Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

1960 Demonstration Dance Redux

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, July 22nd, 2020

Streamed performance everywhere was upstaged this week by the "Wall of Moms." The female phalanx of linked arms provided peaceful counter-choreography to unidentified federal militia snatching demonstrators off Portland's streets into unmarked vans, releasing them hours later without charge, without paperwork, without explanation. Unimpressed even with moms or that what had dwindled to a few hundred demonstrators until this invasion of Portland swelled the protesting crowd to thousands, the federal militia's choreography reprised lobbed tear gas, impact munitions, and batons at peaceful protestors. The power of Portland's scenes was further heightened by the death of Congressman John Lewis and 60-year old newsreels of Lewis with other peaceful civil rights demonstrators similarly beaten and attacked by men with badges wielding batons, firehoses, and dogs.

In what may prove a timely coincidence, real military veterans are featured in a streamed film from Diavolo's Veterans Project exploring what it means to be a true warrior on the front lines, most likely more in spirit with the Wall of Moms than the mystery private army. Beyond the Diavolo vets, this week's other SoCal dance brings new and retrospective streams plus extended opportunities to submit aspiring virtual performances as festivals go online. Some serious, some finding joy, here's how SoCal dance is persevering this week.

Who is the real enemy?

In the streamed film *This is Me – Letters from the Front Lines*, military vets and first responders explore what it means to be on the front line. Since artistic director Jacques Heim and **Diavolo Architecture in Motion** launched their **Veterans Project** in 2016, more than 500 SoCal veterans have participated in the company's gymnastic approach to movement to restore physical, mental and emotional strengths. Along the way, the project developed stunning performance works, one of which was part of Diavolo's day-long 25th anniversary celebration at the Soroya which is hosting this event as part of the theater's Fridays at 4 series. Info at https://www.thesoraya.org/. Film stream: Fri., July 31, 4 p.m., Facebook Event Page.

Diavolo Architecture in Motion-Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian.

More in the lunchbox

In June, **Dohee Lee**'s scheduled REDCAT performance was cancelled. The venue hopes one day to reschedule a live performance. In the meanwhile, the Korean artist whose skills span dance,

drumming, singing and musical composition hosts a live episode of the venue's streamed series. That live session will join the venue's instagram channel's line-up of prior dance performances from artists including Austyn Rich, Genna Moroni, Tzong-Han Wu, and Rosanna Gamson/World Wide. Info at https://www.redcat.org/. Instagram Channel.

Dohee Lee. Photo by Pak Han.

The hips have it

Grand Performances offers Lebanese belly dancer **Alia Mohamed** as part of its summer streaming series. A performance concludes the one hour workshop. Mohamed's credits include work with burlesque star Dita Von Teese. Wed., July 29, 6 p.m., Reservations on Facebook.

Alia Mohamed. Photo courtesy of the artist.

The second four

Since 2004, the **National Choreographers Initiative (NCI)** has benefited from dance companies' summer hiatus to bring 16 professional dancers together with four established and emerging choreographers for three weeks. No rules, no deadlines, no boundaries, just dance. At the end of week three, the results are performed with NCI director Molly Lynch introducing the choreographers and moderating a post performance discussion. While not a final product, to NCI's credit an astonishing percentage of works have gone on to be fully realized and taken into the repertoire of professional companies. With Covid–19, NCI found itself on its own hiatus and has taken the pause to release the first of four "look back" videos. Last week on YouTube they showed clips from the initial four years of NCI and this week brings another 16-choreographer line-up from 2008 to 2011. NCI also has expanded its Instagram IGTV offerings and its YouTube channel.

National Choreographers Initiative. Photo by Dave Friedman.

Don't just walk the line

LA's dance performance venues are closed, including the Music Center where its plaza usually hosts free summer dance at **Music Center Dance DTLA**. While it's not entirely clear how the partnering moves in styles like tango will work, the series has gone virtual. As usual, each week offers a different dance style with an hour-long beginning class followed by a chance to practice the new moves. The online stream provides closed captioning for those with hearing difficulties. This week it's line dance with Rick Rodriguez. Upcoming choices include line dance, cumbia, K-Pop, salsa, Motown, Argentinean tango, and samba. Do the whole series and be ready for when (and if) dance clubs ever reopen. A complete schedule and more info at https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/. Fridays, July 10 thru Sept. 4, 7 p.m.

