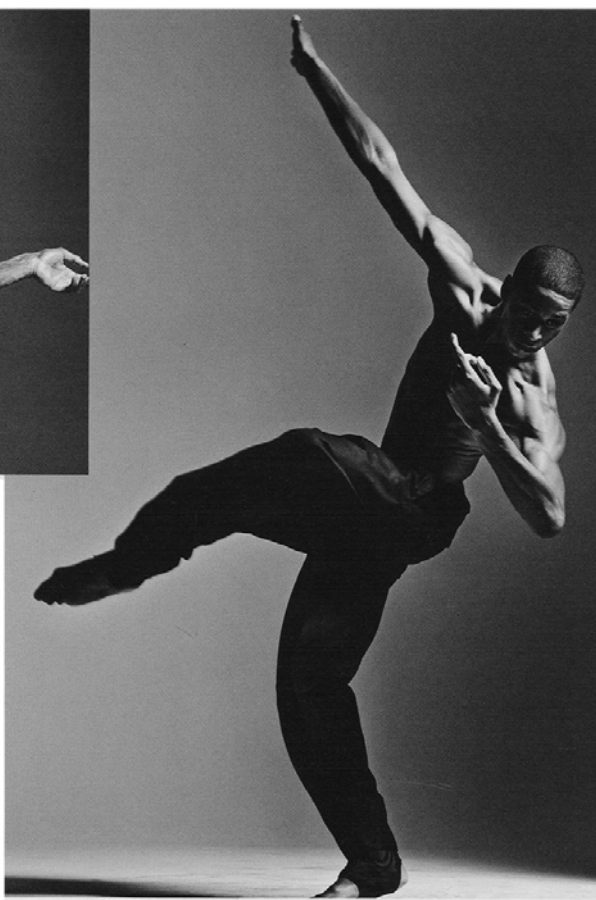
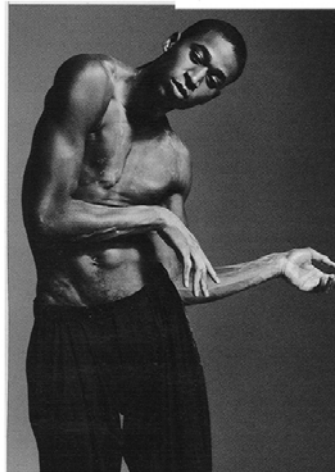

DANCE OFF

PEOPLE COME TO NEW YORK TO DANCE—OFTEN LATE AT NIGHT, MAYBE A BIT DRUNK, IN CROWDED CLUBS AND AT SUDDEN HOUSE PARTIES. THE CITY IS A HAVEN FOR PROFESSIONAL DANCERS TOO, THOSE RARE BODY ARTISTS WHO PERFORM MOVES YOU ONLY THINK YOU'RE COPYING. A NEW GENERATION IS ALWAYS IN TRAINING, READY TO BREAK OUT IN BALLET, HIP-HOP, MODERN OR VOGUE, UP IN THE CONCERT HALLS OR DOWN IN THE STREETS. HERE ARE FOUR YOUNG UP AND COMERS WHO JUST WANNA DANCE

By ARIANA SPEYER Photography SEBASTIAN KIM



Josh JOHNSON

Ailey II dancer Josh Johnson spends most of the year touring the United States, performing in Ailey's modern repertory virtually every night, rehearsing during the days, and subsisting on an unholy mix of backstage catering, Applebee's, and Outback Steakhouse. When Johnson is back in New York, you can find him cooking up a storm in his Harlem apartment. Reached by phone at home on a rare night off, the 21-year-old San Fernando, California, native is busy making Cornish hens and scalloped potatoes—enough to last the week. "I get home-cooked meals if I cook them," Johnson explains ruefully. Not that he regrets the move that brought him to New York in 2005 as a fellowship student at the Ailey School. Transitioning from student to apprentice to company member were big leaps. "I felt like I blossomed into a performer. It forces you to be on your game," he says. And his game is a serious one. The repertory is very eclectic and includes movements constructed by Alvin Ailey and other choreographers which incorporate everything from ballet to jazz. Johnson needs to reach a "meditative state" in order to perform. "I'd rather the audience come into what we're doing than make it like a circus," he says. "Dance is a lot more sacred than that."
