Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Diversity Dances Downtown

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, January 1st, 2020

Local dance provides a world tour as swans swarm at opposite ends of the Music Center, a cluster of Irish Christmas shows sprout, and *Nutcracker* season peaks throughout SoCal this week.

4. The Celts are coming!!

The **Celtic Knight Dancers** join the singers of Celtic Angels and musicians of Trinity Band Ensemble of Dublin in the family friendly *Celtic Angels Christmas.* The resumes of two dancers, Patrick O'Mahoney and Blaine Donovan, include time with the popular show *Riverdance*. Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 18000 Park Place Dr., Cerritos; Sun., Dec. 22, 7 p.m., $40-$60. http://www.cerritoscenter.com/.

Celtic Knight Dancers. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Irish step dancing and traditional music are part of **Christmas with the Celts**. La Mirada Theater, 14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada; Sun., Dec. 22, 8 p.m., $16-$38.50. https://lamiradatheatre.com/.

Boasting an alumna from *Riverdance* (Caterina Coyne), a world champion (Tyler Schwartz) and dancer with the Chieftains (Connor Reider), **An Irish Christmas** explores seasonal traditions through dance, song and music. Bank of America, Performing Arts Center, 2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks; Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m., $42-$50.http://bapacthousandoaks.com/an-irish-christmas.

Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake. Photo by Johann Persson.

3. When swans swarm

The original show opened in Britain in 1997 where it was seen by then Center Theater Group artistic director Gordon Davidson who booked it into the Music Center's Ahmanson Theatre. Thus L.A. became the American launch of ***Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake*** before it went on to become a Broadway and international phenomenon. Along the way, Matthew Bourne showed how danced theater could be a game changer for both arts. Bourne kept the Tchaikovsky score but turned the classical ballet from a tale of some once upon a time kingdom into a recognizable contemporary British monarchy, replaced the female corps with male dancers in feathered knickers, and transformed the lead swan into a male who comforts and seduces the neglected prince then goes on

to entice and seduce the queen herself. And now Bourne is back, the show's 20-year old audacity still ringing curiously true. As the British crown reels once more from revelations about a current prince's involvement with a notorious sexual predator, the return of the ballet continues to resonate. Ahmanson Theater, Music Center, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Tues.-Fri., 8 p.m., Sat., 2:30 p.m. & 8 p.m., Sun., 1:30 p.m. & 7 p.m., thru Jan. 5, $35-$145. https://www.centertheatregroup.org/.

H?lau Keali'i o N?lani. Photo courtesy of the artists.

2. Free dance + free parking!!

The dance troupes, musical groups and singers lined up for the annual **L.A. County Holiday Celebration** continues to give Santa's sleigh competition, traveling around the world on Christmas Eve with SoCal-based dance troupes, musical groups and singers reflecting cultures from around the world. Metro LA boasts many populations larger than anywhere outside the home country. The dance line up this year includes Hawaiian hula from H?lau Keali'i o N?lani, Mexican folklorico from Pacifico Dance Company, West African dance from African Soul International, and Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy, plus Infinite Flow combining dancers with and without disabilities. Among the musical groups, the popular and resurgent Gay Men's Chorus perform with their new director. Not only is the show free, parking at the Music Center is free. For those caught up in holiday prep, the show livestreams on pbssocal.org and kcet.org, along with KCET rebroadcasts on Dec. 25 at noon and 7 p.m. Music Center Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Tues. Dec. 24, 3 p.m., free. pbssocal.org/holidaycelebration.

1. *Nutcrackers* just keep cracking

Set in 1912, the **Los Angeles Ballet**'s "*Nutcracker*" is an L.A. original, choreographed by company co-artistic directors Thordal Christensen and Colleen Neary, with set design by L.A. artist Catherine Kanner. Now in its 14th season, L.A.'s own professional classical ballet company continues to demonstrate how well it understands this city. This year the company performs in Cerritos, Glendale, Westwood, Redondo Beach, and Hollywood (with a live orchestra), bringing ballet to the audience rather than expecting folks to overcome hours of gridlocked traffic. The superb company dancers have proven themselves a home team to root for. In full disclosure, your scribe volunteered to watch the goings on from a chimney. Info and tickets at https://www.LosAngelesBallet.org. Dolby Theatre, Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Fri., Dec. 20, 8 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 5 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, noon, Tues., Dec. 24, 3 p.m., $45-$131. Also at Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Sat., Dec. 28, noon & 5 p.m., Sun., Dec. 29, noon, $34-$109, 10% discount for children, students, seniors & military. 310-998-7782, https://www.LosAngelesBallet.org.

