Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Boundless Hope, Fleeting Memory

Ann Haskins · Thursday, November 12th, 2026

Site-specific considerations inside a famous German émigré's Pacific Palisades home and at a Santa Monica food truck fest; New York visitors bring contemporary ballet to Northridge and modern dance to Santa Barbara; South Asian dance moves a Pasadena art installation; a tv dance star concertizes in Cerritos; contemporary dance in Santa Monica, Sierra Madre, Dominguez Hills, Downtown LA, and donates in Lincoln Heights; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

Live Performance This Week (ending November 19)

So much resilience

Author Thomas Mann was among the many artists who fled Hitler's Germany and settled in LA, building a home in Pacific Palisades. The home survived the 2025 Palisade firestorm and now becomes the venue of *Mourning Home: Collective Futures in Los Angeles,* **HomeLA**'s latest site-specific excursion articulating architecture through dance and music. For the event, HomeLA's co-director Bernard Brown curated dance and music developed by Harmony Holiday, Brianna Mims, and Chris Powe from Ivie Obulor's research that takes audiences into a house that resonates with a history of exile, migration, and sanctuary. Initial tickets sold out, but just before press time, more tickets were released, and maybe there is a wait list? At the Thomas Mann House, 1550 San Remo Dr., Pacific Palisades; Sun., Nov. 15, 3 pm, RSVP at HomeLA.



Thomas Mann House, site of HomeLA's "Mourning Home: Collective Futures in Los Angeles." Photo courtesy of the artists.

Ballet trifecta

With George Balanchine's support, New York City Ballet star Arthur Mitchell founded **Dance Theatre of Harlem** in 1969 and with co-founder Karel Shook, significantly changed American ballet, building a company and school focused on dancers of color. Later, troubling finances triggered a contraction back to just the school. Led by Virginia Johnson, one of its first stars, DTH rebuilt, resuming its place as a major American ballet company. Currently led by choreographer Robert Garland, DTH remains an unrivaled company of dancers and arrives with a mixed bill that samples its contemporary repertoire. Balanchine ballets remain a mainstay of the company, showcased this visit in Balanchine's *Donizetti Variations (1969),* along with William Forsythe's *Blake Works IV* (2023), and Garland's *Higher Ground* (2022). On Tues., Nov. 10, the California African American Museum (CAAM) hosts DTH dancers and current Artistic Director Robert Garland in a dialogue moderated by DTH Executive Director Charmaine Jefferson about DTH, ballet, and Black dance. CAAM info & reservations at Dance Theatre of Harlem conversation. Performance at the Soraya, Cal State University Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Ave., Northridge; Sat., Nov. 14, 8 pm, $56-$74. https://thesoraya.org/en/whats-on/genres/dance/.



Dance Theatre of Harlem. Photo courtesy of the artists.

New and now

Dance weaves its way through all three performances in Week Two of *REDCAT New Original Works (NOW) Festival.* In *Muñequita Muy Muy*, **Brenda Barrios** employs dance, life-size dolls, and live musicians. Dancer Gretchen Ackerman embodies **Cody Perkins**' choreographic exploration of technology and intimacy in *Motherboard.* **Megan Paradowski**'s *REGENESIS* is set to original music for cello and electronics. REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., DowntownLA; Thur.-Sat., Nov. 12-14, 8 pm, streamed on Sat., $25+$2 fee. NOW Week 2



Megan Paradowski. Photo courtesy of the artist.

More new and now

Dance is a major component for two of the three performers sharing the stage *REDCAT NOW Week 3*. **Friidom** employs various street dance genres in *THE TETHER*, exploring dance as a metaphor for community support and connection. **Tarren Johnson** draws from dance theater for *High Earners Not Rich Yet*, referencing how affluent appearance sometimes is only veneer. Chica Barbosa goes for film and text to reconsider Marilyn Monroe in *Marilyn Times*. *A*t REDCAT, Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., Downtown LA; Thur.-Sat., Nov. 19-21, 8 pm, $25+$2 fee. REDCAT NOW Week 3.



