

Cultural Daily

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Awake and Eager to Start Kicking

Ann Haskins · Monday, September 13th, 2021

Rehearsals were in full swing at **Los Angeles Ballet** for its full-length production of the *Sleeping Beauty* in March 2020. Then the Covid-19 public health emergency suddenly shutdown everything, much like the vengeful fairy sent the storybook princess and the entire kingdom into a deathlike slumber. As with so many arts organizations, instead of performing, LAB grappled with the abrupt end of the 2019-2020 season, dancer layoffs, staff reductions, and ongoing uncertainty.

To the relief of SoCal dance fans, LAB is back with its 2021-2022 season and ready to start dancing. Last week Los Angeles Ballet announced the new season's three programs including its popular version of the *Nutcracker* running through December, a mixed bill in April, and that postponed production of *Sleeping Beauty* next June. Nearly 18 months on, as theaters reopen with new ventilation systems and Covid-19 protocols, LAB is able to confirm its return to multiple home theaters throughout Los Angeles, to bring dancers back, begin rehearsals, and begin selling both subscriptions and single tickets.



Los Angeles Ballet's "Sleeping Beauty." Photo by Reed Hutchinson.

For Los Angeles Ballet's co-artistic director Thordal Christensen the season announcement underscores the important reality that after an 18 month absence from the stage, LAB dancers are back in the studio, building to performance peak, and getting ready to dance. "A dancer's life becomes meaningful and fulfilled when you perform live on stage and our dancers are overjoyed to be able to share that experience with audiences once again."

LAB co-artistic director Colleen Neary agreed, adding that the company's resilience, optimism, and eagerness to start dancing was reflected in their choice of ballets. "To celebrate the return of both LAB dancers and our audience, we are presenting a season filled with themes of joy, hope and love," she said simply.



Los Angeles Ballet's "The Nutcracker." Photo by Reed Hutchinson.

LAB's 16th season opens in December with its popular production of *The Nutcracker*, set circa 1913 in a Los Angeles home reflecting Mexican, Spanish, and European influences. LAB's *Nutcracker* travels to theaters throughout metropolitan Los Angeles, ending Christmas weekend at Hollywood's Dolby Theater with live music from the Los Angeles Ballet orchestra conducted by respected ballet conductor Andrea Quinn. Glendale's Alex Theater hosts the opening shows (Sat.-Sun., Dec. 4-5), then Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center welcomes the production (Sat.-Sun., Dec. 11-12), followed by UCLA's Royce Hall (Fri-Sun., Dec. 17-19), and closing at the Dolby (Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 23-24, Sun., Dec. 26).



Los Angeles Ballet's Kenta Shimizu and Petra Conti

In April 2022, a trio of more contemporary, shorter works are the calling card under the banner *Bloom*. The repertoire includes two company premieres, Christopher Wheeldon's *Ghosts* and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *Bloom* which lent its title to the program. The third scheduled ballet, *Apollo*, is considered one of George Balanchine's masterpieces and draws on Neary's long history with the legendary choreographer who designated her as one of the répétiteurs authorized to set his ballets on companies approved by the Balanchine Trust.

The season closes in June with that postponed production of the full-length *Sleeping Beauty*, which only had to sleep two years, not the century in the fairy tale. Coming out of the pandemic shutdown, Los Angeles Ballet, like that enchanted princess is awake and ready to start dancing, hopefully toward a happy ending.



Los Angeles Ballet's "Sleeping Beauty." Photo by Reed Hutchinson

The Nutcracker at The Alex Theater, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., Dec. 4, 6 pm, Sun., Dec. 5, 2 pm. At Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Sat., Dec. 11, noon and 5 pm, Sun., Dec. 12, noon. At Royce Hall, UCLA, 10745 Dickson Ct., Westwood; Fri., Dec. 17, 8 pm, Sat., Dec. 18, noon & 5 pm, Sun., Dec. 19, noon. At the Dolby Theatre, Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Thurs., Dec. 23, 8 pm, Fri., Dec. 24, noon., Sun., Dec. 26, 11 am.

Bloom at The Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., Apr. 21-22, Sun., Apr. 23, 5 pm.

Sleeping Beauty at Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Sat., May 28, 7:30 pm. At UCLA Royce Hall, 10745 Dickson Ct., Westwood; Fri., June 3, 7:30 pm, Sat., June 4, 2 pm. At the Alex Theater, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat. June 11, 7:30 pm.

Ticket prices start at \$39 with student, senior and military discounts. Full season and Choose-2 subscriptions as well as all standard tickets are on sale now. Early Bird pricing for subscriptions ends on September 30. More detail, venue details, and tickets at [Los Angeles Ballet](#) or call Los Angeles Ballet box office at (310) 998-7782.

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