

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

From Seen to Stream

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, May 12th, 2021

A downtown space retaken, more lessons from a prior plague, a trio of live premieres repeat in a stream, a four-day street dance anniversary, plus recent online encores, where to take online dance classes, and more SoCal dance this week.

This Week

Filling the time

Pedestrian and non-pedestrian activities fuel **taisha paggett's** latest, *com.pleats.we (housecoat)*. Not just playing with words in the provocative title, this dancer/choreographer constructs her own definition of performance, taking over this venue with a 24/7 livestream totaling 240 hours as she aspires to a live and real consideration of Black collectivity as well as solitude in the pandemic-induced new normal. REDCAT, Sun., May 16 -Sat., May 22, 24-hour stream, free. [REDCAT](#).



Taisha Paggett. Photo by Justin Sullivan.

She does like a good book

Choreographer **Rosanna Gamson** has drawn some of her most compelling work from literature ranging from *Scheherazade* in *Tales of the Arabian Nights* to the Brothers Grimm's *Hansel and Gretel*, and lectures by theoretical physicist Richard Feynman. Other than Albert Camus' *The Plague*, what could be more appropriate pandemic source material than Boccaccio's *Decameron* with tales from ten strangers sheltering from the bubonic plague? Just as the tales of the ten travelers unfold one at a time, Gamson's *The Decameron Project* rolls out ten films, each made by a different artist. The episodes for the first five weeks are from **Jinglin Liao, Kevin Zambrano, Dion Pratt, Gretchen Ackerman, and Clementine Gamson-Levyare**, viewable for free on [Instagram](#).



Rosanna Gamson /WorldWide "The Decameron Project." Photo courtesy of the artists.

Hybrid performance shifts to stream

The first post-pandemic opening of a major venue brings a new kind of hybrid presentation, with a socially-distanced live concert followed by a streamed version. A promising combo that hopefully will be retained as part of dance's post-pandemic future. Over the past year, many dance companies created safe bubbles for small groups of dancers to work with choreographers, mostly for live-streamed performances although occasionally in the outdoors for limited audiences. **American Ballet Theatre** made safe bubbles for 18 dancers who worked with a trio of New York-based choreographers—Jessica Lang, Lauren Lovette, and Darrell Grand Moultrie. Segerstrom Center for the Arts hosted the single performance before a limited live audience and a streamed version is available this week. Along with the three new, contemporary works, more traditional ballet gets a nod with the technical showpiece *Grande Pas Classique* and the Act II pas de deux from *Swan Lake*. Now streaming thru Wed., May 26, \$25 per household. [Segerstrom Center](#).



American Ballet Theater. Photo by Todd Rosenberg Photography.

Taking it to the streets

The exhilarating energy and commitment of **Versa Style Dance** in live performance continued to be evident over the past year with dance videos, online lifeskills coaching, and a virtual Hip Hop Dance Festival. This week the street dance troupe hosts a four-day *Community Expressions Showcase* marking its 16th anniversary. Each day includes multiple pre-recorded performances, DJs, community collaborators, a Zoomed family dance class on Friday, and a company premiere on Saturday. Details and reservations at the website. Wed.-Fri., May 12-14, 7:30, Sat., May 15, 3 p.m. [Versa Style Dance](#).



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Adding to the trove

The 2013 Ford Theater performance of *Para XaXa* marked the choreographic debut of Shelby Williams-Gonzalez. Inspired by popular Brazilian social dances xaxado and forro, the 2013 performance is the latest addition to **Viver Brasil**'s weekly online rebroadcast of a past concerts. The company's rich repertoire reflects the company's efforts to preserve Brasil's African culture in dance and music. Free at [Viver Brasil](#). The troupe also is part of KCET's *Southland Sessions* streaming at [KCET](#).



Viver Brasil. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Recent Online Encores

Just don't call her a yentl

Matchmaking scientists with choreographers is a hallmark of choreographer Donna Sternberg's recurring series *Awe and Wonder*. In his new edition, **Donna Sternberg & Dancers** focuses on climate change. The choreographers' varied styles include tap (Gisele Silva), street dance (Leigh Foaad), classical Indian Bharata Natyam (Ramya Harishankar), and contemporary (Sternberg), paired with the science fields of rocketry (Anita Sengupta), climatology (Christine O'Connell), nursing (Sharon Cobb), and immunology (Devavani Chatterjea). The online performances include conversations with the dancemakers and scientists about what they learned about each other in the creative process. Anyone who missed the early May performances can still view the quartet of work online for \$10. Info at [Donna Sternberg & Dancers](#).



Donna Sternberg & Dancers. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Dances with cars

Over three Saturdays, **Suárez Dance Theater** rolled out three short films under the banner *Mapping Our Stories*. Inspired by the histories of Black, Native and LatinX people, each film is set in a Santa Monica public space with often overlooked cultural significance (the city provided funding). Choreographer/performer **Bernard Brown** of bbmoves takes the audience from the landmark Phillips Chapel CME Church (the 1909 church was the first serving the African American Community) to the site of "Inkwell Beach" where Blacks and Browns were restricted in segregated California beaches.

Acknowledging her Chumash and Tongva Nations heritage, poet/songwriter **Jessa Calderon**'s film starts overlooking the ocean from Tongva Park. The history of the Westside Classics Car Club in Santa Monica is the focus of the film from **Primera Generación Dance Collective (PGDC)** and its members Alfonso Cervera, Rosa Rodriguez-Frazier, Irvin Manuel Gonzalez, and Patricia "Patty" Huerta. Each film has resources for further exploration and continue to screen for free at [Bernard Brown/bbmoves](#) :: "...at leisure..." ,Jessa Calderon :: "Before the Noise" , Primera Generación Dance Colletive :: "low riting"



Suárez Dance Theater. Photo courtesy of Primera Generación Dance Collective (PGDC).

Oh, the places we have been

With support from three theaters, The Wallis and The Soraya in SoCal and The Harris in Chicago, **Jacob Jonas The Company** worked with more than 150 artists all over the globe to produce short dance films for the series, *Films.Dance*. Just as vaccination and pandemic restrictions start to allow travel, the 15-week dance film world tour that began in January concluded earlier this month with Emma Rosenzweig-Bock in a film co-directed by Jonas and Ireland-based Kevin McGloughlin. It joins the other 14 short films still viewable at [Films.Dance](#).



Films.Dance "Same Sky." Photo courtesy of the artists.

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. [LA Dance Chronicle](#).



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