

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Contemporary Considerations

Ann Haskins · Thursday, March 21st, 2024

A contemporary dance encore in Irvine, new ballet in Santa Monica, jazz ballet downtown, dancers with poets in Pasadena, site-specific dance inside West Hollywood architecture, frequent New York visitors get new status downtown; Mexican folkloric collaboration in Long Beach, musicals that dance in Hollywood and Costa Mesa; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

Live This Week

Vibrant not vintage

This year, **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** turns a venerable 65. An ongoing infusion of new generations of dancers trained in the company's signature blend of modern dance and ballet as well as careful stewardship by its directors, help explain why the company doesn't look its age or dance like a museum. The company continues to bring a distinctive, contemporary African American perspective with a mix of new choreography alongside works by the late founder Alvin Ailey. Two different programs this visit, each closing with the company's gospel infused signature, Ailey's *Revelations*. Program A on Thursday, Saturday matinee, and Sunday evening includes Kyle Abraham's *Are You in Your Feeling?* and Jamar Robert's *Ode*. Program B on Friday, Saturday evening, and Sunday matinee offers Amy Hall Garner's *CENTURY* and Ronald K. Brown's *Dancing Spirit*. SoCal is almost always on the company's national tour. With this visit, the company starts a more formalized relationship with a four-year residency at the Music Center. Details on the repertoire and the residency at the website. Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Thurs.-Sun., March 21-24, 7:30 pm, Sat.-Sun., March 23-24, 2 pm, \$34-\$167. [Music Center](#).



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Photo by Paul Kolnik

Taking steps

Continuing its commitment to contemporary ballet including new choreography from artistic director Melissa Barak, **Los Angeles Ballet** presents three works including Barak's newest. The as-yet-untitled work draws on a score by composer Kris Bowers, known for his music for *When They See Us* and *Bridgerton*. Also on the program, *Belles Lettres* from New York City Ballet's resident choreographer Justin Peck, with music by César Franck, and the U.S. premiere of Hans van Manen's *Frank Bridge Variations* (2005) with music by Benjamin Britten. While LAB's other programs tour to several metro LA venues, *Next Steps* is offered only at one theater this one weekend. The BroadStage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica, Fri.-Sat., March 22-23, 7:30 pm, Sat.-Sun., March 23-24, 2 pm, \$76-\$137. [Los Angeles Ballet](#).



Los Angeles Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Once more

Fresh from their recent, highly praised LA-Arts District performance, choreographer Jennifer Backhaus and her **Backhausdance** reprise the program, this time at what is something of a home venue. The quartet of works, includes *The Barest Echo* from Flock Works (aka Alice Klock and Florian Lorchner), guest choreographer Peter Chu's *Portals of Being*, company associate artistic director Amanda Kay White's *Dangerous and Blooming*, and a reimagined version of Backhaus' humorously insightful *Love and Other Impossibilities* from 2006. The Barclay, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Wed., March 27, 8 pm, \$25-\$95. [The Barclay](#).



Backhausdance. Photo courtesy of the artists

Words to dance to

This concert of dance theater and poetry brings together the contemporary dance artists **Megill & Company** and **Stephanie Liapis**. Based in Ventura, the performers promise *Assemblings* will provide 90-minutes of group works and solos, punctuated by poetry from local artists. Megill is known for often humorous choreography. Liapis is recently arrived from New York where she danced with Doug Varone and Dancers. ARC (A Room to Create), 1158 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Sat., March 23, 7:30 pm, Sun., March 24, 4 pm, \$20, free for children under 12 years.

Megill & Company.



Megill & Company. Photo courtesy of the artists

Both Sides Now

Again joining forces with its frequent collaborators, the musicians of Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar, **Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles** returns with *¡Viva Mexico! ¡Viva America!*, celebrating dance, music, and storytelling from both sides of the border. Carpenter Center, Cal State University Long Beach, 6200 Atherton St., Long Beach; Sat., March 23, 8 pm, \$40. [Carpenter Center](#).



Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles. Photo courtesy of the artists

Foot fittings

It's fairy tale time as **State Street Ballet** brings a full length *Cinderella* to the stage. Set to the familiar Sergei Prokofiev score, this production was choreographed by founding director Rodney Gustafson with additional choreography by rehearsal director Marina Fliagina. Lobero Theatre, 33 E. Canon Perdido St., Santa Barbara; Sat., March 23, 7:30 pm, Sun., March 24, 3 pm, \$38-\$58, \$26 children. [Lobero Theatre](#).



