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## Hopefuls have hip-hop in their corner

By LEIGH WITCHEL

**T**HE best thing about Kyle Abraham's "The Corner" is that it lets the up-and-coming dancers at Ailey II be themselves — and a little bit more.

These dancers are vying to join the main Ailey company, and Abraham, a young choreographer who fuses hip-hop and postmodern sensibilities, helps them look their best.

### DANCE REVIEW

#### AILEY II

*The Ailey Citigroup Theater, 405 W. 55th St.; 866-811-4111. Through Sunday.*

2005 track that gave the piece its name, to Chopin. True to the title, the piece takes place on a mythical corner. There are distant gunshots on the soundtrack, and the dancers ignore them. It's just another summer evening in the 'hood.

A group is chatting; across the stage,

a girl and her hunky boyfriend (Jacqueline Green and Collin Heyward) are arguing. Her hair's pulled up high in a ponytail, and she's bobbing her head more than one of Montel Williams' guests.

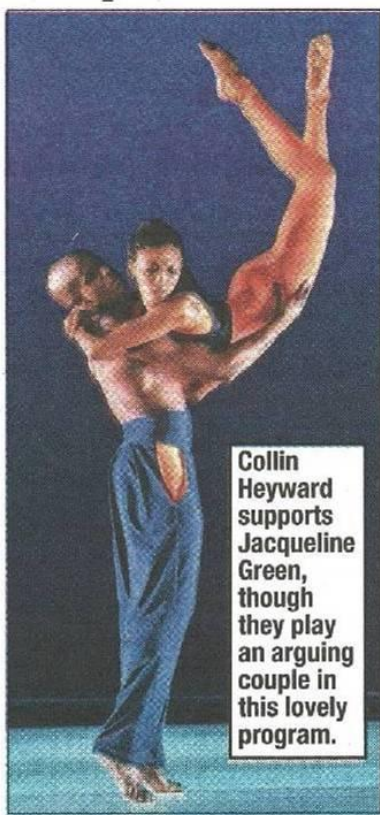
A second couple, Renaldo Gardner and Kelly Robotham, both short and dynamic, are more awkward. She's sweetly interested, but he just can't make the move. Their pas de deux, and a lovely sextet that follows, feature hip-hop moves to a Chopin nocturne, and Abraham makes it seem as if that's what Chopin wrote it for.

Green and Heyward return to hash it out in a moving duet, in which she drags him backward, supporting him as much as he supports her.

Gardner returns and breaks the tension. "Put your shirt on before you make me cry," he jokingly tells the other man, and everyone returns for the finale.

Two programs alternate during the season: "The Corner" is being performed Thursday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.

Don't worry about turning this "Corner" — it's funny, smart and pop without shock.



**Collin Heyward supports Jacqueline Green, though they play an arguing couple in this lovely program.**

Eduardo Palino