



New World School of the Arts Tribute: "Daniel Lewis -- A Life of Dance"

"So dad, I want to be a dancer." "Um, right.... In this economy? A nurse, a lawyer, heck, even a politician I can see. But a dancer... ha!" This fictional bit of dialogue, or something along those lines, is perhaps what students who have decided to make dance their career have encountered at one time or another. The reality, however, is usually more complex.

"That's an old cliché. That's old thinking," Daniel Lewis says. Lewis should know: he's been in the world of dance education for over four decades. Now in his 60s, he has excelled as an internationally renowned choreographer, performer, teacher, author, and, for the past 24 years, dean of dance at the New World School of the Arts (NWSA) in downtown Miami

"The arts industry is a very strong industry. I think people are over that concept of either you are a star or you can't do it," says the native New Yorker turned full-fledged Floridian. "You don't have to be a star dancer, you don't have to be a Baryshnikov to make a decent living. Now, very few make it to the level of a Baryshnikov or a Nureyev or a Margot Fonteyn in the dance world, but there are thousands, literally, hundreds of thousands of dancers out there working and making a good living, raising families and doing all the normal things that people do. All our kids get jobs, everywhere in the country, or are teaching around the world."

By kids he means the students who have put those feet to good use by entering the dance program at the NWSA since Lewis became the first dance dean in 1987. Now, "Danny", as he is affectionately called, will be the subject of a major party to honor his legacy: On Saturday, colleagues, friends, students, and alumni from all over will gather to hold the "Daniel Lewis -- A Life of Dance" tribute concert at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts. During the show, NWSA will also announce the newly established Daniel Lewis Dance Scholarship. On June 30, the curtain comes down for Lewis, but that's not his last act. He's already planning on traveling and going back to teaching. Can't ever keep a good dancer still.

See "Daniel Lewis -- A Life of Dance" at Gusman Center for the Performing Arts (8 p.m., 174 E. Flagler St., Miami) at 8 p.m. Saturday. Tickets cost \$20 to \$35. Call 305-237-3753 or visit nwsa.mdc.edu.