

David Scott

Contributed by Chris Yandek
Monday, 14 May 2007
Last Updated Monday, 30 August 2010

Director Sylvain White (Left) with David Scott on Stomp The Yard set.

Interview Conducted April 25, 2007

The 2007 movie year opened up with the surprise box office hit Stomp The Yard. The film gives hope to anyone that wants to take their life in a more positive and productive direction. Movie and TV choreographer David Scott had his work cut out for him when he rehearsed with these young men three months prior to filming. In the end, Scott put these dance routines together in an explosive fashion that the viewer can appreciate and stops by to talk about it.

Listen to the David Scott Interview

{audio}<http://thesportsinterview.com/mp3/DavidScott.mp3>{/audio}

Stomp The Yard was number one at the box office two weeks in a row and is being released on DVD May 15th. Being the choreographer for Stomp The Yard, why do you think this movie based on a competitive dance called stepping worked so well and was successful?

“Well, I think it worked well because it’s intense and it’s something new for the viewers. It’s not something that hasn’t been around for a while. It’s something that people haven’t seen and it hasn’t been shoved in their face. You get all this energy, all this excitement all wrapped into one, and package it up, and put it on film. It’s like it’s a no brainer. Let’s go see it. It was a phenomenal story on top of it. It was beyond a dance movie. It was beyond entertainment. It was a great...great story.”

What is stepping for those that aren’t familiar with it?

“Stepping is pretty much a rhythmic form of dance that comes from Africa and it’s from the mines. They used it to communicate when they were in the diamond mines cause it’s dark. It’s kind of like a Morse Code, but it’s really using your body as a tool, as percussion, your feet, your hands, on your chest, and on your legs. Stuff that makes different sounds. It’s pretty much making rhythm and beats with your body.”

Stepping has its roots in Africa. Does the USA not focus enough on the culture that Africa has to offer?

“Yeah. I definitely feel that way, but movies like this and different things give us that opportunity. Hip hop as well is a mixture of a lot of different dance styles in one. It all comes from one core. I try to do different things as I teach and when I direct Debbie Allen’s Dance Academy. I direct the hip hop intensive and we have all those mixtures - African, jazz, tap, all these different mixtures in the workshop as well. We try to keep everybody well rounded and know the history.”

You have part in the DVD feature Battles. Rivals. Brothers- The Story of Stomp The Yard where we get to see a lot of the stepping routines come together. What did you enjoy most about this cast and crew?

“What I enjoyed most was the brotherhood. We developed a bond with each other that was incredible. What’s good is the bond the real fraternities have and the history they have with each other. It’s like one of those undeniable situations for us to develop that bond in a month’s time or two months time was really...really good. That was cause how we were sheltered, how we separated ourselves, and I had it like boot camp. It was like everybody was looking out for each other. No one was from Atlanta. Everyone was from L.A. We were all out there and we had to stick together and be together. It was really good.”

What were the main reasons you rehearsed with these young men three months in advance for eight hours each day?

“The reason was cause I wanted everything to read real. When you saw the rivalry, when you saw the intensity of them dancing and battling, the togetherness, the brotherhood, the bond, it just didn't look fictitious. It looked like it was real. It was something the viewers wanted to be a part of, like I want to be a part of that. That's something that you can't just fake. I wanted to have all that rehearsal time and time for everybody to be together. It was a pool of testosterone.”

Why do you feel that yourself and director Sylvain White felt it was important to create that sense of competition between the characters of these two fraternities that the movie focuses on?

“Well, I felt like it needed that energy. Everybody has a competitive nature in them. Everybody wants to compete, wants to win, wants to battle. When it's directed and it's casted it's put on them. Of course we can try and make it happen, but why not have it feel and look real? When I started rehearsing with them I had the teams separate so no one can see each other's moves regardless of what the scripts said. You are going to win and you are going to win. No one wanted to lose. To have that come across is just something you can't fake.”

Some of these dance routines were created on the spot before filming. Did you worry how it would turn out with some of the dances not being planned out?

“No, actually because during the casting I hired some very professional - they went just beyond having the look for the film. I wanted people who had great spirit, that was talented, and able to learn quick on the spot because I do choreography in rehearsal. Not before because I like to feel the energy of everybody in the room. It was a beautiful thing to have all that talent around me because I just feed off of it.”

Is this country in dance fever with shows like Dancing with the Stars, So You Think You Can Dance, Dancelife, and movies like Stomp The Yard?

“Yes.”

Anything in particular you think why it's so popular right now?

"No. Coming from four years ago with *You Got Served*, it's just people are starting to realize. Hip hop is very energetic and it's fun and not anything to be afraid of. It's something that gets you out of your seat and then now it's like dances becoming cool. When things become cool everybody wants to be a part of it. I think that's what it is now. We are in the cool era where dancing is the thing to do without looking a certain way to different people in different people's eyes so dancing is cool right now."

With all the discussion towards the black community recently, I think this movie shows black men and women in a college environment where they are doing something productive with their lives and we don't see enough of that side being portrayed through pop culture. Is that a fair statement?

"Yeah. That's a very fair statement. That's why this film was such a blessing and an honor to be a part of. The storyline gave you something else to look forward to. It just didn't give you the negative of the ghetto life and stuff like that. It just showed individuals getting into a different realm of life and finding a different brotherhood to build up, a more positive way to exert energy."

What is the key to being a successful choreographer?

"The key to being a successful choreographer is pretty much stay on top of the game. I keep my ear to the streets, what's new, what's out, and really be versatile. I have changed just from hip hop choreographer to I am trying to master the art of movement. I am just trying to stay on top of it in that matter."

Being a black man in the entertainment industry, is the black community moving in the right direction now for example that Russell Simmons is calling for the elimination of a few degrading words in rap songs and that we're having a discussion like this and the images that are being portrayed?

“Yes. Definitely. It’s good. It’s good for us. It’s something that should’ve been done a long time ago. There is a time for everything. I think it’s a really good thing because everything doesn’t have to be derogatory. Hip hop don’t have to be underground. It can be accepted just like jazz and R&B.”

Finally, when you aren't working on a movie or a TV show, tell the audience what kind of work you do?

“Well, I am teaching. I teach around the country and around the world with Pulse, that’s with Broadway Dance Center out in New York and also with Monsters of Hip Hop. I am all over the country teaching. I got some new artists that I am developing right now, one in general is Michael Jackson’s nephew and his name is Austin and he’s incredible so we coming out. We got some stuff that’s gonna hit the streets in a second.”

Stomp The Yard is available on DVD May 15th. You can find more information about the DVD at www.sonypictures.com/homevideo/stomptheyard.

You can find more information about David Scott at his [IMDB biography](#) by clicking here.

About David Scott

David Scott is a renown choreographer that has worked on many entertainment projects. Scott's first movie project was in 1997 with Good Burger. In 2004, Scott won the American Choreography Award for Outstanding Achievement in Choreography - Feature Film for the movie You Got Served. He would also move his way over to TV that year with the show The WB's Superstar USA. David moved on to more movie choreography for Coach Carter (2005) and Accepted (2006). Scott's choreography expertise was shown off recently in the 2007 box office hit Stomp The Yard. The movie centers around a competitive type of dancing called stepping. Away from Hollywood, he teaches with the Broadway Dance Center, Monsters of Hip Hop, and Debbie Allen's Dance Academy.