

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Can SoCal Have Too Many Dance Festivals?

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, September 25th, 2019

Dance festivals in Laguna, Santa Barbara and downtown, trafficking in Beverly Hills, classical dance from India in Santa Monica, immigration consequences explored in Boyle Heights, that swan ballet flutters around Glendale and Oxnard, and more SoCal dance this week.

### 5. Losing where and who you are

How issues of migration, assimilation, fear and loss affect one's sense of identity are tough and often painful issues being tackled fearlessly by **Deborah Rosen and Dancers** in *Finding Home*. Other scheduled works are *Drifting ... A Suite of Dreamscapes* and *Slichot*, an excerpt from the evening-length work *Tashlich*. The choreography is from Rosen and Myra Joy Veluz. The dancers include Jacquelyn Buckmaster, Diane Hula, Matt Lara, Bernadette Sebastian, Myra Joy Veluz, and Monilade Walker. A reception follows each performance. CASA0101, 2102 E. First St., Boyle Heights; Fri.-Sat., Sept. 27-28, 8 p.m., \$25, \$20 students. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/deborah-rosen-and-dancers-present-finding-home-tickets-67303956947>.



Deborah Rosen and Dancers. Photo by Denise Leitner.

### 4. A matter of devotion

Considered one of India's most important Bharata Natyam dancers, **Malavika Sarukkai** embodies that devotional classical dance in this concert. Sarukkai and four musicians perform *Darshan*, described as "exploring moments when the divine is envisioned" in the myths and legends of India. The Broad Stage, 1310 11<sup>th</sup> St., Santa Monica; Sat., Sept. 28, 6 p.m., \$22-\$45 in advance, \$25-\$50 at door. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/malavika-sarukkai-tickets-68175692331>.



Malavika Sarukkai. Photo courtesy of the artist.

### 3. A new festival mixing up A, B, C

In its newest endeavor, **LA Dance Project** hosts *LA Dances*, promising an intermittent festival spread over six weeks with ten LA premieres and six world premieres, divided into three programs. Labeled "Program A, B & C," each installment has works from four or five choreographers, most from New York, a few based here, plus a revival of a work by the late Bella Lewitzky. The

opening Program A includes *Adagio in B Minor* from former New York City Ballet now LADP dancer Janie Taylor, *Rising Water* from current NYCB dancer Gianna Reisen, *Split Step* from Emily Mast & Zack Winokur, and *Chapter Song* from NY-based Kyle Abraham who is currently a UCLA artist in residence. This program repeats Oct. 10-13, 20, & 25. Program B brings Lewitzky's *Kinaesonata*, and works from Charm La'Donna, Emily Mart & Zack Winokur on Oct. 3-6, 16-18 & 25. Program C presents two works from LA Dance Project director Benjamin Millepied, Lewitzky's *Kinaesonata*, plus dancemakers Tino Sehgal and Madeline Hollander on Nov. 14-17 & 21-24. LA Dance Project, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., downtown; Program A: Thurs.-Sun, Sept. 26-29, 8 p.m., \$45, Program B: Thurs.-Sun., Oct. 3-6, 8 p.m., \$45; complete schedule at website. <http://ladanceproject.org/19-20-season>.



LA Dance Project's "LA Dances". Photo by Josh Rose.

## 2. Traffic control

In 2018, **BODYTRAFFIC** debuted at this venue as the final event of the dance season. This year, the contemporary company assumes the mantel of Company-in-Residence and opens a dance season devoted to LA-based dance companies. Artistic directors Lillian Rose Barbeito and Tina Finkelman Berkett have attracted dancers who shift seamlessly from impressive ballet technique through a range of equally demanding contemporary moves, abilities that draw major national and international choreographers to create on the company. For this program, the company selected two works from L.A.-based choreographers, a world premiere by Michaela Taylor and a west-coast premiere by James Gregg and Rubberlegz known as Wewolf. The program also includes a U.S. premiere from Fernando Hernando Magadan (artistic director of Nederlands Dans Theatre 2) plus the reprise of *A Million Voices* by Ballet X artistic director Matthew Neenan which had its world premiere at the company's 2018 debut program here. Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Bram Goldsmith Theater, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Thurs.-Sat., Sept. 26-28, 7:30 p.m., \$39-\$99. <https://thewallis.org/bodytraffic>.