Music Center Dance DTLA. Photo courtesy of the Music Center.

A new Long Beach festival recruits

Hosted by The Cray Project and sponsored by the Long Beach Arts Council, the debut of **Long Beach Black Dance Festival** was planned before George Floyd and the resurgence of Black Lives Matter, but events make the venture more timely. As with other planned live performance, festival

performances will be streamed on August 9–16, but right now the new festival is inviting applications from choreographers and companies of color by Monday July 20. The Cray Project

CRay Project. Photo by James Mahkween.

A San Pedro festival too

The warm lingering days of September are the hallmark of the annual **San Pedro Festival of the Arts**. Acknowledging the Covid–19 restrictions that may well linger past September, the 14th edition of the Festival goes online. The eclectic event has always welcomed an array of dance troupes thanks to festival executive director/choreographer Louise Reichlin. This year, the festival will stream September 19–20, but the deadline to apply is July 17. Selected professional dance troupes present a 10- to 20-minute work and receive an honorarium. Pre-professional and community dance groups also are welcome to submit a ten minute work though no honorarium is offered. Applying involves a $35 application fee and an application email. Details on what to include in the application e-mail and how to pay are at the festival website.

San Pedro Festival of the Arts. Photo courtesy of the artists.

SoCal Encore Streaming

Seven minutes for seven dancers

Teaming up for the second time, filmmaker Nathan Kim and **Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Company** (LACDC) stream *BLINK*, a seven minute film choreographed by artistic director Genevieve Carson in collaboration with the LACDC dancers. Exploring timely issues of solitude and connection, the film features dancer Hyosun Choi with Christian Beasley, Kate Coleman, Tess Hewlett, Ryan Ruiz, Drea Sobke, and Tiffany Sweat. The short film was an official selection in the Hollyshorts Film Festival 2019, Cucalorus Festival 2019, and the San Francisco Dance Film Festival 2019. Information on other LACDC virtual programming: lacontemporarydance.org. Film on Vimeo.

LA Contemporary Dance Company. Photo by Nathan Kim.

For the small screen

Among the SoCal artists selected for KCET's *Southland Sessions*, **Viver Brasil** reworked its popular family show *Celebrating Samba* for the small screen and now it's online. This version may have company members performing from their homes, but through the power of Afro-Brazilian dance and live music they promise a cultural journey to Salvador, Bahia to explore royal orixá dances, high-flying capoeira, and samba from a Bahian Carnaval. Streaming at KCET.

Viver Brasil. Photo courtesy of the artists.

More Offstage

The **Music Center Offstage** continues to stream new and encore video clips and performances from Swing 2020, Cuba's Malpaso Dance Company, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy, Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, Infinite Flow, and

Spotlight classical and non-classical dance finalists Jacob Jovanni Alvarado, Ashley Lew, Maya Alvarez-Coyne and Bergundi Loyd. https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/.

Malpaso Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Coming to a sidewalk near you

With theaters somewhere in stage 4 of that elusive reopening, CAP UCLA paired with the National YoungArts Foundation to bring local performers to where the audience lives with **The Sidewalk Sessions**. For $50, artists will show up and perform on a sidewalk or driveway for the sponsor and invited and socially distanced friends and neighbors. Sponsors can indicate a preference for type of artist, but organizers will schedule artists based on geographical proximity and availability. The plan is for performances to last approximately 15 minutes and all proceeds will go to the artists. For more information or to schedule for July, August or September: Google Doc.

Striding on

The semi-annual **The King of Arms Art Ball** streamed live last week, but continues online. The organizer Rashaad Newsome Studios took the event virtual with several co-sponsors including the LA County Museum of Art. YouTube.

Something to think about

Subtitled “a dance medition,” in *Safe and Sound*, choreographer **Kevin Williamson** and his collaborators: Kayla Johnson, Justin Morris, Alexandra Rixx, Kevin Williamson, Anna Luisa Petrisko, Taso Papadakis, Kelsey Vidic, Katelan Braymer stream their recent performance hosted by Stomping Ground LA. The performance was performed at Dixon Place’s Hot! Festival – the NYC Celebration of Queer Performance. Free, but donations accepted. Tickets for the stream are still available, http://dixonplace.org/performances/safe-and-sound-a-meditation-07-07-20/.

