
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Deadly Delectable Deceptions

Ann Haskins · Thursday, April 23rd, 2026

Happy ending ballet in Rancho Cucamonga; anything but a happy ending ballet downtown; Black and LatinX choreography in Crenshaw; modern dance demystifier onstage in Pasadena; contemporary dance with a mountain view in Glendale; intriguing escapism in Lincoln Heights, Charles Dickens reconsidered in Santa Ana; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

Live This Week (thru April 30)

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

Speaking up

Under the banner *UNMUTED: Power to the People in Motion*, this year’s **BlakTinx Dance Festival #14** opens with a Community Dance day on Saturday preceding the Sunday performance portion. Festival founder/artistic director Licia Perea promises “deeply personal and politically resonant works, the artists speak up and speak out—channeling freedom, courage, and lived experience into embodied storytelling.” This year’s choreographers include Kai Martinez, Bad Newz, Tatiana Rawsstein, Cultura, Zarina Mendoza, Old School Skinny, Chantel Heath. At Crenshaw Yoga & Dance, 5426 Crenshaw Blvd., Crenshaw; Sun., April 26, 6:30 pm, \$25. [BlakTinx Dance Festival](#).



BlakTinx Dance Festival #14. Photo by Lena Elgab

Into the theater

Known for presenting minimally staged events in non-traditional venues including parks and libraries, a welcome occasion finds **Benita Bike's DanceArt** celebrating its 45th anniversary in a more traditional venue with a fully-staged performance of Bike's contemporary danceworks. This concert includes the premiere of *Flock Struck* set against gamelan music and an original composition by Dean Walraff. Other works include *From Where I Sit* with vignettes where characters reveal their state of mind, *Aspects of Me*, *Benches (excerpts)*, and *Schoenfield Dances* mixing popular early 20th century dance styles with classical movement. At Lineage Performing Arts Center, 920 E. Mountain St., Pasadena; Sat., April 25, 8 pm, Sun., April 26, 3 pm, \$25-\$45. [Benita Bike's DanceArt](#).



Benita Bike's DanceArt, part of LA Dance Festival. Photo by Dean Walraff

With a mountain view

Set against the San Gabriel foothills, this year's *Brand Associates Dance Series* opens with Holly Rothschild and her **Bipedal Herd**. Known for her work as co-founder of *String Theory*, Rothschild draws on contemporary dance, structured improvisation, and site specific installation, for *Temperature Drop* considering "the tension between order and the inevitable unraveling of time." At Brand Library & Art Gallery, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., April 25, 6 pm. free. [Brand Library](#).



Bipedal Herd. Photo courtesy of Brand Library Dance Series

Forest fun

Join guest artists, company dancers, and students of **Inland Pacific Ballet** to venture into an enchanted forest filled with feuding fairies, mismatched lovers, and a dubious band of would-be thespians, all crossing paths in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Laurence Blake choreographed the company's beloved version of the Shakespearean comedy. Kelsey Dorr, Ahlias Tiamzon, and guest artist Reece Taylor head the cast. At Lewis Family Playhouse, Victoria Gardens Cultural Center, 12505 Cultural Center Dr., Rancho Cucamonga; Sat., April 25, 4 pm, Sun., April 26, 2 pm, \$43-\$85. [Inland Pacific Ballet](#).



Reece Taylor and Hayley Winslow in Inland Pacific Ballet's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Photo by Marsha McNeely

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'Espacio 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

Two by two

Choreographer Boroka Nagy and her **Re:born Dance** present the world premiere of *A Tale of Two Tables: Un/Covered*. Inspired by Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* and created in partnership with the Be Still Ministry, the immersive production considers the need for peace amid the destructive pursuit of power. A discussion with the artists is offered after the performance. At the United Methodist Church of Santa Ana, 2121 N. Grand Ave., Santa Ana; Fri., April 25, 6 pm, \$25-\$100. [Re:born Dance](#).



Re:borN Dance Interactive. Photo courtesy of the artists

Showcase #1

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 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

Showcase #2

New Works Choreographed by Undergraduate Dance Majors presents dances created by Colin Dean, Alexis Gutierrez, Isabella Ladine, Elisa Murray, Miriam Nguyen & Miguel Vasquez, Laney Patton & Kacey Ura, Maya Sabbah, and Dylan Shube. At Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater, Cal State University Long Beach, 6200 E. Atherton St., Long Beach; Thurs.-Fri., April 23-24, 8 pm, Sat., April 25, 2 & 8 pm, \$30, \$25 students/seniors. [Contemporary Dance Concert](#).



Cal State University Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists

A Peek at Next Week (May 1-7)

Celeste Lanuza Dance Theater at Brand Library & Art Gallery, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 2, 6 pm, free. [Brand Library Festival](#).

Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater 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](#).

Heidi Duckler Dance – *A Night at the Library* at the Central Library, 630 5th St., Lower Level 3, Downtown LA: Sat., May 2, 7-11 pm, \$38-\$158.74. (performances intermittent) [Heidi Duckler Dance](#).



Dancing With Bob. Photo by Ben McKeown courtesy of the American Dance Festival

Robert Rauschenberg, Trisha Brown, and Merce Cunningham – *Dancing With Bob* 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](#).

ReVerb – *A Homegrown Dance Showcase* at the Stomping Ground, 5453 Alhambra Ave., El Sereno; Sat., May 2, 7 pm, \$15. Venmo/zelle/cash at door. [ReVerb](#).

Kenneth Walker Dance Project – *Balletfest* at University Theater, Cal State University Dominguez Hills, 1000 E. Victoria St., Carson; Sat., May 2, 8 pm, \$36.15 (w/fees). [Balletfest](#).

Ecos de España at Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Sat., May 2, 11 am, \$25. [Ecos de España](#).

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