Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Dancing an Homage to Home

Ann Haskins · Thursday, March 15th, 2018

Star-crossed lovers downtown, tap meets Kathak in Santa Monica, swans alight in Westwood, flamenco fest moves to North Hollywood, hip hop in University Park, and more So Cal dance this week.

5. Ankle bells and tap shoes

Speak: Tap & Kathak Unite is not a a call to arms. Well, perhaps a call to feet as the percussive genres of American tap dance and classical Kathak dance from India join forces in an all-female cast. The line up includes Kathak dancers Rina Mehta and Rachna Nivas with tappers Domeshia Sumbry-Edwards and MacArthur 'genius' grant recipient Michelle Dorrance. Expect some interesting rhythmic explorations with the dancers backed by live music ranging from jazz drumming to South Asian sitar and tabla. The Broad Stage, 1310 W. 11th St., Santa Monica; Thurs-Sat., March 22-24, 7:30 p.m., $45-$95. http://www.thebroadstage.org.

"Speak: Tap & Kathak Unite" with Racha Nivas, Michelle Dorrance, Domeshia Sumbry-Edwards & Rina Mehta. Photo by Margo Mortiz.

4. Dancing hard time

Over two months last autumn, a band of dancers and visual artists infiltrated a medium security state men's prison in Norco. Led by respected choreographer and long-time activist Suchi Branfman, the group worked with the incarcerated men, sharing their process and developing choreography. *Inside Outside* includes dances performed at the prison and new work developed over the eight weeks. Participating choreographers and artists include Alex Almaraz, Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo, Jay Carlon, d. Sabela Grimes and Tom Tsai. Branfman curated the evening.

Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., March 16-17, 8:30 p.m., $20-$25. https://www.highwaysperformance.org.

Suchi Branfman's "Inside Out". Photo by Cooper Bates.

3. Doubling down on doomed lovers

The popular **Joffrey Ballet** arrives with Polish choreographer Krzysztof Pastor's contemporized *Romeo and Juliet*. Serge Prokofiev's score still puts the star-crossed lovers in Italy,

but Pastor injects time capsule shifts over the three acts. Opening with Mussolini's fascists in the 1930's, the action moves to the Red Brigade and political kidnappings in the 1970's, concluding with Silvia Berlesconi's social upheaval in the 1990's. Along the way, there's even a ball that gives a nod to *West Side Story*, perhaps the original contemporary version of the doomed lovers. Originally set on the Scottish Ballet in 2008, Pastor's version joined the Joffrey repertoire in 2014. The Joffrey does double duty this visit, providing the dance component in a different tale of star-crossed lovers in the **Los Angeles Opera**'s *Orpheus and Eurydice* directed and choreographed by the internationally renowned John Neumeier. Complete details on both productions at http://www.musiccenter.org. Music Center Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Romeo & Juliet: Sat., March 17, 2:30 & 7:30 p.m., $34-$125. http://www.musiccenter.org/joffrey. Orpheus & Eurydice: Thurs., March 15, Wed., March 21, Sat., March 24, 7:30 p.m., Sun., March 18 & 25, 2 p.m., $29-$289. http://www.laopera.org.

Joffrey Ballet's "Romeo & Juliet". Photo by Cheryl Mann.

2. Watch out for the feathers

L.A.'s own professional ballet company, the **Los Angeles Ballet**, closes its 12th season with a luscious, romantic full-length production of *Swan Lake*. Boasting some of Peter Tchaikovsky's most delicious music, this is deservedly one of the most popular classical ballets, and one of the most technically demanding, not just for the leads, but also for the corps de ballet who are tested to move like a single mirror image. Reviewers' high praise when LAB last presented *Swan Lake* is one indication of how well LAB rises to those challenges. The dual role of the White Swan Odette and the Black Swan Odile will alternate between principal dancers Bianca Bulle and Petra Conti. Principal Kenta Shimizu and soloist Tigran Sargsyan share the role of Prince Siegfried. In keeping its promise to bring great ballet to greater L.A., After opening in Glendale, *Swan Lake* traveled to the South Bay last week and closes with three shows this week in Westwood. Details and tickets at https//www.LosAngelesBallet.org. UCLA Royce Hall, 340 Royce Dr., Westwood.; Thurs.-Sat., March 15-17, 7:30 p.m., $29.50-$104. 310-998-7782. https://www.LosAngelesBallet.org.

Los Angeles Ballet's "Swan Lake" with Kenta Shimizu & Petra Conti. Photo by Reed Hutchinson.