Friidom. Photo by Jordan Sortero.

Helping hands (and feet)

The charity fundraiser *Dance/BACK* is a dance concert with 50% of ticket sales going to performer-selected charities. Presented by **Brockus Project** and producer/choreographer Deborah Brockus, this year's event boasts 16 choreographers and dancers who selected the ACLU, Center for Biological Diversity, Navajo Relief Fund and Big Dog Rescue (Sun Valley). Ticket buyers can note which charity to direct their contribution. Announced choreographers include Jose Costas, Debra Rosen, Christopher Fraiser, Marissa Mahoney, Sean Greene, Marua Townsend, Nastia Yavoski, Charlotte Smith, Anisa Johnson, Erica Alexx, Natalie Figueroa, Aysha Cunningham, Zoe Carter, and Brockus. BP Studios Black Box, 618 B Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Sat., Nov. 14, 8 pm, Sun., Nov. 15, 6 pm, $20. Zelle : 562-412-7429, Venmo: @brockusprojectstudios, Paypal: www.brockusprojectdance.org, cash at door.



Deborah Rosen & Dancers. Photo by Tim Agler.

A moving installation

Audiences enter into *Living Landscapes*, an installation crafted by artist Gautam Rangan using light, sound, sculpture, and movement to create a world inspired by 16th century Ragamala paintings. **Arpana Dance Company** contributes the movement with music composed by Aashray Harishankar for tabla player Robin Sukhadia. At USC Pacific Asia Museum, 46 N. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena; Thurs.-Fri., Nov. 19-20, 7:30 pm, free w/reservation Living Landscapes.



Arpana Dance Company. Photo by Ackerman & Gruber.

An order of dance

Dance is on a food truck menu as **Heidi Duckler Dance** brings *¡Ordena! Santa Monica* to a public food truck festival. This edition follows the site-specific dance troupe's appearances at food truck events in Culver City and Burbank. At Santa Monica Block Fest, Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica; Sat., Nov. 14, 7:30 to 9:30 pm, free, reservations at Heidi Duckler Dance.



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Immersive navigation

Blending poetry and performance, **Camille Hernandez** offers *Motherlands*, a choreo-poem reimagining of her book navigating across time, language and geography. At Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre, Sun., Nov. 15, 4 pm, $20. Camille Hernandez.

Evolving points of view

Exploring how story-telling can enhance understanding of changing circumstances, Chelsea Asman and Cihtli Ocampo direct **CSU Dominguez Hills Theatre & Dance** department's *Faculty/Guest Dance Concert.* Under the banner *Parallax, c*horeography from guest artists Fernando Carrillo and David Bernal-Fuentes join contemporary dance works from the CSUDH faculty. University Theatre, Cal State University Dominguez Hills, 1000 E. Victoria St., Carson; Thurs.-Fri., Nov. 12-13, Sat., Nov. 14, 1 & 7 pm, $20, $12 students. Parallax.



Cal State University Dominguez Hills Dance Concert. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Multi-genre

View across the dance spectrum from hip hop to contemporary ballet, modern to fusion, commercial dance to dance theatre as **Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater** showcases the versatility of Santa Monica College's dance department**.** Works from guest artists Ariel Scott, David Lee, and Robert John Whidbee join contributions from notable faculty and some student choreographers. At the Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., Nov. 14-15, 7:30 pm, $20 in advance, $25 at door. Synapse Dance Theater.



Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater. Photo courtesy of artists.

