Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Emotional Negotiations

Ann Haskins · Thursday, November 20th, 2025

Vets and dancing gymnasts conquer obstacles in Lincoln Heights; rabbits and red queens in Northridge; 20th anniversary brings new contemporary dance in LA Arts District; Taiko master feted in Little Tokyo; contemporary choreography in Santa Monica, Long Beach, and Downtown LA; story ballets in Thousand Oaks and Santa Barbara; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

Live This Week

Thank you for your service

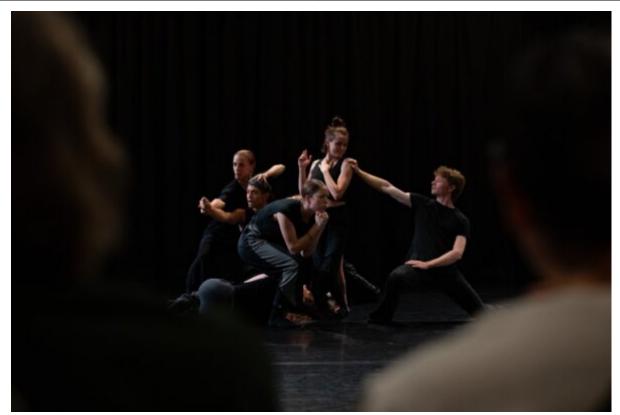
This week ends **Diavolo** and its **Veterans Project**'s performances of *Escape*. Vets and dancer/gymnasts move inside, outside, over and through the often outsized architectural structures that are signature elements of Jacques Heim's choreography, this time up close and personal in the intimate studio setting. Proceeds support ongoing military and educational programs. L'Espace Diavolo Studios, 616 Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Fri.-Sat., Nov. 21-22, 8 pm, Sun., Nov. 23, 6 pm, \$51.74-\$93.14. Diavolo – Escape.



Diavolo Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian

Ways to tell the tale

Jillian Meyers has credentials as assistant and co-choreographer as well as an Emmy in her own right. Now **LA Contemporary Dance Company** brings Meyer's *Story (Un)Structured* to the stage. This world premiere blends movement, text, and story-telling, signature elements as LACDC marks two decades since its founding by Kate Hutter and Michelle Jolly. LA Dance Project, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Downtown Arts District; Fri.,-Sat., Nov. 21-22, 7:30 pm, Sun., Nov. 23, 2 & 6 pm, \$20-\$60. LA Contemporary Dance Company.



LA Contemporary Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists

Shared stage

In this shared concert, **Maya Billig** and **Camila Arana** tackle the lovely and ugly sides of love, intimacy, and power. Billig's *Not My Queen* pivots between witch trials and a 1980's pageant with help from dancers Marcella Thile, Quinn Wynacht, and Maia Driz-Diaz. Arana examines the porous border between love and hate. Arana is joined by dancers Santiago Villarreal and Donny Collinson. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., Nov. 21-22, 8 pm, \$25.63. Maya Billig & Camila Arana.



Momix' "Alice." Photo courtesy of the artists

Another side of the looking glass

The imaginative, gymnastic, contemporary dance company **MOMIX** returns with *Alice*, its theatrical retelling of *Alice in Wonderland*. While the larger than life-size set grabs the eye, the accomplished dancers of this ever-touring contemporary company should not be overlooked. Soraya, Cal State University Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge; Sat., Nov. 22, 3 pm, \$46-\$94. Momix – Alice.

Triptych of the new, week 3

This year's *REDCAT New Original Works (NOW) Festival* wraps up with three distinctive artists bringing their newest. **Lu Coy** draws on movement to consider Tecciztecatl—a gender-expansive Mexican moon deity. **Jeremy de'jon guyton** offers "autofiction" of his family's move west. **Luna Izpisua Rodriguez** presents a theatrical prism examining home and land ownership and dispossession. Saturday's show has a streaming option. Details at the website. Disney Hall, REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., Downtown LA; Thurs.-Sat., Nov. 20-22, 8 pm, \$25. REDCAT NOW.