Kevin Williamson. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Putting the best foot forward

Two events from the all-male contemporary troupe **Pony Box Dance Theatre** and the artistic director Jamie Carbetta continue on-line. The Muticultural Festival *Best Foot Forward* page has an intro from Raymond Ejiofor and the two dance excerpts are introduced by choreographer/performer Elijah Laurant. Another example of how the City of LA, Department of Cultural Affairs is funding and supporting LA dance. Info at https://www.ponyboxdance.org/. Stream on Facebook.

Pony Box Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Street to stage

Instead of its usual annual live performances from Black and Latinx choreographers at the Bootleg Theater, the BlakTinx Dance Festival returned with a viral format in late June. For those who missed that live stream of *Dancing on the Edge*, the show now continues on-line in four parts with works from Nancy Rivera Gomez, Shantel Ureña, Anthony Aceves, Bernard Brown, Joshua

Estrada-Romero, Keilah Lomotey, Michelle Funderburk, Primera Generación, Vannia Ibargüen, Marina Magalhães, Regina Ferguson, Rubi Morales, Amber Morales, Alan Perez, Dorcas Román, Yarrow Perea, Andrea Ordaz, Eluza Santos, Briseyda Zárate, and Sadie Yarrington. With many of the works recently created, the pandemic and the streets were subjects and five pieces from earlier festivals that focused on Black Lives Matter were last minute additions. More info at https://www.blaktinafestival.com/. Program One, Program Two, Program Three, Program Four.

BlakTinx. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Knock twice & tell them Jacob sent you

Reminiscent of what one did to enter a speakeasy in the 1920s or a Cold War spy meet-up, six weeks ago a select, paying audience was given the address of a Santa Monica airport parking lot with strict instructions on arriving in their cars, remaining in the cars wearing face masks, and turning on their headlights when cued. In perhaps the first “drive in” dance event, Jacob Jonas and his eponymous **Jacob Jonas The Company** performed *Parked* with those vehicles encircling the “stage,” their headlights illuminating the socially spaced dancers performing to live music by Anibal Sandoval. The one-night only event was filmed by Ivan Cash and Daniel Addelson. The five minute final cut debuted this week. With the film covering interviews with the choreographer and dancers, the actual performance footage is brief, but if the cars flashing their headlights at bows was a kind of applause, the experiment garnered a vehicular standing ovation from the audience. Hopefully, the performance itself will have a separate streaming life. Info at http://jacobjonas.com/. Film on Vimeo.

Jacob Jonas The Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Looking back

Despite an extensive career in dance here and abroad, **Sean Greene** locally will always be identified with his decade with the Bella Lewitzky Dance Company. With her career based mostly in New York, notably with Laura Dean, **Liz Maxwell** is less well know in SoCal, but both Greene and Maxwell are on the Chapman College dance faculty and were the focus of *Always a Dancer*. The live interview included several clips of Maxwell dancing and then commenting on the roll, the choreography, and the choreographer. Sadly, only still photos were available for Greene’s work for Lewitzky. The conversation and visuals are facilitated gently by Napoleon W. Gladney quietly demonstrating his own background as a performer and arts administrator (he’s now audience development administrator for the Musco Center for the Arts which hosted the program). The live-streamed interview is now up and available for viewing. Info on Musco Online. Stream on YouTube.

Sean Greene. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Alone with a chandelier

The site specific performance ensemble **Heidi Duckler Dance** has been actively exploring the possibilities in combining live and virtual performance. Last week’s *Ebb & Flow: Chinatown 2020* allowed audiences to stroll about installations with dance projected into some of the constructs. Other ongoing streamed projects include a five-minute video drawn from the live

performance of *The Chandelier*based on a work by Brazilian author Clarice Lispector about a woman experiencing isolation and trying to connect. Choreographed by Duckler, the performers include Himerria Wortham, Rafael Quintas, Myles Lavallee, Nicole Flores, Maureen Asic, Magdalena Edwards, Jessica Emmanuel, Jaeme Velez, David Guerra, and Paula Rebelo. Vimeo. Video of the full zoomed performance.

