Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Glimmers of Exhilaration

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, May 26th, 2021

National Tap Day reigns downtown, why Little Tokyo went Bronze, contemporary dance on a parking lot stage, LatinX collaborations, ballet paired up in the plaza, new lessons from a prior plague, plus recent online encores, where to take online dance classes, and more SoCal dance this week.

This Week

When Little Tokyo Was Bronzeville

Filmed in the surrounding Little Tokyo streets and at the JACCC plaza, Marissa Osato choreographed and dances in the film premiere of *to peer through veils*. The work focuses on how the area's identity as Little Tokyo shifted to being known as Bronzeville during World War II as African Americans moved into the area after the Japanese American inhabitants were involuntarily shipped to internment camps, the continuing anti-Asian animus, and the fear it instills. Asian Pacific Virtual Showcase.



Marissa Osato’s “peering through veils.” Photo courtesy of the artist.

Tapping In

Stepping gingerly into the post-pandemic world, the Music Center returns with an outdoor summer dance series under the banner *Dance at Dusk*. Opening just in time for National Tap Dance Day, the debut event offers a combination of five live, Covid-compliant, outdoor performances by a trio of tapmasters, a free livestream of the final Sunday show, and a week-long public tap dance park (free with timed reservations.) The dance park visitors may pick up some steps from the trio of pros—**Dormeshia, Jason Samuels Smith** and **Derick K. Grant** performing as *The Super Villainz: A Tap Dance Act for the Modern Age*. A planned livestream to Grand Park did not get the go-ahead for this opening but with three more out of town visitors scheduled into July, a Grand Park live stream may still happen later. Details on public health precautions for the live audience and dance park visitors are posted at the website. Live performances (now all sold out) at the Music Center’s Jerry Moss Plaza, 135 N. Grand., downtown; thru Sun., May 30, 7:30 p.m. $200 (buys a pod for four). Livestream, Sun., May 30, 7:30 free. Super Villainz Tap Dance Park, Music Center’s Jerry Moss Plaza; thru Sun., May 30, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. free, with reservation. Info, reservations and tickets at Music Center.



The Super Villainz: A Tap Dance Act for the Modern Age. Photo courtesy of the Music Center.

Limited live/unlimited live-stream

Fresh from its live and live-streamed Orange County performances, American Ballet Theatre sends six dancers for classical and contemporary pas deux in the second installment of the Music Center's Dance at Dusk series. On the classical end, Devon Teuscher and Cory Stearns dance the Romeo and Juliet pas de deux and Christine Shevchenko and Joo Won Ahn tackle the Don Quixote pas de deux. In a more contemporary mode, Katherine Williams and Blaine Hoven essay the duet from A Time There Was choreographed by ABT's Gemma Bond plus more to be announced. The music will be recorded. All the live performances involving socially distanced pods are sold out, but the Sunday show will be a free live-stream. Music Center Plaza, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Wed.-Sun., June 2–6, 7:30 p.m., sold out. Livestream, Sun., June 6, 7:30 p.m., free. Music Center.



American Ballet Theatre. Photo by Todd Rosenberg Photography.

Take the parking lot!

As the pandemic settled in last summer, the parking lot of **LA Dance Project**'s arts district studio offered dance performances for audiences, first vehicle-contained and later on socially-distanced, as well as online. Now there is an official outdoor stage ready to host five weeks of *Dances in the Open* with a new work from former New York City Ballet principal dancer and current LADP company member Janie Taylor along with the reprise of *Solo at Dusk* choreographed by Bobbi Jene Smith with Or Schraiber that was part of the earlier parking lot presentations. Two family friendly shows on Sun., June 13 & 20 at 6:30 p.m. offer $10 children's tickets. LA Dance Project studios, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Arts District; Wed.-Sat., thru June 25, 8 p.m., Sun., May 30 & June 6, 8 p.m., $50 & $175, $25 & $100 students w/i.d. Sun., June 13 & 20, 6:30 p.m., $10 children. More info and seating detail at OvationTix.



LA Dance Project. Photo courtesy of the artists.

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. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Showing theirs

Those ever-exploring folk at **Show Box LA** offer two different events this week. In *X-Collaborations*, LatinX artists Pavel Acevedo, Diana Cervera, and choreographer/dancer Gabriel Gutierrez brought different geographic perspectives and artistic practices to the creation of a virtually designed performance. The series is designed to encourage artists to network, collaborate, and experiment. The product of this trio's interaction is online Thurs., May 27, 6:30 PDT, $10. Eventbrite. Finding ways to weave together dance, poetry, and printmaking in an effort to map individual and collective experience, *Cayuco Corriente: Our Current*, is another series online this week from **Show Box LA**. Eventbrite.



Show Box LA's Gabriel Guttierrez. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Recent Online Encores

Pulitzer dances

Dance continues to be part of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra's digital series *CLOSE QUARTERS*. Choreographer Rebecca Steinberg along with dancers Layne Paradis Willis and Joe Davis collaborated with stage director George Miller in two scheduled works, Ellen Reid's *Lumee's Aria* from the Pulitzer-winning opera *p r i s m* and Benjamin Britten's musical setting of Rimbaud poems, *Illuminations*. The program also includes the premiere of Peter S. Shin's *Hyo*. Free (donations are welcome) at the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra's website, YouTube page, Facebook page.



Joe Davis. Photo courtesy of the artist.

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’s “…at leisure…,” Jessa Calderon’s “Before the Noise,” Primera Generación Dance Colletive’s “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. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Adding to the trove

A prior Ford Theater performance featuring choreography by Shelby Williams-Gonzalez 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.

Oz without Toto

Choreographer Louise Reichlin and her dancers have extended the free online stream of the family-friendly *The Patchwork Girl of Oz,* Reichlin's popular take on a Frank Baum *Oz* book that did not involve Dorothy and Toto through Mon., May 31 on Vimeo.

"The Patchwork Girl of Oz." 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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