## MIAMIMODERNLUXURY

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DANCE

114 Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Jamar Roberts makes his move.





## IN GOOD COMPANY

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER STAR JAMAR ROBERTS RETURNS TO THE CITY THAT BRED HIS TALENT.

> By Drew Limsky Photography by Gregg Delman

Despite glowing praise from the press, if Jamar Roberts is a god of dance, he's a rather humble one. To hear him tell it, the demands of being a principal dancer with Alvin Ailey are such that moments of grandiosity are few and for between. But when they do happen, Roberts says, "I feel like it's the highest form of myself... pure expression." While in rehearsal for a 23-city North American tour that lands at the Adrienne Arsht Center Feb. 20-23, the Miami native looked back on his trajectory as he anticipated his return to his home city. What's the most exciting thing about your life right now? I turned 31 this year, and I'm sort of in a place where I have perspective on everything that I've done. I'm really grateful for where I am, and I try not to do that 'dancer thing' where you're constantly pushing, pushing, pushing for more. When you were growing up, did you have a lot of artistic encouragement from your family? That happened in school. There was an afterschool program, and I had nothing else to do-my brothers were playing football, so I figured I would just dance. They needed more guys. It was fun, and it was something I was good at. Was it difficult to find role models? Even in high school, I never really had any role models. I never

male dancers that I wanted to aspire to be. There wasn't any actual living person I wanted to be until way later, when I was actually in the Alvin Ailey company. And then I wanted to model my life after other artists who weren't necessarily dancers; they were musicians, writers, like James Baldwin, John Coltrane, Toni Morrison, Randall Kenan, And, of course, Alvin Ailey. What have been some of your career highlights so far? There's a solo choreographed by [AAADT Artistic Director] Robert Battle, called 'Inside.' It's scary because it's really grueling and extremely expressive. It's one of those pieces that kind of forces you to be

completely vulnerable on

stage. I'm a private kind of

saw any African-American

guy, but it clicked with me. Whenever I've performed it in Miami, it's always gotten a good response, and that mattered the most to me. Your Miami performance this month will be a homecoming. Are there people close to you who will be in the audience? Oh, for sure-my mom; and one of my teachers from high school, Peter London, who taught me the Graham technique at New World School of the Arts, and all my old dance teachers. A lot of students who I teach now in a small studio where I train will also all be in the audience. Will you be hitting up any old haunts while you're in town? Definitely.

Michael's Genuine in the

District and Panther Coffee

in Wynwood. Those are my

two favorites