One more time

The annual **Palm Desert Choreography Festival** returns with 11 professional choreographers presenting on Saturday, and with locals and students presented on Sunday. The professionals selected include Natasha Adorlee (Houston TX), Gabriel Canepa (Portland, OR), Noelle Kayser (Chicago, IL), Alexandra Light (New York, NY), Jessica Liu (Mannheim, Germany), Ben Needham-Wood (Boulder, CO), Daniel Ojeda (Brooklyn, NY), Ashley Roland/ BodyVox (Portland, OR), Deanna Stanton/ Ballet Arkansas (Little Rock, AR), Maté Szentes (Los Angeles, CA), Morgan Williams (Milwaukee, WI). At the McCallum Theatre, 73000 Fred Waring Dr., Palm Desert; Sat., Nov. 14, 7 pm, $34-$69 (professionals), Sun., Nov. 15, 4 pm, $29-$64 (local and student choreography). Palm Desert Choreography Festival.



Megan Doheny and Ilya Nikurov at Palm Desert Choreography Festival. Photo by Jingzi Photography.

From New York

The popular New York-based contemporary company **Doug Varone and Dancers** brings a program of Varone works. In *Double Octet,* set to music by Philip Glass, the company's professional dancers are joined by UC Santa Barbara dance department students. At the Lobero Theatre, 33 E. Canon Perdido St., Santa Barbara; Sat., Nov. 14, 2 & 7 pm, $20-$75. https://artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/.



Doug Varone & Dancers. Photo courtesy of the artists.

First nut

The first *Nutcracker* ballet out of the gate this year is **Leigh Purtill Ballet**'s *Cracked, Nutcracker with a Twist,* a family friendly version of the holiday favorite.At Lanterman Auditorium, 4491 Cornishon Ave., La Canada/Flintridge; Sat., Nov. 14, 7 pm, Sun., Nov. 15, 4 pm, $44.52, $28.52 students, $23.18 children under 12 (includes fees). Leigh Purtill Ballet.



Derek Hough and Hayley Erbert. Photo by Eric McCandless.

Early holiday arrival

Television and his electric talents have taken *Dancing with the Stars'* **Derek Hough** beyond the ballroom diaspora and into the realm of popular culture, with matching ticket prices for his live concert tour dubbed *Dance for the Holidays.* At Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 18000 Park Plaza Dr., Cerritos; Sat., Nov. 14, 8 pm, $117-$588. Cerritos Center.

A Peek at Next Week (November 20-30)

Sankai Juku — *Totem: Void and Height* at the Granada Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara; Fri., Nov. 20, 7:30 pm, $20-$100. https://artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/.

Diavolo — *Escape* at the Soraya, Cal State University Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Ave., Northridge; Sat., Nov. 21, 8 pm, Sun., Nov. 22, 3 pm, $42-$99 (includes fees). https://thesoraya.org/en/whats-on/genres/dance/.



Diavolo's "Escape." Photo by Cheryl Mann.

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan — *Blue Hour / Beckoning*: *A Double Bill* at UCLA Royce Hall, 10745 Dickson Ct., Westwood; Sat., Nov. 21, 8 pm, $45.08-$72.02. Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan.

Dance News of Note

Newly elected LA Mayor **Nithya Raman** is a big fan of dance, according to the LA Times. She studied classical Indian dance, but stated her dance interest was not limited to South Asian dance. She also choreographed while at Harvard. When the post-election dust settles, we'll ask what she will do as LA Mayor for local dance.

If we are lucky, SoCal will see the **Bill T Jones/Arnie Zane Company** in 2027 for one last time. Based in New York, the contemporary ensemble has been a frequent visitor since its founding 45 years ago, and this week announced plans to close down after 2027. Founded by the named partners, Jones retained the full name of the company after Zane's death from AIDS, a subject that has recurred in Jones' compelling sometimes controversial choreography. Jones is now 75 and in announcing the plan to close the company, he outlined a roughly choreographed timeline with details about the final 2027 tour to be announced after a final gala in March. The announcement raises questions that arose when Merce Cunningham announced he would end his company. Why the choice to close rather than name a successor? What will become of the company's space in Chelsea? What will become of the dancers? What will become of the dances? Some answers should be known in 2027, especially after that March gala. Watch this space.

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