

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Does It Feel Like We Can Finally Exhale?

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, November 25th, 2020

Orchestra and opera draw on dancers, a venue benefit dances, a college channels new choreography, plus encore streaming, where to submit dance videos, where to take online dance classes, and more SoCal dance this week.

This Week

Online Encores

Post-Thanksgiving dancing

Starting this coming Monday, dance created by professional and student choreographers is featured in an online performance by Santa Monica College's Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater. Free at [SMC](#).



Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Debbie does documentary

Over the years, Debbie Allen's *Hot Chocolate Nutcracker* became a popular staple of the holiday parade of *Nutcracker* ballets. While the live stage production can't go forward this year, *Dance Dreams: The Hot Chocolate Nutcracker*, a documentary following Allen and the students rehearsing the show premieres this week. Sat., Nov. 27, on [Netflix](#).



Dance Dreams: The Hot Chocolate Nutcracker. Photo courtesy of Netflix.

More Debbie, plus Nigel

The latest virtual benefit *The Wallis Delivers: Dreambuilders* boasts hosts Nigel Lythgoe and Debbie Allen. The event includes dance from **Debbie Allen Dance Academy Dancers** moving through different parts of the venue, plus dancers from **Generation DCD Studio**. Thurs., Dec. 3, 6:30 p.m., Donations of \$100 or more receive donor benefits. Information and tix at [The Wallis](#).



POWERHOUSE: Generation DCD. Photo courtesy of the artists.

The past comes present

Among the subtle and not so subtle changes of new management by the LA Phil, what used to be the Ford Theater is now The Ford and while the theatre itself remains closed, four digital series were announced through the end of the year. A quartet of festivals includes mostly music, but last week added a festival dubbed *Movement / Matters* focused on Black street and club dance. Co-curator Tyree Boyd-Pates leads the survey of dance from TV's *Soul Train* to the present as a source of connection, care, power and potential. Lula Washington is among the notables participating in this decade by decade exploration. Other Ford efforts showcasing dance include the Saturday morning family classes and videos of past concert performances that reflect how the beloved al fresco venue functioned as an informal summer dance festival. Those past performances reflect the energy and diversity in SoCal dance including contemporary from Lula Washington Dance Theatre, street dance from Versa-Style Dance, Brazilian from Viver Brasil, plus traditional and contemporary folkloric dance from Grandeza Mexicano Folk Ballet Company, Pacifico Dance Company, the LA Phil's exploration of Tovaangar Today with dancer Ba'ac Garcia, and contemporary South Asian, Bollywood and Bhangra dance from Achinta S. McDaniel and her Blue13. All free. Complete calendar and information at [The Ford](#).



Lula Washington Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists.

An international dozen

A dozen dancers working remotely from three continents developed a series of short videos presented by **Nancy Evans Dance Theatre** under the banner *The Channels*. The initial three ready to be viewed are *Parallel* by Jenn Logan and Marcos Novais, *Connections* by Karina Francis Jones and Ricard Campos Freire, and *Behind the Mirror* by Jen Hunter and Irupé Sarmiento. [Nancy Evans Dance Theatre](#)



Nancy Evans Dance Theatre. Photo by Shana Skelton.

House dancing

Pasadena's iconic Gamble House was the site for a collaboration with dancers from **Lineage** for this year's ArtNight. The performance, appropriately called *Lineage x Gable House*, streams for free for a limited period. [Lineage](#).



Lineage Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

More Taylor

Choreographer **Micaela Taylor** pairs with TL Collective dancer **Matt Luck** in *Love Struck*, streaming on FLTPK, the online streaming service from choreographer Trey McIntyre. Subscription is a monthly pledge of \$1 to \$9 to support this and other films. Access to the service's website varies with the level of pledged support. Fri., Nov. 20. [Patreon](#)



Micaela Taylor. Photo courtesy of the artist.

They're ba-a-a-ck!

In mid-September, the annual **San Pedro Festival of the Arts** reinvented itself from an outdoor fest with several stages hosting an array of professional, community and student dance groups.

With Covid–19 making even al fresco gatherings risky, organizer Louise Reichlin moved the 14-year old festival online. The festival’s two different programs get an online encore. Participants include AkomiDance, San Pedro City Ballet, Alan L Perez, Cathartic Dance, Jose Costas Contempo Ballet, Pranamyia Suri, Re:borN Dance Interactive, WestMet Classical Training, Tonia Shimin, Degas Dance Studio, Brittany Woo and UC Irvine students, Barkin/Selissen Project, Emergent Dance Company, MixedeMotion Theatrix, and host company Louise Reichlin & Dancers/La Choreographers & Dancers. Sat., Nov. 21-Sun., Dec. 6, free. Detailed program schedule at [Vimeo](#) or [LA Choreographers & Dancers](#).



