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# A return to Renaissance

PAUL KOLNIK

## ► Matthew Rushing reached into American history to choreograph his big, multimedia work, 'Uptown'

To research his historical piece on the Harlem Renaissance, "Uptown," Ailey star Matthew Rushing used modern technologies. "YouTube was a great help. I searched for Charleston and Lindy Hop, started purchasing books and DVDs," he explains. "Part of the dance is called 'Rent Party' — the Harlem Renaissance is where rent parties started."

But there is much more to his piece than music and dance. "I stumbled across incredible ideas, people,

music, artwork, the whole literary movement ... I felt like I was in another world," Rushing admits.

The choreographer wants his new piece to be authentic, entertaining and educational. "We've got the steps and the structure; now we're working on making it authentic," he says. "Hope Clark helped, and a swing dance consultant, Clyde Wilder, showed me the correct style, how to hold a female's hand."

"Uptown," to music by Waller, Eubie Blake, Nat

"King" Cole and others, has its first performance on Dec. 9. Also new at Ailey are dances by Judith Jamison ("Among Us," with paintings by Jamison and an original jazz score by Eric Lewis), Ronald K. Brown and Robert Battle.

### Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Dec. 2-Jan. 3, New York City Center, 131 W. 55th St., \$25-\$150, [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org)

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► Matthew Rushing, foreground, rehearses with Amos J. Machanic Jr. for "Uptown."