
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Creating Worlds to Dance In

Ann Haskins · Thursday, April 30th, 2026

When artistic genius met modern dance genius in Beverly Hills; classical ballet in downtown LA; contemporary ballet in Carson; flamenco in Sierra Madre and Glendale; intriguing escapism in Lincoln Heights, contemporary dance in El Sereno, Santa Monica, and DTLA; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

Live This Week (thru May 7)

Ménage à trois

The choreography of Trisha Brown and Merce Cunningham each commands attention on its own, yet their impact was amplified when artist Robert Rauschenberg provided sets and costumes. The chance to see two of those compelling danceworks makes *Dancing with Bob: Rauschenberg, Brown and Cunningham Onstage* an art and dance event of historical significance. The program stops off on a year long tour with the **Trisha Brown Dance Company** and the **Merce Cunningham Trust** bringing to the stage two celebrated Rauschenberg collaborations—Trisha Brown’s *Set Reset* (1983) and Cunningham’s *Travelogue* (1977). At the Wallis, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Thurs.-Fri., May 7-8, 7:30 pm, Sat., May 9, 2 & 7:30 pm, \$42.90-\$119.90. [Dancing With Bob](#).



Trisha Brown Dance Company. Photo by Charles Atlas

Where the time goes

Wrapping up its celebratory 20th anniversary season, **Los Angeles Ballet** goes classical with the romantic tragedy *Giselle*, telling of a village maid's deadly betrayal by a disguised nobleman who's already betrothed, and how redemptive forgiveness can extend beyond the grave. The ballet requires accomplished lead dancers who can act as well as meet the technical challenges, yet it is the dancing by the corps de ballets in Act 2 that often defines the caliber of the company (spoiler alert-in Act 2 the corps portray a gang of beautiful forest ghosts, who vengefully dance men to death). Since at least the 1950's LA hosted multiple efforts to establish a Los Angeles Ballet. New York City Ballet's George Balanchine and impresario Sol Hurok each announced mid-century efforts that did not take root. Balanchine encouraged NYCB dancer/choreographer John Clifford who succeeded for more than eight years. Then in 2004, in a new, separate effort, Thordal Christensen, Colleen Neary, and Julie Whittaker founded and developed the current Los Angeles Ballet, and in 2022 Melissa Barak became artistic director, bringing her background as a choreographer, having helmed her own company, and having danced with NYCB and LAB with Christensen and Neary. In this historical context, two decades set a new high water mark showing a Los Angeles Ballet can take root and flourish. At the Music Center, Ahmanson Theatre, 135 N. Grand Ave., Downtown LA; Thurs.-Sat., April 30-May 2, 7:30 pm, Sun., May 3, 2 pm, \$50.60-\$157.55. [Los Angeles Ballet – Giselle](#).



Los Angeles Ballet in “Giselle.” Photo by Reed Hutchinson

To the pointe

Hosted by **Kenneth Walker Dance Project**, this year’s *Balletfest* includes mostly contemporary ballet from José Costas, Contempo Ballet, Misha Hill, Vannia Ibarguen, Grace Maxwell, Gabriella Padilla, Robert Salas, Deanna Stanton, Ballet Arkansas, and host Kenneth Walker. From established choreographers to emerging dancemakers, the event reflects SoCal’s lively chamber ballet landscape. At University Theater, Cal State University Dominguez Hills, 1000 E. Victoria St., Carson; Sat., May 2, 8 pm, \$36.15 (w/fees). [Balletfest](#).



Balletfest. Photo by Scott Edwards

With a mountain view

Proponents of the flamenco/jazz dance fusion **Celeste Lanuza Dance Theater** combine embodied practice, spoken word, original live music, singing, and instrumentation. Choreographer/dancer Lanuza leads the second installment of this season's *Dance at the Brand*. Curated by Jamie Nichols, the series offers a taste of SoCal's most vibrant dance in an historic building set against the San Gabriel mountains. Brand Library & Art Gallery, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 2, 6 pm, free. [Brand Library Festival](#).



Celeste Lanuza Dance Theater. Photo by Denise Leitner

Locavore dance

Produced by choreographer Alice Lousen, **Reverb** features danceworks from SoCal choreographers Julie Turner, Mikensie Jae, Amanda Harris, Jackie Pierce, Jennelah, Medha Prakash/Ashwin Vasudevan, Karina Fonseca, and Lousen. Under the banner *A Homegrown Dance Showcase*, the line-up promises an array of dance styles. At the Stomping Ground, 5453 Alhambra Ave., El Sereno; Sat., May 2, 7 pm, \$15. Venmo/zelle/cash at door. [ReVerb](#).