San Pedro Festival of the Arts. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Moving at the opera

The **LA Opera**’s livestreamed production of *The Anonymous Lover* includes splendid dance segments choreographed by Andrea Beasom and danced by Beasom and Daniel Lindgren. Wonderful performances from young singers cultivated by L.A. Opera music director James Conlon with imaginative Covid-compliant staging at the Colburn’s Zipper Hall. (Good lessons on how ribbons can be useful for social distancing.) This is a rare staging and the first digital staging of the only surviving opera by Joseph Bologne, considered the first Black opera composer. After opening last weekend, the show continues to stream until Sun., Nov. 29, free (donations encouraged). [LA Opera](#)



L.A. Opera’s Anonymous Lover. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Outnumbered, not outdanced

Known for dancing with contemporary company Ate 9, choreographer/dancer **Shauna Davis** performs as a guest with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Part of *LACO At Home* free online at [LACO](#).



Shauna Davis. Photo by Chris Emile.

Unexpected curriculum addition

The challenges of creating dance while observing social distancing and other Covid–19 safety protocols is a new curriculum addition for dance departments as well as dance companies. Under the direction of assistant professor Becca Lemme, Cal State University Long Beach dance students observed strict protocols in creating two different programs of dances for last week’s live-streamed *Fall Dance Festival*. The pre-recorded performances draw on scores created in collaboration with different composers. Concert director Kaelie Osorio moderates two post-performance zoom Q&A session with each program’s artists. A complete list of choreographers scheduled for each evening at [CSULB](#). The performances continue online on [YouTube](#).



CSULB Fall Dance Concert. Photo by Gregory RR Crosby.

Alone with others watching

The site specific performance ensemble **Heidi Duckler Dance** just wrapped up ten days of *The*

Quest, each day taking audiences to ten sites throughout metro LA metro for live performances to celebrate HDD's 35th anniversary. *Quest* has concluded, but the company and Heidi Duckler's choreography can still be seen online in two different site specific performances. Just in time for the pandemic sequestering, Duckler based *The Chandelier* on a work by Brazilian author Clarice Lispector about a woman experiencing isolation and trying to connect. Performers include Himerria Wortham, Rafael Quintas, Myles Lavallee, Nicole Flores, Maureen Asic, Magdalena Edwards, Jessica Emmanuel, Jaeme Velez, David Guerra, and Paula Rebelo. Free online at [Vimeo](#). For *What Remains*, a tale of life behind the iron curtain, Duckler took inspiration from the travails of *Orpheus and Eurydice* as well as from East German author Christa Wolf's short story about being under surveillance by the Stasi police. Staged in the garden of a museum dedicated to the cold war, the work was presented in conjunction with the museum's exhibit *The Medea Insurrection: Radical Women Artists Behind the Iron Curtain*. The online screening includes a discussion with the museum's chief curator Joes Segal. [Wende Museum](#).



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Dancing around LA

In the absence of touring companies inside its theaters, the Music Center is giving a little love and attention to LA's dance companies, showcasing filmed performances from six SoCal companies. **Versa-Style Dance Company** sent its street dancers to the beach, folkloric troupe **Pacifico Dance Company**'s had nine dancers at different locations representing different areas of Mexico, the tap group **Syncopated Ladies** took an existing routine to a rooftop, five members of Malathi Iyengar's **Rangoli Dance Company** premiered a work celebrating a South Asian goddess, Albertossy Espinoza's **LA Fusion Dance Theater** offered a Flamenco fusion duet, and Pat Taylor's **Jazz Antiqua Dance & Music Ensemble** sent its dancers in parks, alleys, an empty business street, and other sites spread around LA. for their solos. After their premiere on [Instagram](#), all six films now are available for viewing at [Music Center](#).



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

A show of force

In what may prove a timely, if unnerving coincidence, military veterans are featured in a streamed film from Diavolo's Veterans Project exploring what it means to be a true warrior on the front lines. In *This is Me – Letters from the Front Lines*, military vets and first responders explore what it means to be on the front line. Since artistic director Jacques Heim and **Diavolo Architecture in Motion** launched their **Veterans Project** in 2016, more than 500 SoCal veterans have participated in the company's gymnastic approach to movement to restore physical, mental and emotional strengths. Along the way, the project developed stunning performance works, one of which was part of Diavolo's day-long 25th anniversary celebration at the Soroya which hosted this event as part of the theater's *Fridays at 4* series. Info at <https://www.thesoraya.org/>.



Diavolo Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian.

