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DANCESPIRIT

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jazz legend.

all
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DS investigates where the artForm
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Tribute to Jazz & Jimmy Locust

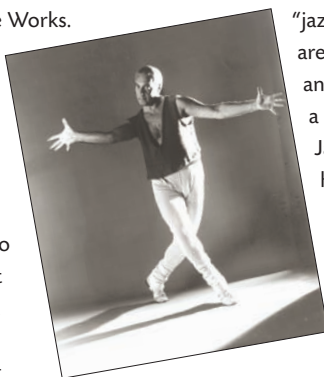


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Jimmy Locust has done it all. He's choreographed for Janet Jackson. He's been featured in Paula Abdul's music videos. He's shared the stage with Michael Jackson. Locust owns his own studio, the Stamford Performing Arts Center in Connecticut, sponsored by Capezio, where he offers classes in hip hop, ballet, jazz, tap, modern, musical theater, voice and performance coaching. He also has his own dance company, Locust Contemporary Dance Works.

the day was ballet. I feel that ballet is a strong force that facilitates jazz dance. It's one of the most powerful techniques."

The 4'9" dancer, choreographer, artistic director and teacher has many stories to tell about his career. But his foundation of jazz dance is near and dear to his heart. It was jazz legend Gus Giordano that gave him the confidence to build a dream. "Giordano saw something in me that not only got me ready to face the world but he said



The late Gus Giordano, director of Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, creator of Jazz Dance World Congress and author of *Anthology of American Jazz Dance*

"I'm going to go against what the world looks at. I'm going to put you in as a principal member because I believe in you as a talent not just your diversity," says Locust. "It gave me the courage to walk up to Paula and Janet and Michael with my head up and to book those jobs. It was the tradition of his jazz dance that got me to cross over."

Locust wants to carry on the traditions of jazz dance, built by the founders like

Giordano, Matt Mattox, Frank Hatchett and Luigi. Though he sees a shift in the way jazz technique is taught nowadays, he's doing his best to keep the tradition alive. "In the old traditions of jazz dance, the first class of

Locust is also trying to bring "jazz dance to the industrial arena," he says, "where my hip hop feel and jazz technique can go together but it's a fine line." He says when he worked on Janet Jackson's *Rhythm Nation* video, he used his jazz knowledge. "The movement is clear, it's precise, it's from the center. That's how jazz dance carries over."

When Capezio offered to be his school's sponsor Locust was thrilled because just as he wants to keep jazz dance traditions alive, he feels that Capezio keeps dance legacies alive through their clothing.

"The way the clothes are made—they're built to last," he says. Locust says he's able to use Capezio products for all the genres of dance he offers at his studio. "Capezio is branching out and making sure all genres of the industry are being fulfilled with quality clothes. They're one of the most versatile companies that I've ever worked with," he says. "The products change constantly but they keep the traditions of the history of dance." ■

Capezio's Jazz sneakers were featured in ads that appeared in *Vogue*, *Fit and Shape* in the '80s!



Top: Jim Kahnweiler; inset: Dance Magazine Archives



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