

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Cutting New Teeth

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, June 26th, 2019

Tap dance sails on in Sierra Madre, samba celebration in Leimert Park, new contemporary ballet in Santa Monica, bachata arrives downtown, a one-night only premiere in Burbank, and more SoCal dance this week.

5. Dominican Dance

Warm summer nights mean it is time to dance under the stars with **Dance DTLA**. From now until September, the series affords different ways to move on most Friday nights. Free beginner dance lessons start at 7 p.m. followed by a chance to dance or to just watch and enjoy until 11 p.m. This summer includes two new entries, including this week's introduction to the shoulder and hip action of Bachata from the Dominican Republic. Later in August, Motown/funk debuts and in between popular styles including disco, salsa, and line dance return. With the Music Center Plaza still closed off for renovation, the action continues at nearby Grand Park, but moves around nearby venues later on. Each week's dance style and specific location at <https://www.musiccenter.org/tickets/events-by-the-music-center/danceDTLA/>. Grand Park Event Lawn, 200 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri., June 28, 7 p.m., free. <https://www.musiccenter.org>.



Dance DTLA. Photo by Javier Guillen.

4. Hotel with a one-night stand

In a combination performance and gala, **Leigh Purtil Ballet Company** offers the only performance of its new work *Hotel at the End of the Universe*. The event also welcomes guest companies Gulistan Dance Theater, Terpsichore Now, Free2BeMe, Christina Carlisi (as Martha Graham), and Esencia Flamenca with live musicians. The Colony Theatre Company, 555 N. Third St., Burbank; Sat., June 29, 7 p.m., \$30. <https://www.leighpurtilballet.com/performances/>.



Leigh Purtil Ballet Company. Photo by Clarence Alford Photography.

3. Taking samba to the street

Afro-Brazilian dance takes to the streets as **Viver Brasil** offers samba, live drumming and song. The performance coincides with the Day of Ancestors: Festival of Masks that runs during the afternoon from 1 to 5 p.m. Kaos Network, 4343 Leimert Ave., Leimert Park; 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., free.

<http://www.viverbrasil.com/calendar/2019/6/30/samba-in-the-streets-culmination>.



Viver Brasil. Photo by Susan Goines.

2. Taking a new look and a new listen

Drawing inspiration from the life of Nelson Mandela, guest artist Esie Mensah created *We are One* on students of **Lula Washington Dance Theater**. The work is premiered as part of LWDT's showcase *New Visions, New Voices*. Also scheduled are Mensah's *ZAYO*, Lula Washington's work in progress *Fragments*, an excerpt from Tamica Washington-Miller's *Transportation Dances*, plus choreographic contributions from LWDT members and alumni including Bernard Brown, Micah Moch, Michael Tomlin III, Joniece Boykins, and Christopher Frazier. A DJ dance jam and refreshments follow the performance. Lula Washington Dance Center, 3773 Crenshaw Blvd., Baldwin Hills; Sat., June 29, 8 p.m., \$25 (includes \$15 dance jam admission). <https://www.lulawashington.org/>.



Lula Washington Dance Theater. Photo by Richard Termine.

1. Dancing with new friends

Melissa Barak cut her teeth as a choreographer while dancing at New York City Ballet and later when she joined Los Angeles Ballet, but since 2013 has made her mark as choreographer and artistic director of her eponymous contemporary ballet troupe **Barak Ballet**. While her own work is the core of the repertoire, Barak has brought other choreographers to town, often introducing them to L.A. audiences. This program *New Repertoire* follows that pattern with premieres from Barak, South Africa-born Andrea "Andi" Schermoly (whose work was last seen at Orange County's Festival Ballet), and former Tulsa Ballet principal Ma Cong. Cong's work has been seen at the National Choreographers Initiative (NCI) in Irvine and San Francisco's Smuin Contemporary Ballet. He is unfamiliar in L.A., but deserves to be better known here. The Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., June 28-29, 8 p.m., \$40-\$75. <https://thebroadstage.org/calendar>.



Barak Ballet. Photo by Cheryl Mann.

Other dance of note:

A week-long intensive launching the UCLA's new **Dancing Disability Lab** concludes with an informal showing. UCLA faculty member Victoria Marks leads the new initiative that draws on ten noted disability researchers and dance advocates. This event showcases experienced and emerging dancers exploring how to define dance with disabilities and will include discussion with the performances. UCLA Kaufman Hall, Room 208, 120 Westwood Plaza, Westwood; Fri., June 29, 8 p.m., free. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ucla-dancing-disability-lab-open-studio-tickets-60899699641>.

Now in its third year, the **L.A. Dance Shorts Film Festival** concentrates on filmed dance, each film under 10 minutes. Mimoda Studios, 5774 W. Pico Blvd., Pico/Fairfax; Sat., June 29, 7 p.m., \$10. <https://www.ladanceshortsfilmfest.com/attend>.



Dames at Sea. Photo by Gina Long.

Hoofers rejoice! The tap-filled musical *Dames at Sea* has extended its run to August 3. Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m., thru Aug. 3. \$45, \$40 senior, \$25 21 & under. <http://www.sierramadreplayhouse.org/>.

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