

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Dancin' from the Beach to Beverly Hills

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, May 8th, 2019

Indigenous dance launches a Santa Monica summer series, two choreographers go toe to toe in Beverly Hills, Spanish visitors bring flamenco to Hollywood, Mother's Day dance in Topanga Canyon, contemporary dance in a Glendale library, and more SoCal dance this week.

5. Tackling tough topics

Led by choreographer Laurie Sefton, the contemporary dance company **Clairobscur Dance** has distinguished itself among local troupes by unabashedly tackling tough cultural and political issues including bullying, dementia, climate change, and her most recent work riffing on the cartoonish gestures of a certain president and other world leaders. Under the banner *Art, Artifacts and Jazz*, this somewhat informal event will include a performance, a live jazz band and displays of notebooks and research material that has fueled Sefton's dancemaking over the past decade. Mimoda Studio Theatre, 5774 W. Pico Blvd., Mid-City; Thurs., May 16, 7 p.m., \$35. <https://www.clairobscudance.org/events>.



Clairobscur Dance. Photo by Denise Leitner.

4. They feel the earth move

Dance from indigenous artists joins music, visual art and spoken word in *Indigenous Now*. Among the performers look for the contemporary dance company **Dancing Earth** with performers Snowflake Towers, Natalie Benally and Dakota Camacho. At noon, a blessing opens the day with the dance and other performances repeated until 4 p.m. Set in a park named after the Tongva, an indigenous people who populated the L.A. area, this is an apt venue for the opening for Santa Monica's *Art in the Parks* series. Details at <https://www.santamonica.gov/arts/indigenous-now>. Tongva Park, 1615 Ocean Ave., Santa Monica, Sat., May 11, noon-4 p.m., free. <https://www.santamonica.gov/arts/indigenous-now>.



Snowflake Towers of Dancing Earth. Photo courtesy of the artist.

3. Dancing at a birthday fest

In 1989, Highways Performance Space opened its doors with a commitment to include and showcase LGBT issues and artists among its dance, performance and theater presentations. Over the years, the venue's outreach has grown from LGBT to the more expansive and inclusive

LGBTQIA as it continues as a force and a forum for progress and acceptance. Under the banner *Behold!*, Highways declared May and June a two month celebration of its 30th birthday presenting veteran Highways performers who gained national fame interspersed with a new generation of artists younger than the venue. This weekend begins the dance festivities with two nights curated by Moises Josue Michel under the umbrella *Queer/Sweat Dance Festival*. Friday hosts **Illsquared** and **Luke Dakota Zender**. Saturday is shared by **Bernard Brown/bbmoves**, **Cacia LaCount** and **Ironstone**. Each evening offers a post-performance talk-back session with the choreographers. Two more dance shows to follow. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., May 10-11, 8:30 p.m., \$25 (\$40 for both nights). <https://highwaysperformance.org/>.



Barnard J Brown/bbmoves. Photo courtesy of the artist.

2. A boho mothers' day

If your mother is more Lily Tomlin's "Frankie" than Jane Fonda's "Grace," consider Topanga Canyon's Theatricum Botanicum for **MOMentum**, a Boho afternoon of dance, acrobats, circus acts and other miscellaneous and mischievous performers curated by Lexi Pearl. For those who require Mother's Day brunch, there is a lovely al fresco option at noon available for \$30. (See menu and order in advance at <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=97663>.) For those who prefer to bring their own, the Theatricum gardens are open for picnicking before the show. No extra charge for the chance to enjoy a spring day in Topanga Canyon among the oak trees. Will Geer's Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga Canyon; Sun., May 12, 2 p.m., \$35 in advance, \$40 at door, \$15 students, \$10 children 12 and under. 310-455-2322, <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?performance=428490>.



MOMentum Place's Lexi Pearl. Photo courtesy of the artist.

