

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Festivals That Bloom in the Spring

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, April 24th, 2024

LA dance celebrates in Lincoln Heights and North Hollywood festivals, South Asian dance pops up at Venice Beach and around the Westside; a hip hop battle in Burbank; new contemporary dance in the Arts District, percussive performance against the Glendale hills, contemporary ballet in Santa Monica, French visitors in West LA, more So Cal dance this week, and a peek at next week (May 3 to 9).

Live This Week

One for the home team

This weekend, the **2024 LA Dance Festival** opens with LA Dance Chronicle's founder/editor/publisher Jeff Slayton receiving the festival's *Lifetime Service to the Field Award*. Slayton's five decade career began as a dancer with Merce Cunningham and then Viola Farber, then teaching, choreographing, and directing his SoCal-based Jeff Slayton & Dancers, before establishing LA Dance Chronicle to respond to the dearth of dance reviews and coverage. After the presentation, Friday's performance includes SoCal companies MashUP Dance Company, Gretchin Ackerman, Akomi Dance, Kybele Dance Theatre, Celeste Lanuza Dance Theater, Charlotte Katherine & Dancers, and festival host BrockusRED. On Saturday, festival founder and producer Deborah Brockus receives her own tribute as the evening performance *BALANCE* draws from her long dancemaking career for her own company BrockusRED. Info on free classes, workshops, and other free and ticketed events in the three-day festival are detailed at the ticket link. Brockus Project Studios, 618 B Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Fri., April 26, 7 pm, \$15, [Eventbrite](#). Sat., April 27, 7 pm, \$16. [Eventbrite](#).



BrockusRED. Photo by Denise Leitner

New for spring

Two different programs, each with a work by Janie Taylor and two from artistic director Benjamin Millepied are part of **LA Dance Project's** *Spring Dances*. Both programs include Millepied's newest *Me, You, We, They*, set to music by his frequent collaborator Nico Muhly. Both programs also include the premiere of Taylor's *Sleepwalker's Encyclopedia* with a set from artist Ben Styer. Millepied's *Moving Parts* completes Program A, alternating with *Triade* in Program B. LA Dance Project, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Arts District; Program A – Thurs., May 2, Fri., May 8, & Sat., May 11, 8 pm, Sat., May 4, 4 pm, Sun., May 12, 1 pm. Program B – Fri.-Sat., May 3-4, 8 pm, Sun., May 5, 1 pm, Sat., May 11, 4 pm, Sun., May 12, 5 pm, \$45, \$30 students & seniors. [LA Dance Project tickets](#).



Los Angeles Dance Project. Photo courtesy of the artists

Crossing the LINES

Led by its namesake choreographer, San Francisco's **Alonzo King LINES Ballet** brings its

contemporary brand of ballet in *Deep River*. Set to spiritual music compositions from Black and Jewish traditions plus original compositions by Jason Moran, the work has drawn high praise since its 2022 debut. The Granada Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara: Fri., April 26, 8 pm, \$41-\$106. [UCSB](#).



Alonzo King LINES Ballet. Photo by R J Muna

With a few invited friends

With *Poetry in Motion*, **Hollywood Ballet** offers a performance followed by its 2024 gala dinner. In addition to artistic directors Petra Conti and Eris Nezha, the former La Scala, Boston Ballet and Los Angeles Ballet principal dancers have invited several friends to perform, including international ballet dancers Ana Sophia Scheller, Myrna Kamara, Tigran Mkrtchyan and Alexander Maryianowski. The announced program includes classical selections from *Le Corsaire* and *La Bayadere*, Balanchine's Gershwin homage *Who Cares?* plus contemporary works. The BroadStage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Sat., April 27, 7 pm; \$69-\$89 (performance only), \$350 and up for post-performance gala). [Hollywood Ballet](#).



Hollywood Ballet's Petra Conti. Photo by Costin Radu

Body tapping

The always-welcome spring series at this scenic venue in the San Gabriel foothills opens with **DrumatiX** bringing together tap dance and bodydrumming with drumming using found items and invented instruments. Led by Noa Barankin, the bi-coastal ensemble's performances include rhythmic historical dance references and global rhythms. Curated by Jamie Nichols who draws on her deep history with SoCal dance, the series is a proven platform for local dance. Brand Library & Art Center, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., April 27, 5 pm, free. [Brand Library](#).