Mask breathing

The scheduled premiere of choreographer Melissa Barak's first full length contemporary

ballet *Memoryhouse* for her **Barak Ballet** was cancelled when Santa Monica's Broad Stage closed with the statewide coronavirus shutdown. On what would have been the closing night, **Barak Ballet** instead went online with the premiere of *Breathe In*, a short ballet filmed at the grounds at the Holocaust Museum in what formerly was known as Pan Pacific Park in the Fairfax district. The film features Peter Chursin with Andrew Brader, Lucia Connolly, Jessica Gadzinski, Chasen Greenwood, Stephanie Kim, and with choreography by Barak. Also, there's an opportunity to sign up for the company's new YouTube channel. Info and streaming at <https://barakballet.org/> and [Facebook](#).



Barak Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

The Moms have it

The same week that memorialized the late civil rights leader congressman John Lewis was the week Emmett Till would have been 79 years old had he not been lynched at age 14 because of his skin. In 2010, Kevin Spicer curated *The Emmett Till Project* at Highways Performance Space. Choreographer Pat Taylor's contribution *A Kindred Woe* receives a timely encore. The work focuses on how mothers whose children have been murdered "take on the mantle" in the fight against racism and justice. The **JazzAntiqua Dance and Music Ensemble** performers include Terrice Banks Tillmon, Keisha Clark-Booth, Rayne Duronslet, Kacy Keys and Shari Washington Rhone. <https://vimeo.com/441671503>.



JazzAntiqua Dance & Music Ensemble. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Silver screen shifting

After discovering their admiration for the others work was mutual, **LA Contemporary Dance Company** and Vitamin String Quartet's planned collaboration for a live performance was put on hold by the pandemic shutdown. The effort took a different turn to film, two films so far with the first now streaming. That initial release, *The Box*, managed to adhere to CDC guidelines while putting two dancers (Jamila Glass and Angel Tyson) and four musicians (Elizabeth Baba, Amanda Lo, Filip Pogády, Caleigh Drane) in the historic Heritage Square Museum. The roughly three-minute film streams on YouTube. Now a second collaboration has been added with *Blinding Light* with dancers Christian Beasley, Hyosun Choi, Jamila Glass, Nicole Hagen, Tess Hewlett, Malachi Middleton, JM Rodriguez, Ryan Ruiz, and Angel Tyson. An earlier LACDC collaboration, this time with filmmaker Nathan Kim continues to stream. The seven-minute film *BLINK*, was choreographed by artistic director Genevieve Carson in collaboration with the LACDC dancers. An official selection in the Hollyshorts Film Festival 2019, Cucalorus Festival 2019, and the San Francisco Dance Film Festival 2019, *BLINK* features dancer Hyosun Choi with Christian Beasley, Kate Coleman, Tess Hewlett, Ryan Ruiz, Drea Sobke, and Tiffany Sweat. The two films and information on other LACDC virtual programming on [their website](#).



LA Contemporary Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Feel like screaming?

Originally developed as a stage piece by choreographer Sophia and the dancers of **Iris Company**, the creators in 2018 presciently reworked *Screaming Shapes!* into a film. After a year on the

festival circuit including SoCal's Dance Camera West, the company has released the work online. The performers include Bryanna Brock, Hyosun Choi, Cat Cogliandro, Casey Gonzalez, Kristen Holleyman, Amanda MacLeod, Joan H. Padeo, Shane Raiford, and Jamal Wade. [Iris Company](#).



Iris Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Locking it up

Early on, the street dance troupe **Versa-Style Dance Company** seemed to take naturally to online streaming including a tribute to Don Campbell, the creator of the Locking dance style, and its youth organization Versa-Style Next Generation unveil *Finding Creativity and Fun in Our Personal Space*. The troupe went to the beach for its contribution to the line up at the Music Center's gallery of videos from SoCal dance companies. Always more than just about the dancing, the troupe mentors its younger members to add college and a career to their dance moves. In the absence of live gatherings, the website now hosts informative and useful videos on a range of life-skills subjects. This week the ensemble announced the launch of its [YouTube channel](#), adding to its social media presence. Videos and info at the [Versa-Style website](#).



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Multi-screens

Adding to its trove of streaming options, **Viver Brasil** adds a weekly spotlight on past performances. The Afro-Brazilian dance and live music ensemble offer journeys to Salvador, Bahia to explore royal orixá dances, high-flying capoeira, and samba from a Bahian Carnival. Current and past spotlight events [now available](#). Viver Brasil also was among the SoCal artists selected for KCET's *Southland Sessions*, reworking its popular family show *Celebrating Samba* for the small screen with company members performing from their homes. But through the power of Afro-Brazilian dance and live music they promise a cultural journey to Salvador, Bahia to explore royal orixá dances, high-flying capoeira, and samba from a Bahian Carnival. Streaming at [KCET](#).



Viver Brasil. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Is it a question?