BODYTRAFFIC. Photo by Rob Latour.

## 1. Visitors from way out of town

While occasional events happen throughout the year under the auspices of **Laguna Dance Festival**, this weekend is the main festival featuring three companies worth the drive and perhaps an excuse to spend the weekend. Friday's opening event is the always exciting **Parsons Dance Company**. Led by choreographer David Parsons, this N.Y.-based contemporary troupe is known for physically vibrant, often humorous and sometimes technologically cutting edge work. One of Parsons' signature works has the dancer leaping to a timed strobe light that creates the effect of the dancer being essentially suspended in air. On Saturday, all three companies take turns onstage with **Parsons Dance Company** joined by Canada's **RUBBERBAND**, and Salt Lake City's **Ballet West**. On Sunday, **RUBBERBAND** gets its own showcase for a blend of ballet, athletics and and hip hop. Now in its 15th year, the festival continues to be led by founder Jodie Gates who now also heads the USC Kaufman School of Dance. The website lists other events including workshops and pre-show discussions with the choreographers. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine, Fri. Sept. 27, 7:30 p.m., \$45-\$100, Sat., Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m., \$36-\$60, Sun., Sept. 29, 2 p.m., \$45-\$100. <https://www.lagunadancefestival.org>.



Ballet West at Laguna Dance Festival. Photo courtesy of the artists.

### *Other dance of note:*

Two dance operas featuring dancer **Roxanne Steinberg** along with singers and musicians are part of three nights of **Open Gate**. Friday and Sunday offer bring the dance opera *Rizpah*, with *Dragonfly* presented on Saturday only. All three shows include *Manzanito's Cabaret* populated with puppets and clowns. Friday and Saturday shows also include music from Kaoru Monsour, Brad Dutz, and GE Stenson Trio and Jie Ma. An ambitious launch for Open Gate's new season. The Legion Club, 131 Marengo Ave., Pasadena; Fri.-Sat., Sept. 27-28, 8 p.m., Sun., Sept. 29, 7 p.m., \$15. <https://www.opengatetheatre.com>.



Roxanne Steinberg in Open Gate's "Rizpah". Photo courtesy of the artist.

Under the banner *Word of Mouth*, those inventive folks at **Los Angeles Performance Practice** host several different formats exploring performance. On Wednesday, Casual, a new monthly, work-in-progress series hosted by choreographer **d. Sabela grimes** focused on works-in-process that would benefit from an audience performance. On Friday, **Amy O'Neal** curates *The Hybrid Lab: Conversations in Merging Dance Cultures*, presenting short works that reflect multiple dance cultures with a focus on hip hop and house dance. Aisha and Stephen, Tom Tsai and O'Neal are among the participants. Saturday is an interactive evening as dancer/choreographer **Austyn Rich** offers *BITE* blending performance, music, and food. Rich is joined by Sensational Bobbi, Julian, Algorhythm Code with food by Vegan Eat. Sunday presents works-in-progress from Cristina Fernandez collaborating with Jennie Liu (6 p.m.) and from Scarlett Kim + Parch Es (8 p.m.). Other activities including workshops and discussions detailed at the website. <https://performancepractice.la>. The Vortex, 2341 E. Olympic Blvd., downtown; Fri.-Sat., Sept. 27-28, 7:30 p.m., Sun., Sept. 29, 6 & 8 p.m., \$5-\$20. <https://performancepractice.la>.



L.A. Performance Practice's BITE. Photo courtesy of the artist.

