxophonist and composer John Coltrane’s music, 50 years after the legend’s death. This world premiere for 10 dancers is a personal and creative union for Roberts, as he will be working with his fellow Ailey company members, as well as reuniting with lighting design virtuoso Brandon Stirling Baker – who lit his Ailey II work *Gêmeos* and is a frequent collaborator with New York City Ballet’s Justin Peck, among other major choreographers and companies – and Marion-Skye Brooke Logan – his rehearsal assistant and the daughter of Dance Empire of Miami founder Angel Fraser-Logan, who first introduced him to dance. The work uses the dancing body paired with this distinctive music and lighting in hopes of inspiring the audience, allowing them to momentarily transcend their own personal blues.



AAADT in Jamar Roberts' *Members Don't Get Weary*. Photo by Paul Kolnik.

“The surprise came in the somber radiance of Jamar Roberts’s new work... “Members” is **what happens when choreographic intention is more important than steps. It has that ease ...was as emotional as it was virtuosic ...**”

The New York Times

“... enthralling ... didn’t feel so much like a dance – although it was a fine one, with nuance and power – as it did **a profound message to the world ...** A cherished veteran of Ailey, Mr. Roberts delivered, in his first work for the main company, a **transcendent look at how the blues play into our culture. It’s a rarity. It will last.**”

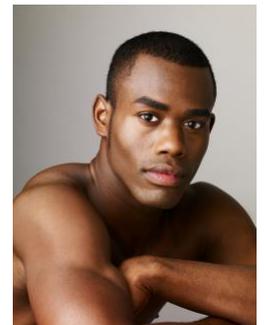
The New York Times

“... like the blues that inspired it, **his choreographic debut for Ailey does not exacerbate our pain so much as assuage it ...** Members Don’t Get Weary is **subtle and wise.**”

Financial Times

Jamar Roberts

Miami native Jamar Roberts graduated from the New World School of the Arts after beginning his dance studies at the Dance Empire of Miami, where he continues to teach and mentor students each year. His connection to his home city remains strong, and he recently starred in *Moonlight x Ailey*, Ailey’s homage to the Oscar-winning film *Moonlight* set in Miami (written by another New World School of the Arts alumnus – Tarell Alvin McCraney). *Dance Magazine* featured Jamar as a “25 to Watch” in 2007 and on the cover in 2013. He has performed at The White House in 2010, and as a guest star on *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and *The Ellen Degeneres Show*. In 2015 he made his Ailey II choreographic debut with his work *Gêmeos*, set to the music of Afrobeat star Fela Kuti. In 2015, Mr. Roberts won Outstanding Performer at the prestigious New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Awards and was a guest star with London’s Royal Ballet. Roberts received a fellowship to The Ailey School before becoming a member of Ailey II, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 2002.



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s Jamar Roberts. Photo by Andrew Eccles.



John Coltrane.

John Coltrane

Born on September 23, 1926 in Hamlet, NC, John Coltrane was one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century. His early recordings capture a musician in the relatively conventional confines of bebop and hardbop, but his enduring legacy primarily rests on the modal jazz pioneered by his classic quartet (1960-64) and by free jazz explorations late in his career. He recorded more than 50 albums as a leader and appeared as a sideman on many other albums, performing with other giants of jazz like Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk. Coltrane received numerous awards including a posthumous "Special Citation" from the Pulitzer Prize Board in 2007 for his 'masterful improvisation, supreme musicianship and iconic centrality to the history of jazz'. As his life progressed, his music and outlook became increasingly spiritual. After his untimely death in 1967 he was proclaimed a saint by the African Orthodox church that took his name. Coltrane died on July 17, 1967.

The creation of *Members Don't Get Weary* was supported by commissioning funds from New York City Center.

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Members Don't Get Weary **Music Credit Information**

Songs: "Dear Lord" and "Olé"

Written by: John Coltrane

Publisher: Jowcol Music.