Filmed during the initial Covid-19 shutdown, Emily Mast and Yehuda Duenyas' project *HOW ARE WE*, collected 15 solos, each 90-seconds including from LA choreographers. The possibilities of a plant, the bed sheets, or the corner of a room are among the starting points. Armed with a tennis racket, Carlon contributed *Anesthetized*, admitting that he wanted a socially acceptable reason to scream or grunt like Serena Williams or John McEnroe without looking like nut. Other contributors include Shannon Hafez, Jessica Emmanuel, Stacy Dawson Stearns, Jenny Marytai Liu, Constance Hockaday & Faye Driscoll, Barnett Cohen, Hana Van Der Kolk, Darrian O'Reilly, David Arian Freeland Jr., Heyward Bracey, Mireya Lucio, Dorothy Dubrule, Terrence Luke Johnson, and Mast & Duenyas. Info at [How Are We](#). Stream on [Vimeo](#).



Carlon. Photo courtesy of the artists.

More in the lunchbox

In June, **Dohee Lee**'s scheduled REDCAT performance was cancelled. The venue hopes one day to reschedule a live performance. In the meanwhile, the Korean artist whose skills span dance, drumming, singing and musical composition joins the line-up of prior dance performances from artists including **Austyn Rich**, **Genna Moroni**, **Tzong-Han Wu**, and **Rosanna Gamson/World Wide**. Info at <https://www.redcat.org/>. [Instagram Channel](#).



Dohee Lee. Photo by Pak Han.

Moving Offstage

The *Music Center Offstage* continues to stream new and encore video clips and performances from Swing 2020, Cuba's Malpaso Dance Company, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy, Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, Infinite Flow, and Spotlight classical and non-classical dance finalists Jacob Giovanni Alvarado, Ashley Lew, Maya Alvarez-Coyne and Bergundi Loyd. <https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/>.



Ballet Hispanico. Photo by Paula Lobo.

When one was not enough

Instead of its usual annual live performances from Black and Latinx choreographers at the Bootleg Theater, the BlakTinx Dance Festival returned with a viral format in late June. For those who missed that live stream of Dancing on the Edge, the show now continues on-line in four parts with works from Nancy Rivera Gomez, Shantel Ureña, Anthony Aceves, Bernard Brown, Joshua Estrada-Romero, Keilah Lomotey, Michelle Funderburk, Primera Generación, Vannia Ibargüen, Marina Magalhães, Regina Ferguson, Rubi Morales, Amber Morales, Alan Perez, Dorcas Román, Yarrow Perea, Andrea Ordaz, Eluza Santos, Briseyda Zárate, and Sadie Yarrington. With many of the works recently created, the pandemic and the streets were subjects and five pieces from earlier festivals that focused on Black Lives Matter were last minute additions. More info at <https://www.blaktinafestival.com/>. View all four programs on [YouTube](#).



BlakTinx. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Knock twice & tell them Jacob sent you

Reminiscent of what one did to enter a speakeasy in the 1920s or a Cold War spy meet-up, a select, paying audience was given the address of a Santa Monica airport parking lot with strict instructions on arriving in their cars, remaining in the cars wearing face masks, and turning on their headlights when cued. In perhaps the first "drive in" dance event, Jacob Jonas and his eponymous **Jacob Jonas The Company** performed *Parked* with those vehicles encircling the "stage," their headlights illuminating the socially spaced dancers performing to live music by Anibal Sandoval. The one-night only event was filmed by Ivan Cash and Daniel Addelson. With the five minute final cut covering interviews with the choreographer and dancers, the actual performance footage is brief, but if the cars flashing their headlights at bows was a kind of applause, the experiment garnered a vehicular standing ovation from the audience. Hopefully, the performance itself will have a separate streaming life. Info at <http://jacobjonas.com/>. Film on [Vimeo](#).



Jacob Jonas The Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Platforms to Submit Video Dance

Dare Dancing

With cautions about staying safe while filming, organizers Sarah Elgart and Cultural Weekly announced round 4 of *Dare to Dance in Public* with the theme of *Pandemia*, meaning a hyper energized state. Info on the judges, prior winners, plus rules and regulations for submission at [Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival](#). The group's other film endeavor Six Foot Dances is still accepting one-minute films. Current submissions on [Dare to Dance in Public](#).



Dare to Dance. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Online Dance Classes

Pandemic exhaustion? Get thee to a dance class!

On-line dance classes continue on zoom, instagram and other on-line platforms, many classes free, low cost or suggesting a donation. One central, constantly updated source on dance classes and in-depth reporting on SoCal dance, [LA Dance Chronicle](#) lists on-line dance classes including any cost and contact info. Grab a chair or clear off a corner of the room and use this time to dance.

<https://www.ladancechronicle.com>.



Dance classes listed on LA Dance Chronicle.

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