

# Chokolade<sup>mmm</sup>

## FRANK GATSON Jr. - Bio

Director/Artist Visual Developer  
Creative Director/Choreographer



Frank Gatson Jr. discovered the world of dance after seeing the Broadway production of 'The Wiz'. In 1980 he graduated from the University Of Wisconsin-Madison and began dancing for 'Up With People', an organization that travelled the world performing at all different kinds of venues even appearing at several Super Bowl halftime performances.

Eventually, Frank worked his way up to official 'dance captain' and, finally, began to manage the show itself. He later moved to New York to study at the 'Broadway Dance Center' and 'Alvin Ailey Dance Center'. After finishing his time at Ailey and Broadway centers he returned to University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and received a Masters in Theatre and Dance. He got his first professional break when he danced in Michael Jackson's "Smooth Criminal" video and eventually moved to Los Angeles to pursue more opportunities. It was in L.A that Frank started his career choreographing for the legendary EnVogue. Attending a beauty pageant Frank had choreographed, Cindy Herron of EnVogue asked him if he'd help her choreograph her girl group's videos 'My Lovin' and 'The Funky Divas Tour'.

The rest is history.

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EnVogue exploded as Frank honed in his skills and developed what is now his signature style and as well as his ability to turn ordinary people into 'stars'. His talent and amazing vision caught the attention of Camille Yorrick at Sony Music who was in the early stages of Destiny's Child. Frank became their Creative Director and Choreographer while Destiny's Child became a huge success. During this time Frank was also directing music videos for the likes of Trisha Covington, Smooth and R Kelly and had also added Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, Usher, Maxwell, Tyrese, Toni Braxton, Debra Cox and New Kids On the Block to his Choreography resume. He has also choreographed and creatively directed stars such as Vanessa Williams, Debbie Gibson, Maxwell, Seal, TLC, Mary J. Blige, Tamar Braxton, Ciara, and has overseen the live stage performances of Fantasia, as well as several Kennedy Center Honors events.

Frank's personal dream is to bring back the movie musical on a grand scale as it was in the 50's and 60's. He has choreographed and directed over 300 music videos and believes a music video is like a mini-movie musical. His understanding of the history of dance movement informs his deep creativity and love for the great musicals of the past. Some of the many movies he's collaborated on are 'Living Out Loud', starring Danny Devito and Queen Latifah, 'The Blues Brothers 2000' specifically the famous 'Respect' number with Aretha Franklin, the Disney movie 'Hercules', as well as the highly lauded independent film 'Leave It On The Floor,' with Ephraim Sykes.

Because Frank studied ballet and jazz, he has been able to perform in several musicals which have shaped his style - 'Single Ladies', for example, and of course 'Dreamgirls.' He modernized classic Bob Fosse for 'Single Ladies', and when working with Envogue and Destiny's Child, he blended their natural styles with movement from famous 60's girl groups as well as 'Dreamgirls' on Broadway to create unforgettable signature movements for both groups.

Frank's history with Destiny's Child and Beyoncé goes back a long way. When Beyoncé went solo, Frank was there every step of the way, helping her transform her image from urban street act to glamorous diva. Frank's attention to detail is legendary, nothing escapes it; every detail from the way she walked, the way she held herself, posed for a picture or positioned her hands every gesture was studied and every detail considered. During Beyoncé's rising success, Frank was also working with Tina Turner, Mariah Carey, Christina Milian, Mario, Usher, Nelly Furtado, NeYo, Brandy, Monica, Kelly Rowland, Michelle Williams and Kanye West. He choreographed several videos for Rihanna, including 'SOS', 'Only Girls' and 'Unfaithful.' These clips were so well received he went on to create Rihanna's entire promotional tour.



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Frank is especially proud of his appearance on the Oprah Winfrey show. Oprah placed Frank center stage as "Special-Choreographer" setting aside 40 minutes of showtime to feature his talents. This, along with his other achievements, led to numerous commercials for brands such as L'Oreal, Tommy Hilfiger, Armani, American Express, Samsung, Pepsi, Converse, The Gap, and Reebok.

After 15 years of working closely with Beyoncé and developing iconic gestures like the 'Uh-Oh Dance', 'To the Left, To the Left' and 'Single Ladies', Frank was asked to co-direct her 'I am Tour' in 2009 which turned out to be the best selling music DVD of 2010, and for which he was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2012.

In 2012, Grammy nominated country band The Band Perry approached Frank to join their creative team. Since Frank started working with the group, they have grown exponentially confident in their live performances, pulling out all the stops in their slick and polished Frank Gatson supervised shows, creating a unique niche for them on the country music scene.

Frank became the first RnB/Pop creative to join the country music world, a world very far removed from anything he'd done before. Because of his ability to adapt his skills to any talent and situation, he was able to put his stamp on The Band Perry's show-stopping performances at the best country awards ceremonies in North America: Academy of Country Music Awards 2012/13, Country Music Awards 2012/13, Billboard Awards 2013, Country Music Television Awards 2012, American Idol 2013 and Canadian Country Music Awards 2013. The Band Perry just won a Grammy for best Country Band in 2015.

Throughout his glittering career Frank has won seven MTV Awards, most recently for Beyoncé's 'Run The World' video, and three MIPA Awards with both Beyoncé and EnVogue. He also worked with Jennifer Lopez on her video 'On The Floor', as well as Coldplay's 'Charlie Brown' video. At the beginning of 2013, after a short hiatus, Beyoncé was back in full promo swing for her new sold-out 'Mrs. Carter' tour. Frank was on-hand as creative director for her amazing Super Bowl Half-Time Show, her H&M campaign, and her award winning Pepsi commercial.

Frank is very hard on dancers. He re-designed, from the ground up, the 30 year-running Jubilee Show in Las Vegas, working with the very best and most enthusiastic performers out there. More than simply wanting to dance, each performer under his charge must LOVE dance. He feels male dancers must epitomize 'male-ness' at all times, never flitting or skipping to get across stage. He feels women should epitomize womanhood iconically, like Fred Astaire epitomized the male yin, and Ginger the female yang.



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In addition to the enormous 'Jubilee' show in Vegas he revamped, he also was Creative Director for Jennifer Lopez on her latest work with her 'Booty' video and performance at the AMAs, Fashion Rocks and her 2015 NYE concert at Caesar's Palace. Frank was also instrumental in Kelly Rowland's comeback with fresh RnB singles and videos for 'Down for Whatever', 'Lay it on me', and 'Motivation' which he co-directed. 'What a Feeling' was directed solely by Frank. He also worked closely with another major talent, Brandy.

Frank is also managing recording artist Luke James, who has been under his management for 15. Currently signed to Island Def Jam, Luke James has been nominated for two Grammy Awards and two Soul Train. He also opened for Beyoncé's 'Mrs. Carter Tour' in both Europe and the USA, and also starred in a movie with Angela Basset and Forest Whitaker called Black Nativity. Frank's work with developing talent is legendary in the business. He managed Tyrese Gibson, and was deeply influential in the early stages of Usher's career, helping to hone his tours and conceptualizing his music videos, among them 'You Make Me Wanna', 'You Remind Me' and the video for 'My Way'. Frank's influence on the world of dance is wide and deeply felt. He has had a hand in so many influential acts, tours, clips, and performances that he has earned the reputation as a supreme professional, a world class choreographer and a brilliant director. The talent he has nurtured, discovered and perfected is absolutely legendary.

Frank recently featured on CNN special 'The Ones To Watch' which aired to millions of people and has had amazing feedback around the world. He is currently featuring on a BET show with Kelly Rowland called 'Chasing Destiny' which airs in Jan 2016.



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