DrumatiX. Photo courtesy of the artists

Honoring Bella

Under the banner **EMPOWERMENT: Maxine + Bella**, this weekend festival includes performances, workshops and documentary screenings honoring the late Bella Lewitzky (The documentary *Bella* screens Sunday at 2 pm) and American born Chinese writer/educator Maxine Hong Kingston. Festival sponsor, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, commissioned dance and spoken word works by Bernard Brown, Mona Jean Cedar, Chris Emile, Caitlin Javech, Ibuki Kauramochi, Genna Moroni, Siwaraya Rochanahusdin, and Tracy Silver that pay tribute to the honorees. A full list of performances, screenings, workshops and other events is at [DCA](#). Lankershim Arts Center, 5108 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood Arts District; Fri. & Sat., April 26 & 27, 8 pm, Sun., April 28, 6 pm, free to \$1. [Brown Paper Tickets](#).



Bella Lewitzky. Photo courtesy of the documentary film “Bella”

Go another round

Round two of the qualifying battles for **Versa Style Dance Company**’s 2024 festival is *IvsI Popping Dance Battle*. A workshop at 6:30 pm precedes the dance battle. Mihran K. Studios, 135 N. Victory Blvd., Burbank; Fri., April 26, 8:30 pm, battle or watch \$15, workshop at 6:30 pm \$20, both \$30. [Versa Style Dance Company](#).



Versa Style Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

French plumes

Set against a fantastical, dreamlike backdrop, France's **Compagnie Pyramid** brings *Sous le poids des plumes*” (*Beneath the weight of feathers*). The work launches four hip-hop dancers in a series of sketches where different memories of life collide amid mime, hip-hop, and physical theater. Fouad Kouchy is the choreographer. Yann Crayssac, Mounir Kerfah, Benjamin Midonet, Mounir Touaa are the dancers. Theatre Raymond Kabbaz, 10361 W. Pico Blvd., West LA; Wed., May 1, 8 pm, \$35. [Theatre Raymond Kabbaz](#).



Compagnie Pyramid. Photo courtesy of the artists

Winning a prince

Watch for the slipper to fit as **Inland Pacific Ballet** brings *Cinderella* to the stage complete with the mistreated heroine, her wicked stepsisters, malevolent stepmother, fairy godmother with her fairy entourage, and a persistent prince. Kelsey Dorr from Boston Ballet guests with dancers from the respected training academy. Lewis Family Playhouse, 12505 Cultural Center Dr., Rancho Cucamonga; Sat. & Sun., April 27 & 28, 11:30 pm & 4 pm, \$55-\$79, \$28-\$33 children 12 & under. [City of Rancho Cucamonga](#).



Inland Pacific Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

A pop up quartet

In what may prove a pleasant surprise, **Leela Dance Collective** brings India's Kathak dance to Venice Beach, UCLA, Santa Monica Promenade, and the Culver Steps in four days of free pop up performances, plus a concluding concert performance in Agoura Hills. It's part of Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage (AAPI) Month. Bruin Plaza, UCLA Campus, 308 Westwood Plaza, Westwood; Thurs. & Fri., May 2 & 3, noon, free. Also along Ocean Front Walk between Venice Blvd. and Rose Ave., Venice, Beach; Sat., May 4, 10 & 11 am, free. Also at the 3rd Street Promenade, Santa Monica; Sat., May 4, 3 & 4 pm, free. Sun., May 5, noon, 2 & 5 pm, Culver Steps, 9300 Culver Blvd., Culver City; Also ticketed performance at Agoura Hills Performing Arts & Education Ctr., 28545 W. Driver Ave., Agoura Hills; Sat., May 11, 4:30 & 7:30 pm, \$25 [The PAECs](#); livestream \$10 [Imagine India](#).



Leela Dance Collective. Photo by Margo Moritz

A story ballet that's funny

It dates back to 1870, yet the comic ballet *Coppélia* strums chords of troubled young love as current as a Taylor Swift song. The delightful tale of a young maiden's efforts to win back her feckless young man enamored with an aloof young woman sitting in the toymaker's balcony brims with subplots— toyshop break-ins, impersonations, and the toymaker's efforts to bring a doll to life. **Festival Ballet** welcomes guest artists Katherine Barkman and Estaban Hernandez from San Francisco Ballet in the leads, backed by students of this respected ballet academy. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Sat. April 27, 7 pm, Sun. April 28, 2 pm, \$35-\$60. [Irvine Barclay Theater](#).



