



3/31/16 O&A NYC SHALL WE DANCE FRIDAY- REVIEW: Ailey II- Jean Emile's In And Out Is Outstanding

By Walter Rutledge



Ailey II began their annual New York City 2016 season Wednesday March 30th at the Ailey Citygroup Theater, in the Joan Weill Center For Dance (405 W 55th Street). The two-week season, which runs through April 10, 2016, will offer two programs, *All New* and *Returning Favorites*. The season opened with the *All New* program, featuring four works by Kyle "JustSole" Clark, Jean Emile, Ray Mercer, and Jamar Roberts.

The well-curated program lived up to the Ailey credo of giving dance back to the people; and in this case offered something for everybody. The twelve-member ensemble performed works ranging from pure abstract, to dance narrative, to dance theatre. *In and Out*, based on the Jean Emile's own journey from depression to enlightenment, opened the program on a strong note.

Emile's *In and Out*, an ensemble work for eight dancers, combined good choreographic form with a compelling storyline. Introspective and at times surreal Emile's courageous elegy took us into his personal labyrinth. The metaphysical quality of the work complimented Emile's subtle use of imagery and subliminal messaging.

In the duet performed by Nathaniel Hunt and Annellyse Munroe the partnering reached beyond convention to produce sculptural symmetry. The delicate balance of one promenade (with Munroe on one knee) reached beyond movement reminiscing a Calder mobile. Throughout Emile created a quiet emotional tension that heightened the pathos between the performers without becoming saccharine.



An alumnus of the Ailey School Emile's amalgam of dance styles also showcased the company esthetic. To the choreographer's credit the work remained stylistically consistent despite the varied movement vocabulary. In one memorable passage the dancers formed a diagonal line before taking turns falling into the floor, creating a cascading canon of echoing movement.