Reverb-Amanda Harris. Photo courtesy of the artist

A night without a Ssh!

Dance, puppets, music, song, and poetry performances will be arrayed on different floors throughout the iconic downtown Central Library for *A Night at the Library*. As part of the library's centennial, this event seeks to turn the library into a party. Setting dance in a library comes easily to the masterful site-specific dance, vocal, and dramatic artists of **Heidi Duckler Dance** who offer two performances of *Ask the Wrath* during the evening. The ever-dancing puppets from Bob Baker's Marionette Theatre are also listed to perform. Duckler at the Central Library, 630 5th St., Lower Level 3, Downtown LA: Sat., May 2, 8:30 & 10 pm, \$38-\$158.74. (performances intermittent) [Heidi Duckler Dance](#).



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo by Jason Quigley

Reverberations

Led by flamenco artists dancer Yolando Arroyo and guitarist Paco Arroyo, flamenco, classical Spanish dance and music are celebrated in **Ecos de España**. Dancers Susana Elena and Albertossy Espinoza, plus guitarist Almer Imamovic join in this family-friendly performance. At Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Sat., May 2, 11 am, \$25. [Ecos de España](#).



Paco and Yolanda Arroyo. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Mesmerizing

From flashy appearances in the Emmy and the Grammy awards, and *America's Got Talent*, to years of world wide tours, the jaw-dropping, split second choreography of artistic director Jacques Heim and his LA-based **Diavolo/Architecture in Motion** has earned popular and informed acclimation. The company is home, reprising *Escape* that finds the dancers and gymnasts in a visceral exploration of individuals trying to break free. The tv appearances may have spread the word, but can't begin to capture the interplay of the movers and crescendo of powerful movement in a live Diavolo performance. This chance for the live experience of **Diavolo** should not be missed. At L'Espace Diavolo, 616 Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Fri.-Sat., 8 pm, Sun., 6 pm, thru Sun., June 14, \$39. [Diavolo-Veterans Project](#).



Diavolo/Architecture in Motion. Photo by George Simian

Connections

The contemporary dance company of Santa Monica College, **Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater**, brings a variety of dance styles in works by guest artists Malia Baker and João Ducci, along with faculty choreographers Angela Jordan, Karen McDonald, and Chai Nwagbaraat. Student choreographers Maite Garcia, Kiari Lee Montgomery, and Liz Perez co-choreographed a Hip Hop contribution. At the Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Sat-Sun., May 2-3, 7:30 pm, \$20 advance purchase, \$23 at show. [Synapse Dance](#).



Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater. Photo courtesy of artists

More connections

This *BFA Showcase* presents the accomplished students of **USC Kaufman School of Dance** in choreography by Patrick Corbin, Jiří Kylián, Houston Thomas, Jana Thompkins, and Yuanyuan Wang. The program also includes new works set on these dancers. At USC Bing Theatre, 3400 Watt Way, University Park; Thurs., April 30, 7:30 pm, Fri., May 1, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sat., May 2, 2 pm, free with reservation at [BFA Showcase](#).



USC Kaufman Dance. Photo by Diego Lopez

A Peek at Next Week (May 8-14)

State Street Ballet — *Chaplin* at Lobero Theatre, 33 E. Canon Perdido St., Santa Barbara; Fri., May 8, 7:30 pm, Sat., May 9, 2 pm, \$39-\$127, \$20 student. [State Street Ballet](#).

CalArts Dance — *Emergent Forms* at REDCAT, Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., DowntownLA; Wed.-Thurs., May 13-14, 8 pm, also streamed Thurs., May 14, 8 pm, w/fees: \$22, \$18 students, stream-\$18, \$15 students. [CalArts Dance](#).

Deborah Rosen and Dancers at Brand Library & Art Gallery, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 9, 6 pm, free. [Brand Library Festival](#).



Deborah Rosen & Dancers. Photo by George Simian

Nancy Evans Dance Theatre — *Works 2026: WANTED* at ARC (A Room to Create), 1158 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Sat., May 9, 8 pm, Sat., May 16, 7 pm (gala), Sun., May 10 & 17, 4 pm, \$30 – \$100, \$25 students/seniors. [Nancy Evans Dance Theatre](#).

Pakaraguian Kulintang Ensemble at Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Sat., May 9, 11 am, \$20. [Pakaraguian Kulintang](#).

MOMentum Place at Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga Canyon; Sun., May 10, 2 pm, \$50, \$40 seniors, \$30 students, \$20 children, (optional brunch \$45 at noon) [MOMentum Place](#).

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