Festival Ballet. Photo by Dave Friedman

Cello lifting

Aerialist and cellist **Cellista** brings her talents to and above the stage in *Élégie*. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Sat., April 27, 8:30 pm, \$15-\$20. [EVENTS | Highways](#).



Cellista. Photo by Yellow Bubbles Photography

Out of the classroom

Contemporary dance performance along with live music, large-scale projection mapping, and interactive installations are part of this edition of *Rhythms + Visions/Expanded + Live4*. The outdoor event draws talent from a range of campus programs. Meldman Family Cinematic Arts Park, USC, 900 W. 34th St., University Park, Sat., April 27, 7 pm, free w/reservations. [Visions and Voices USC](#).



DATA or 7 ways to dance a dance through prison walls. Photo by [Ciro Hurtado](#)

Walled in

During the pandemic, choreographer Suchi Branfman and her collaborators were unable to continue in-person sessions with incarcerated participants in **Dancing Through Prison Walls**. The inventive program shifted to written expressions on yellow pads rather than physical dance. The result fueled *DATA or 7 ways to dance a dance through prison walls*. Scripps College Dance Tent, Jacqua Quadrangle, 1030 N. Columbia Ave., Claremont; Thurs., April 25, 5 pm, free w/reservation at [Eventbrite](#).



Photography by Paula Kiley

Vanessa Hernández Cruz. Photo by Paula Kelly

Out of the gallery

The artists and performers who usually inhabit the Hollywood gallery **LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions)** are temporarily nomadic as the gallery undergoes renovation. Ten can be found in the Arts District this week with *Abundance*, a program of new work and re-stagings. Contributing performance, sound and literary artists include Frias, Jessica Carolina González, Vanessa Hernández Cruz, Alima Lee, Caleb Luna, Melba Martínez, Cody Perkins, Ghis Rodriguez, Yesika Salgado, and Dorian Wood. LA Dance Project, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Arts District; Wed.-Fri., April 24-26, 7 pm, free with reservation at [Eventbrite](#).



LA Opera. Photo by Cory Weaver

The final flower

A new production of *La Traviata* at the **Los Angeles Opera** boasts gender duality costumes for choreography by **John Heginbotham**. At its San Francisco Opera premiere, director Shawna Lucey and her team received critical raves for a fresh approach that retained everything that makes this among the most beloved operas while subtly spotlighting the backdrop of a gay but entirely money-dominated world in which love almost transcends the transactional. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Music Center, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Sat., April 27, 7:30 pm, \$39-\$399. [LA Opera](#).

A Peek at Next Week (05-03 to 09)

midLife dance project — *Varietals, Blends and Flashbacks* at Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri., May 3, 8:30 pm, \$20-\$25, \$20 students. [Highways Performance](#).

Re:BorN Dance Interactive Brand Library & Art Center, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 3, 5 pm, free. [Brand Library](#).



Re:born Dance Interactive. Photo by Skye Schmidt

Jamila Glass — *First Look* at Stomping Ground, 5453 Alhambra Ave., El Sereno; Fri., May 3, 2 pm, \$5. [LA Contemporary Dance Company](#).

Backhausdance — Open Rehearsals at Bowers Museum, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana; Tuesdays from 10am to 1pm, May 7 to June 4, included in museum admission. [Backhausdance](#).



Backhausdance. Photo by Kira Bartoli

CalArts Spring Dance — LAUNCH at REDCAT, Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Wed.-Thurs., May 7-8, 8:30 pm, \$20. [REDCAT Tickets](#).

High Voltage at Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Fri., May 3, 8 pm, \$10. [Electric Lodge](#).

Max 10 at Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Mon., May 6, 7:30 pm, \$10. [Electric Lodge](#).

Jerron Herman & Molly Joyce *Left and Right* at the UCLA Nimoy Theater, 1262 Westwood Blvd., Westwood; Fri., May 3, 8 pm, sold out but wait-list sign up at [CAP UCLA](#).

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