Los Angeles Ballet . Photo by Reed Hutchinson.

Celebrated Russian choreographer Alexei Ratmansky's interpretation of the classic ballet for **American Ballet Theatre** returns with ABT's splendid dancers to SoCal. The announced casting includes many of ABT's top stars including local alum Misty Copeland on Dec. 15, 18 and 21 evening.(Current casting for leads at http://scfta.org.). Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Fri., Dec. 20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec 22, 12:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m., $29-$209.

714-556-2787, https://www.scfta.org/events/2019/the-nutcracker.

American Ballet Theatre. Photo by Gene Schiavone.

Choreographer Laurence Blake and artistic director Victoria Koenig created **Inland Pacific Ballet**'s version of the "*Nutcracker*" that has become an Inland Empire tradition. IPB's professional dancers are joined by students from IPB's respected ballet academy. Three Friday performances on Dec. 6, 13, and 20 are devoted to its popular "*Nutty Nutcracker.*" Bridges Auditorium, 450 N. College Way, Claremont; Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. (Nutty Nut), Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 2 p.m., $29-$69, discounts for seniors & children 12 & under. 951-779-9800, http://www.IPBallet.org.

Inland Pacific Ballet. Photo by E.Y. Yanagi.

For two decades, **Moscow Ballet** has brought its touring version titled "*Great Russian Nutcracker*" to approximately 50 cities during November and December. This Russian company stops off at four SoCal venues. The cast of 40 includes international ballet competition winners. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles; Sat., Dec. 21, 3 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. & 5 p.m., $40-$250.

Moscow Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Over the years, artistic director David Wilcox' version of the "*Nutcracker*" for **Long Beach Ballet** has acquired an array of special effects, performers fly and perform magic. The production boasts a live orchestra and professional guest artists fill the leads joined by students from the affiliated ballet school. A pre-show luncheon with special photo ops and VIP seating is available for Sun. Dec. 17 (additional charge). Terrace Theatre, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach; Fri. Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 2 p.m., $34-$115. 877-852-3177, http://www.LongBeachNutcracker.com.

Long Beach Ballet. Photo by Katie Bing.

The professional dancers of **State Street Ballet** are joined by students from the associated ballet school in its "*Nutcracker*" by artistic director Rodney Gustafson. Live music is performed by Opera San Luis Obispo Grand Orchestra. Granada Theater, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara; Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 2 p.m., $38-$106. 805-899-2222, https://www.statestreetballet.com.

State Street Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Two years ago, **American Contemporary Ballet** debuted "*The Nutcracker Suite,*" a one hour, immersive experience. ACB returns at a new venue with even more shows. Metropolis Los Angeles, 877 S. Francisco St., Upper Level, downtown; Fri., Dec. 20, 8 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 5 p.m., Sun. Dec. 22, 2 p.m. & 5 p.m., Mon., Dec. 23, 8 p.m.,Tues., Dec 24, 1 p.m. $55-$137. https://www.acbdances.com.


American Contemporary Ballet. Photo by Anastasia Petukhova.

Pasadena Dance Theatre – Company director Cynthia Young choreographed this version of "*The Nutcracker*" for the students of her well-regarded ballet academy. The Dec. 16 & 17 shows offer refreshments and a chance to meet the heroine Clara at a "*Nutcracker Party*" before the performance (additional charge). San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, 320 Mission Dr., San Gabriel; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 21-22, 2 p.m., Mon., Dec., 23, 1 p.m., $22-$68. http://www.PasadenaDance.org. https://www.pdtnutcracker.com/.

Festival Ballet Theatre – More than 100 students from Southland Ballet Academy perform in this training company's "*Nutcracker.*" Announced professional guest stars include Maria Kochetkova and Vitor Luis (both formerly with San Francisco Ballet) on Dec. 20-22, Jeraldine Mendoza and Dylan Gutierrez (Joffrey Ballet) on Dec. 23 & 24. The company also hosts a related "*Nutcracker Tea,*" details at https://www.festivalballet.org/. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Drive, Irvine; Fri., Dec. 20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. & 6 p.m., Mon., Dec. 23, 6 p.m., Tues., Dec. 24, 11 a.m., $45-$90. 949-854-4646. http://www.theBarclay.org.