State Street Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

In response

Curated by Chloë Flores, *In Their Own Image* presents an afternoon of individual works responding to the art of Valie Export and to the setting, the seminal 1922 house by architect Rudolf Schindler. Born in 1940, the work of Austrian visual and performance artist Valie Export during the 1960s and 1970s adroitly confronted a constricting view of women instilled during WWII. Presented by **HomeLA** in conjunction with an exhibition of the artist's work, the site specific performances by **Zackary Drucker, Sierra Fujita, Emily Lucid, Lara Salmon, Andrea Soto, and Dorian Wood** were developed in response to the exhibit and its context, the extraordinary concrete slab, wood, glass and canvas house created by architect Rudolf Schindler a century ago. MAK Center for Art & Architecture, Schindler House, 835 Kings Rd., W. Hollywood; Sat., March 23, 1-4:30 pm, \$20, [MAK Center](#).



HomeLA's Sierra Fujita. Photo by Corinne Schiavone

Ballet slippers and swords

Promising a blend of classical dance, swordplay, and drama, **Warriors For Peace Theatre** present a 90-minute, re-imagined *Romeo and Juliet*. A reception follows the performance. Westside Ballet Community Blackbox Theatre, 1709 Stewart St., Santa Monica; Sun., March 24, 6:30 pm, \$25-\$35. [Eventbrite](#).



Nrityagram Dance Ensemble and Chitrasena Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists

South Asian duo debut

Presented by the La Jolla Music Society, two South Asian dance companies from India and Sri Lanka make their SoCal debut. **Nrityagram Dance Ensemble** and **Chitrasena Dance Company** join together for *?huti*. Baker-Baum Concert Hall, Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center, 7600 Fay Avenue, La Jolla; Thurs., March 21, 7:30 pm, \$46-\$81. [Conrad Prebys PAC](#).



American Contemporary Ballet. Photo by Anastasia Petukhova

The final pointe

Music from Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, Johnny Dodds, and Igor Stravinsky back choreography for *Jazz*, the latest from **American Contemporary Ballet** artistic director Lincoln Jones. ACB Studios, Bank of America Plaza, 333 S. Hope St., Suite C-150, downtown; Thurs.-Fri., March 21-22, 8 pm, \$60-\$140. [Season XII Jazz — ACB](#).



MJ The Musical. Photo courtesy of the artists

Making an MJ move

The main draw may be the songs Michael Jackson made famous, but ***MJ the Musical*** won a Tony award for director/choreographer **Christopher Wheeldon**, whose dance-infused staging dominates from when the curtain goes up until the finale. Just in case anyone thought Wheeldon's talents were limited to ballet companies. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Tues.-Fri., 7:30 pm, Sat., 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., 1 & 6:30 pm, thru Sun., March 31. \$49-\$159. [SCFTA](#).



Chicago, National Tour. Photo by Jeremy Daniels

Windy City

Those bad girls, Velma and Roxy, are in fine fettle as the National Tour of *Chicago* stops off. It's no longer strictly Bob Fosse's choreography, this iteration has **Gregory Butler** setting the dance moves on what one reviewer considers the slickest set of movers one can ask for. Pantages Theater, 6233 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Thurs., March 21, 7:30 pm, Fri., March 22, 8 pm, Sat., March 23, 2 & 8 pm, Sun., March 24, 1 & 6:30 pm, thru Sun., March 24, \$49-\$225. [Broadway In Hollywood](#).



Shen Yun. Photo courtesy of the artists

They're back

The touring show showcasing a view of China culture pre-communism, **Shen Yun**, returns with its 2024 edition. This week it's Costa Mesa's Segerstrom Center for the Arts. Details on this and upcoming SoCal performances at [Shen Yun](#).

A Peek at Next Week

Oguri & Andrés Corchero — *Dance Homage to Ray Bradbury* at Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Fri.-Sat., March 29-30, 8 pm, Sun., March 31, 3 pm, free w/reservation at [Eventbrite](#).

BlakTinx Dance Festival — *Kaleidoscope Dream* at Lula Washington Dance Foundation, 3773 Crenshaw Blvd., Leimert Park; Sat., March 30, 7 pm, \$20. [Eventbrite](#).



BlackTinx Dance Festival's Daunte Fyall. Photo courtesy of the artists

Jérôme Bel + Ariel Osterweis & dancers – *Jérôme Bel* at REDCAT, Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thurs. & Sat., April 4 & 6, 8:30 pm, \$27. [REDCAT](#).

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