

## Alvin Ailey Dancer Jamar Roberts Comes Home



Jamar Roberts in Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

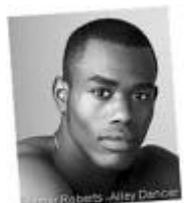
by James Cubby on May 17, 2010

Hometown boy, Jamar Roberts, returns home to Miami as one of the star dancers of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Roberts, born in Miami and a graduate of the New World School of the Arts, takes the stage this week at the Adrienne Arsht Center of Performing Arts with the renowned dance company. Reviewers have labeled Roberts as one of the most exciting dancers of Alvin Ailey. *The New York Times* reported that, "Jamar Roberts...stopped the show." *Dance Magazine* said that Roberts possessed "...movie star looks..an Olympian physique, and he moves like fire." While there is much excitement around this incredible dancer who seemed to blush (if one can blush over the phone) when I mentioned *The New York Times* review that labeled him as "godlike," Roberts said "it's much more exciting to dance with the company than watch." Roberts wasn't saying that it isn't exciting to watch the incredible dancers of Alvin Ailey, he's just sharing his love for the dance. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will not only bring its masterpiece "Revelations" but will celebrate Judith Jamison's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as "the most stellar and admired artistic director of any repertory company in America."

Roberts, who was chosen by Jamison

to represent the company in its advertising campaign posters, speaks very highly of Jamison. "She's a beautiful person and a very giving person. She pushes everyone to strive to be not only a better dancer but a better artist."

Oddly enough, Roberts did not seek out a career as a dancer. "I was encouraged by others because it was something that I was good at doing," said Roberts when asked about his beginnings as a dancer. "I wanted to be a fashion designer. I didn't aspire



Jamar Roberts

to be a professional dancer.” Roberts had been dancing professionally for three years when he finally made the decision that this was his career. In order to confirm to himself that he made the right choice, Roberts took design classes but dance won out in the end. Now Roberts' life is consumed with dance. “As a dancer, we live dance. It's an effort to have other life experiences that aren't dance.” While Roberts ponders on missed concerts or other experiences not available to a dancer on tour, his love for dance is evident in his words and performances. “On opening night, I dance a solo called “Inside” and it's very intense and scary. It takes a certain amount of stamina.” He compares the feeling to “going to war with yourself.” With any luck opening night audiences will



.Jamar Roberts

be treated to the kind of performance that *The Miami Herald* called “...so powerfully masculine and so smooth...”

Dancers' careers are often short ones and as a dancer of twenty-seven, Roberts hopes to use his time left wisely. “I have a lot more to say and explore as a dancer,” said Roberts. The young dancer has thought about his life after dance. “I hope to dance until I'm at least thirty-five, but then I will move on to other things.” Roberts was playing the guitar when I called him and he said that music is one of his loves. “I may

have another career in music or as a painter, who knows,” said Roberts. In the meantime, Miami audiences will be treated to the “godlike” performances of Jamar Roberts as he dances with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater this coming week. On a closing note, Roberts shared a bit of advice to those who might seek a career in dance. “Make sure that you love it, and that it's your absolute passion.” A dancer must love the dance and it's obvious when Jamar Roberts steps on stage that he's in love.

*The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will be performing at the Adrienne Arsht Center of Performing Arts on May 20-23. The Adrienne Arsht Center of Performing Arts is located at 1300 Biscayne Blvd. In downtown Miami. For information call 305.949.6722 or visit [www.arshtcenter.org](http://www.arshtcenter.org).*