1. Exactly what is a Cloud Gate?

In the 1970s, fresh from studies in the U.S., Lin Hwai-min, returned to his home in Taiwan where he established the first dance company in Taiwan and the first contemporary dance company in the Chinese-speaking world. Under his leadership, **Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan** acquired an international reputation for Lin's blending of elements drawn from classical Chinese dance, western modern dance, meditation, and marshal arts. The company arrives with Lin's latest, *Formosa*, the title drawn from "Ilha Formosa" (beautiful island), a description by Portuguese sailors in the 1500's. Now politically sidelined in favor of mainland China, Taiwan has known waves of cultural influences over the centuries with the Dutch and then the Spanish replaced by Ming Chinese in turn ousted by the Japanese. After World War II and his defeat by Mao Zedong, General Chiang Kai-shek and his followers retreated to Taiwan, establishing the current Republic of China. Those influences, conflicting forces and the rare beauty of "Ilha Formosa" are celebrated by what may be Lin's final work as director of the dance company with his scheduled retirement next year. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Fri.,-Sat., March 16-17, 7:30 p.m., Sun., March 18, 1 p.m., $29-$129. http://www.scfta.org.

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan. Photo by LIU Chen-hsiang.

Other dance of note:

Under the banner *Beyond the Pale,* three emerging choreographers unveil works that take inspiration from varied sources. In *Thesis of Blood,* **Nate Hodges** considers what happens when performers satirizing Hollywood slasher movies attract a sinister visitor. Soul-deep yearnings evoked by the Welsh word *Hiraeth* is explored by **Courtney Ozovek** with mixed media and an original score by Brian Wood. Romanian legend about a pregnant woman enclosed in the walls of a monestary is the starting point for **Francesca Jandasek**'s *The Immured Woman,* incorporating visual art, text and film projections. Cal State University Long Beach, Martha B Knoebel Dance Theater, 6200 E. Atherton St., Long Beach; Thurs.-Fri., March 15-16, 8 p.m., Sat., March 17, 2 & 8 p.m., $20, $16 seniors & students. 562-985-7000, http://www.csulb.edu/dance.

Beyond the Pale: Nate Hodges' "Thesis of Blood". Photo by Gregory Crosby.

This year's **Los Angeles International Flamenco Festival** opens with top billing going to the singers, Carmen Linares, Arcángel and Marina Heredia in *Tempo de Luz* (*Tempo of Light*), but includes flamenco dancer Ana Morales, former principal dancer of Ballet Flamenco de Andalucia. For the second night and second venue, dance takes center stage with dancers: Rosario Montoya "La Farruca" and Natalia Delmar "La Serrata" with singers Juanilloro de Jerez and El Quint in *Del Fuego y la Memoría*. Details at http://laflamencofestival.com. Wilshire Ebell Theatre, 4401 W. 8th St., Hancock Park; Thurs., March 15, 8 p.m., $25-$75. Also at El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood; Fri., March 16, 8 p.m., $39-$49. 800-595-4849, https://kalakoa.tix.com.

Los Angeles International Flamenco Festival. Photo by Alfred Mauve.

This year's month-long L.A. Dance Festival opened March with three nights showcasing top notch local troupes. This weekend the emerging generation of dancers take the stage under the banner *Future is Female* with choreography from female dancemakers for college students on Friday and for high school students on Saturday. Next week the festival closes with *Fringe,* promising local companies directed by "all different types". Details at http://www.LADanceFest.org or http://www.BrockusProject.org. Diavolo and Brockus Studios, 616 and 618b Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Fri., March 16, 8:30 p.m., Sat., March-17, 5 p.m. $10-$15. http://www.LADanceFest.org.

Based in Montreal and led by choreographer Victor Quijada, **RUBBERBANDance** blends hip hop and contemporary dance, this time in Quijada's *Vic's Mix,* a collection of Quijada's work. The event is free, but reservations required. USC, Bovard Auditorium, 3551 Trousdale Pkwy, University Park; Tues., March 20, 7:30 p.m., free with reservation. **http://crue.usc.edu/visionevents/rsvp/makeReservation_2.php?event_id=966337&RSVPEvtCode=83**

Following her recent show as part of the Odyssey Dance Festival, choreographer **Corina Kinnear** and her collaborators reprise *Naked*. Part fully nude dance performance, part art installation, part musical performance, the project sets up for a four week run, mostly Thursday,

Saturday and Sunday, but check the schedule at http://www.picounionproject.org. The Pico Union Project, 1153 Valencia St., Pico Union; Thurs.-Sun., thru March 25, 8 p.m., $30.

Corina Kinnear's "Naked". Photo courtesy of the artist.

Chagall's vibrant paintings combine with Jewish American dance and live music in *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* charting the love and life of Marc and Bella Chagall who flee from a Russia of pogroms and revolution before finding fame in France. Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; opens Fri., Feb. 23, then Tues.-Fri., 7:30 p.m., Sat.-Sun., 2 & 7:30 p.m. thru Sun., March 11, $35-$125. http://www.thewallis.org.

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