California Ballet – A new production of the "*Nutcracker*" from artistic director Jared Nelson. San Diego Civic Theatre, 1100 3rd. Ave., San Diego; Fri., Dec. 20, 2 p.m. (1-hour version for young children), Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 19-20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. & 5 p.m., Mon.-Tues., Dec. 23-24, 1 p.m., $15-$91. 858-560-5676, http://www.sandiegotheatres.org/the-nutcracker.

South Bay Ballet – The respected ballet school brings its charming version to Marsee Auditorium. El Camino College Center for the Performing Arts, 16007 Crenshaw Blvd, Torrance; Sat. & Sun., Dec. 21 & 22, 2 p.m., $36, $24 children under 13. 310-329-5345, http://www.SouthBayBallet.org, https://elcaminotickets.universitytickets.com/w/?search=nutcracker.

Metropolitan Ballet Company – James Armstrong Theatre, 3330 Civic Center Dr., Torrance; Sat., Dec. 21, 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 2 p.m., $20, $18 children. 652-685-5403, http://dancewest.org.

Southern California Dance Theater – Downey Civic Theater, 8435 Firestone Blvd.; Sat., Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 2 p.m.; $28-$32. 562-861-8211, http://DowneyTheatre.org.

Moorpark Civic Ballet – Agoura Hills Performing Arts Education Center, 28545 W. Driver Ave., Agoura Hills; Sun., Dec. 22, 1:30 p.m. & 6:30 p.m., $35-$40. https://performingarts.lvusd.org/upcoming-events/

Maple Youth Ballet – Stephen Morse from San Francisco Ballet guests. Portal High School Performing Arts Center, 1001 Cadence, Irvine; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 21-22, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., $33, $28 children under 12 years. http://mapleconservatory.com/performances-tickets/

Anaheim Ballet – Symphony Irvine provides live music. City National Grove, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim; Sun., Dec. 22, 12:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m., $25-$45. 714-520-0904, https://www.AnaheimBallet.org, http://www.CityNationalGroveofAnaheim.com.

Ballet Repertory Theatre – Golden West College Mainstage Theater, 15751 Gothard St., Huntington Beach; Fri., Dec. 20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. & 5

p.m., Mon., Dec. 23, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Tues., Dec. 24, 1 p.m., $20-$25, $16 seniors & under 12 years.714-895-8150 x1, http://www.gwctheater.com.

Coast City Ballet – Huntington Beach Historic Theater, 1905 Main St., Huntington Beach; Fri., Dec. 20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m., $20-$26, $18-$24 children & seniors. 714-963-9771, http://www.coastcityballet.com.

Laguna Ballet – McKinney Theatre, Saddleback College, 28000 Marguerite Parkway, Mission Viejo; Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 19-20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. & 6 p.m., $29, $27 students & seniors, $25 children 12 & under. 949-582-4656, http://www.lagunadancetheatre.com/nutcracker, https://www.saddleback.edu/news/arts/Laguna-Ballets-Nutcracker-2.

Pacific Festival Ballet Company – The students of this resident ballet company of the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza are joined by New York City Ballet principal dancers Tiler Peck and Gonzalo Garcia. Bank of America Performing Arts Center, Fred Kavli Theater, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 21-22, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m. $31-$47. http://www.pacfestballet.org/, http://bapacthousandoaks.com/.

City Ballet – Spreckels Theater, 121 Broadway, San Diego; Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 2 p.m., $27-$92. 858-272-8663, https://www.cityballet.org.

San Diego Ballet – Jacobs Music Center, Copley Symphony Hall, 750 B St., San Diego; Sat., Dec. 28, 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 29, 2 p.m., $49-$134. 619-294-7311, https://sandiegoballet.tix.com.

David Allan's Nutcracker– Choreographer David Allan's version of "The Nutcracker" will feature New York Ballet dancers Andrew Veyette and Lauren Lovette. Landis Performing Arts Center, 4800 Magnolia Ave., Riverside; Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 1 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. $18-$45. 800-870-6069. http://brava-arts.org/.

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