jeremy de'jon guyton. Photo courtesy of the artist

Drum decades

The joyful, energized experience of *Taiko* or Japanese drumming happens in the context of highly choreographed movement that surrounds the percussive performance. LA-born taiko master **Kenny Endo** is revered in Japan for his mastery of *taiko* (the first non-Japanese awarded the presitious 'natori' title) and for his boundary crossing mix of tradition with jazz, funk, Afro-Cuban, Hawaiian, and other Asian influences. Celebrating his *50 Years of Taiko*, Endo performs on taiko set, tsuzumi, and odaikois, joined by Chizuko Endo on percussion, Jay Lai on keyboard and ukulele, Abe Lagrimas on percussion and ukulele, with special guest arranger Dave Iwataki on keyboard. Aratani Theatre, 244 San Pedro St., Little Tokyo; Sat., Nov. 22, 7:30 pm, \$35-\$55 (plus \$3.50 – \$5.50 fee). Kenny Endo.



Kenny Endo. Photo courtesy of the artist

It's a snap

Under the banner *New Works*, **Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater** spotlights Santa Monica College faculty choreographers who cover the dance spectrum from postmodern to jazz, hip hop to contemporary ballet and dance theater. The dancemakers include Seda Aybay, Angela Jordan, Sophie Monat, Mark Tomasic, and Vanessa Van Wormer, guest artist Vanessa Hernández Cruz, and student choreographers Sonny James Lira, Lessly "Mar" Marroquin, and Oxana Safronova. The Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Sat.-Sun., Nov. 22-23, 7:30 pm, \$21. Synapse Contemporary Dance theater.



Vanessa Hernández Cruz. Photo by Angel Origgi

These also "do"

Choreography from Cal State University Long Beach faculty members is danced by students in *CSULB Dance in Concert*. Works by Rebecca Bryant, Lorin Johnson, Rebecca Lemme, Andrew Vaca, Tsiambwom M. Akuchu & Danzel Thompson-Stout are featured plus guest Tashara Gavin-Moorehead. Cal State University Long Beach, Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater, 6200 E. Atherton St., Long Beach; Thurs.-Fri., Nov. 20-21, 8 pm, Sat., Nov. 22, 2 & 8 pm, \$30, \$20 students. CSULB Dance in Concert.



CSULB Dance in Concert Photo courtesy of Rebecca Lemme

Listen to the drum

Live dance and drumming are part of *drumming bodies dancing*. The evening also includes a screening of Susanna Knittel's documentary on Senegal's *Sabar* dance and drum culture, a Q&A with the director, and live Sabar dance with Erin Desmond, master drummer Dethie Sarr Diouf, and sons Hkadine and Youssouf Diouf. Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Sat., Nov. 22, 7:30 pm, \$15 suggested donation. drumming bodies dancing.

A birthday gone amiss

A full-length *Sleeping Beauty* populated with dancers from Ukraine and other Eastern European countries, stops off on a national tour produced by **Classical Arts Entertainment.** Scherr Forum Theatre, Bank of America Performing Arts Center, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks; Tue., Nov. 25, \$59-\$105. Ticketmaster.



Classical Arts Entertainment. Photo courtesy of the artists

Gilded glitz

The jazz age of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* goes on pointe in this version by the touring company **World Ballet Company**. Granada Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara; Sun., Nov. 23, 6 pm, \$54-\$129. Tickets.

A Peek at Next Week: (November 28 to December 4)

Heidi Duckler Dance — *MAP LIVE!* at Bendix Building, 106 Maple Dr., 11th Floor, Downtown Arts District; Wed., Dec. 3, 7 pm, \$15. Heidi Duckler Dance.

Grandeza Mexicana Folk Ballet Company — *Diciembre Mexicano* at Luckman Fine Arts, 5151 State University Dr., East LA; Sat., Nov. 29, 8 pm, \$30-\$68. Ticketmaster.



Grandeza Mexicana Folk Ballet Company. Photo courtesy of the artists

USC Kaufman School of Dance — *Fall 2025 BFA Showcase* at USC, Kaufman School of Dance, 3400 Watt Way, University Park; Thurs., Dec. 4, 7:30 pm, Fri., Dec. 5, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sat., Dec. 6, 2 pm, free w/reservation Eventbrite.

Coming soon: The Annual Nutcracker Round Up!

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