1. A generational match-up

After hosting performances at the end of the Santa Monica pier, **Jacob Jonas The Company** heads to Beverly Hills where choreographer Jonas and his dancers wind up their stint as this venue's resident company. Two world premieres are among the offspring of the residency. Of special note, *viceversa* matches Jonas with esteemed choreographer/director Daniel Ezralow (*Across the Universe*) in what is described as a generational choreographic conversation. The second new work, *There's Been a Study*, considers the dearth of creativity in the educational system. Pianist/vocalist Nicole Miglis provided the score which she performs live. Two repertoire works complete the program: *Crash*, Jonas' affectionate nod to waves on the shore and *To the Dollar* set to an Elizabeth Warren speech on equal pay. Friday includes a post-performance talk back. The Wallis, Bram Goldsmith Theater, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Fri-Sat., May 10-11, 7:30 p.m., \$29-\$89. <http://www.thewallis.org/>.



Daniel Ezralow and Jacob Jonas in "viceversa". Photo by Matthew Brush.

Other dance of note:

The light slowly changing as the sun sets on the San Gabriel Mountains adds a special extra

element to the dancing as choreographer Jessica Kondrath and her contemporary troupe **GRAYSCALE** perform works driven by music. This is the second of three offerings in this venue's deservedly long-running dance series. Brand Library & Art Center, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 11, 6 p.m., free. <https://www.brandlibrary.org>.



GRAYSCALE. Photo by Denise Leitner.

Led by dancers Alfonso Losa and Vanesa Coloma, **Vida Flamenca** hosts flamenco performers from Spain including dancer Manuel Gutiérrez, singer Ismael de la Rosa (El Bola), guitarists Antonio Sánchez, Yerai Cortes and Andrés Vadín plus percussionist Diego Álvarez "El Negro." Top price ticket includes pre-show tapas and paellas, along with a no-host bar. Details at <http://vidaflamenca.org/in-hollywood-may-9-alfonso-losa-vanesa-coloma-con-el-bola-y-antonio-sanchez>. Barnsdall Gallery Theatre, 4800 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Thurs., May 9, 7:30 p.m., \$48-\$68. <http://www.itsmyseat.com/Alfonso/>.

In a quick but loving tour of some iconic L.A.'s sights including shoppers on Beverly Hills' Rodeo Drive, *Postcards and Pliés* brings 80 young dancers to the stage. Choreographed by Kelly Ann Sloan who heads Colburn's Youth Dance program. <https://www.colburnschool.edu/calendar/2019-05-12/>. Grand Arts High School Concert Hall, Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, 450 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Sun., May 12, 6 p.m., free. <https://www.colburnschool.edu/calendar/2019-05-12/>.



Colburn Youth Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

An evening titled *2 by 1* presents new works by **Elijah Laurant** and **Jamie Carbetta** that explore recovery from trauma. A Q & A follows the performance. Fiesta Hall, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood; Fri., May 10, 8 p.m., \$20. <http://www.ponyboxdance.org/>.

With the current tv series tracking the relationship of dancer Gwen Verdon and choreographer/director Bob Fosse who choreographed and directed *Pippin*, the new production of *Pippin* from **Lineage Dance** is well timed. For this dance-drenched show, Lineage's dancers are joined by singers and actors to fully realize the musical, a supposed biography of Pippin, the son of the conqueror Charlemagne and his *Candide*-like travails. First United Methodist Church, 500 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Fri.-Sat., May 10-11, & 17-18, 8 p.m., Sun., May 12 & 19, 7 p.m., \$20-\$35. <https://www.lineagepac.org/>.



Lineage Dance in "Pippin". Photo courtesy of the artists.

The first of three weekends of studio shows coming out of the Los Angeles Dance Project's residency program features new work by three choreographers. **Peter Tomka** is an MFA candidate at UC Riverside; **Jinglin Liao** is a 2019 CalArts MFA graduate; and **Taehee Kim** is a 2019 CalArts MFA graduate. Proceeds from the showcase go to the artists. Details at <http://ladanceproject.org/new-events/2018/3/24/open-studio>. Los Angeles Dance Project Studio 2245, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., downtown; Sat., May 11, 8 p.m., \$10. <https://www.artfull.ly/store/events/17873#>.



Shen Yun 2019. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Promising to distill millennia of Chinese culture in a swirl of colorful costumes and in sync dancing, the touring production **Shen Yun 2019** concludes its visit to local venues. McCallum Theatre, 73000 Fred Waring Dr., Palm Desert; Thu. & Sat., May 9 & 11, 7:30 p.m., Fri.-Sat., May 10-11, 2 p.m., \$80-\$165. <https://www.shenyun.com/la>.

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