One of the companies that incorporates "Russian Ballet" in its title, **Russian Ballet Theatre** continues its tour of several SoCal venues with its version of *Swan Lake*. The media material and the troupe's website focus on the costumes and production team more than the dancers, boasting 150 newly designed costumes. Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Thurs., Sept. 25, 7 p.m., \$31-\$98. Also at Oxnard Performing Arts Center, 800 Hobson Way, Oxnard; Thurs., Sept. 26, \$25-\$85. <http://www.russianballettheatre.com/tickets/>.



Russian Ballet Theatre's "Swan Lake". Photo courtesy of the artists.

Head up the coast for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Santa Barbara's **Flamenco Arts Festival**. The four-day event includes the premiere of *FARO (Lighthouse)* choreographed by Eduardo Guerrero for his **Compania Eduardo Guerrero**, an award presentation to Luisa Triana, musical groups, workshops and parties. Lobero Theater, 33 E. Canon Perdido St., Santa Barbara; Sat., Sept. 28, \$35-\$100. Details at <https://flamencoarts.org/>.



Santa Barbara Flamenco Arts Festival. Photo courtesy of the artists.

An adventurous young lad and his animal friends outsmart a wolf as the young dancers of **Los Angeles Youth Ballet** are joined Damir Emric of the Royal Danish Ballet as the wolf. No surprise with those clues that it is *Peter & the Wolf* from choreographer Connie Mathot. Also on the program, choreographer Cedric Dodd's new contemporary ballet *Mixed Emotions*. El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd. North Hollywood; Fri., Sept. 27, 8 p.m., Sat., Sept. 28, 2 & 7 p.m., Sun., Sept. 29, 2 p.m., \$28. 818-508-4200. <https://elportaltheatre.com>.



Los Angeles Youth Ballet's "Peter and the Wolf". Photo by Iker Gutierrez.

Ballet, hula and flamenco alternate on stage in the 5<sup>th</sup> annual **Adult Dance Showcase**. Afterward, join the performers for refreshments at the post performance reception. Westside School of Ballet, 1709 Stewart St., Santa Monica; Sun., Sept. 29, 2 p.m., free. <https://www.westsideballet.com>.



Bauhaus Beginnings. Photo by AL Haskins.

Born in 1919 amid the human and physical debris of World War I, Bauhaus is widely hailed as an influential school of architecture and design, but an often overlooked facet is the part dance played in its curriculum and later on, its role in Bauhaus' survival when under siege by the Nazis. The Getty's Research Institute's two-part deep dive into the world of Bauhaus includes a physical exhibition **Bauhaus Beginnings** (to October 13) along with an on-line exhibition **Bauhaus Building the New Artist** that offers a chance to participate in three Bauhaus-style endeavors including selecting movement, costume and music to choreograph a dance. At the physical exhibition, dance fans should seek out the darkened alcove with photos, programs, and other memorabilia. Videos of recreated Bauhaus dance performances reveal how the integration of craft and fine art were captured in movement. Mostly created in the 1920's, the movement admittedly is dated, but for its time was considered experimental. Some costumes are reminiscent of Pablo Picasso's creations for the 1917 Ballet Russes ballet *Parade* and even today could appear as part of the popular Swiss human puppet troupe Mummenschanz. While ultimately the school closed and Bauhaus figures were among the Nazi victims, ironically instead of Bauhaus' destruction the Nazi persecution inadvertently propelled its influence. The exhibit includes a section on the Bauhaus diaspora which has a dance element in North Carolina's Black Mountain College where major Bauhaus figures were faculty and whose students included Merce Cunningham and John Cage. The college closed in 1957, but a book in the museum store recounts its history and how the founders' ideas on progressive education fused with the Bauhaus philosophy. **Bauhaus Beginnings** Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., Brentwood; thru October 13, 2019, Tues.-Fri., Sun., 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Sat., 10 a.m. -10 p.m., free, parking price varies. [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu). **Bauhaus Building the New Artist- online exhibition** [www.getty.edu/bauhaus](http://www.getty.edu/bauhaus).

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