crain's new york business

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Stepping into the dance

Alvin Ailey's artistic director will bring in edgier productions

BY MIRIAM KREININ SOUCCAR

obert Battle, the new artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, officially takes the reins on July 1. The 38-year-old Juilliard-educated choreographer assumes control from Judith Jamison, making him only the second

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Robert Battle

person in this job besides Mr. Ailey himself. Now on tour with Ailey the troupe in Russia, choreographer recently announced his first sea-

and then look-

ing in the mir-

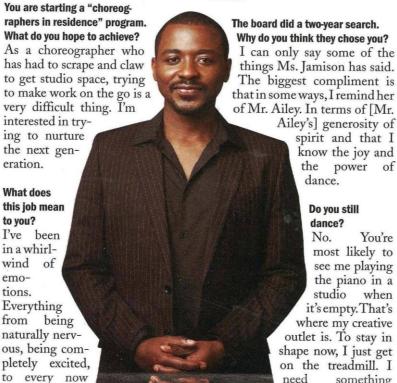
son for the storied company. He plans to bring in edgier productions, like dances infused with hip-hop. At the same time, he will maintain its tradition of featuring landmark works created by Mr. Ailey.

Why is it important to bring in different genres of dance?

One of the bedrocks of the compa-

ny is the versatility of the dancers, so I want to continue to stretch them to be able to tackle most anything. It challenges the audience and keeps them on their toes, no pun intended, but also challenges my dancers, and continues to give them food for thought. That makes the experience on stage very real.

ror and saying, "Is this really me?" I remember being that 12-year-old boy from Miami who was bused from my school to see Alvin Ailey for the first time and being in awe. Now I have the opportunity to make sure the company stays aloft so that some other young person can have that transformative experience.



Do you still dance?

No. You're most likely to see me playing the piano in a studio when it's empty. That's where my creative outlet is. To stay in shape now, I just get on the treadmill. I something mindless that I can tackle.