Mask breathing

The scheduled premiere of choreographer Melissa Barak's first full length contemporary ballet *Memoryhouse* for her **Barak Ballet** was cancelled when Santa Monica's Broad Stage closed with the statewide coronavirus shutdown closed Santa Monica's Broad Stage. On what would have been the closing night, Barak Ballet instead went online with the premiere of *Breathe In*, a short ballet filmed at the grounds at the Holocaust Museum in what formerly was known as Pan Pacific Park in the Fairfax district. The film features Peter Chursin with Andrew Brader, Lucia Connolly, Jessica Gadzinski, Chasen Greenwood, Stephanie Kim, and with choreography by Barak. Also, there's an opportunity to sign up for the company's new YouTube channel. Info at https://barakballet.org/. Streaming on Facebook.

Barak Ballet. Photo by Djeneba Aduayom.

Locking it up

Paying tribute to Don Campbellock, the creator of the Locking dance style, the street dance troupe **Versa Style Dance Company** and its youth organization **Versa-Style Next Generation** unveil *Finding Creativity and Fun in Our Personal Space*. The streamed performance gets help from musician Cody "CoFlo" Ferreira's *Playground Samba*. YouTube, Facebook. Info at http://versastyledance.org/events/.

Versa Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Festival in a box

After Covid–19 shelter at home caused cancellation, the **Orange County Dance Festival** was among the first to shift to streaming. Throughout April and May, a recorded version of the work each company or artist was scheduled to perform was streamed for three days in show order. Bonuses included company photos, artistic statements, and links to websites and social media platforms. Now the OCDF website has collected the individual events from AkomiDance, Contempo Ballet, 7th Street Dance Company, ISSA Dance Company, Animus Dance Co., Jazz Spectrum Dance Company, Emergent Dance Company, Pacific Ballet Dance Theatre, Louise Reichlin & Dancers, The Hubbard Collective, Kairos Dance Co., and Fuse Dance Company. AkomiDance.

She tells stories

A concentrated taste of choreographer Rosanna Gamson's consideration of a legendary storyteller is performed on-line in *Layla Means Night*. Drawn from her company **Rosanna Gamson/World Wide**'s performance, the work is inspired by *The Persian tale of Shahrzad* or *Scheherazade* who entranced her husband and kept herself alive telling stories for 1001 nights. Vimeo.

Rosanna Gamson/World Wide. Photo by Cyrus.

Getting together

Organized by performance/butoh artist Josie J (divinebrick), **Tuesday Night Stream**, is a two part event. The second portion belongs to specific performers, but the opening portion is dedicated to women identified, BIPOC, or otherwise underrepresented avant garde artists. Tues, 7 p.m. PDT thru Aug. 4. Free ($10-$23 donation suggested). For info and event, or email. For tickets.

Platforms to Submit Video Dance

Dare dancing

With cautions about staying safe while filming, organizers **Sarah Elgart** and Cultural Weekly announced round 4 of *Dare to Dance in Public* with the theme of *Pandemania*, meaning a hyper energized state. Info on the judges, prior winners, plus rules and regulations for submission at: www.dare2danceinpublicfilmfestival.com. The group's other film endeavor *Six Foot Dances* is still accepting one-minute films. Current submissions on Instagram and Cultural Weekly.

Think about December

Known for its eclectic assemblage of youth, adult, community and professional performers in a spectrum of dance genres (not to mention music and choral groups), the annual **LA County Holiday Celebration** is accepting applications for the December 24, 2020 performance which traditionally is broadcast and streamed on SoCal PBS stations. The deadline for electronic applications is August 2, 2020 at midnight. Guidelines and applications at http://www.holidaycelebration.org.

A call to a desert festival

Over the next few months, the **Palm Springs International Dance Festival** is accepting submissions for an October performance under the title *MERDE! A Dance Makers Moment*. Six submissions will be selected for presentation on October 23 with by the voting audience and an expert panel. The winner of the voting will be presented as part of the Festival's gala in March 2021. No fee to apply. Deadline Aug. 1. More details on submission at https://www.nickersonrossidance.com/.

Where to Find Online Dance Classes

On-line dance classes continue on zoom, instagram and other on-line platforms, many classes free, low cost or suggesting a donation. One central, constantly updated source on dance classes and in-depth reporting on SoCal dance, LA Dance Chronicle lists on-line dance classes including any cost and contact info. Grab a chair or clear off a corner of the room and use this time to dance.

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