

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Just Harping Around

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, January 8th, 2020

A festival in West L.A. opens with a giant harp, a throng of choreographers vie in Hollywood, a dance film festival continues downtown and an Orange County contemporary troupe troops to Palm Desert, in SoCal dance this week.

4. Praise-winning triptych

Choreography by Complexions Contemporary Ballet artistic director Dwight Rhoden is one of three works in this **Backhaus Dance** performance. Rhoden's *Scene Unseen* is reprised after receiving high praise at its recent company premiere. Also scheduled are Walter Matteini's *Beyond the Noise* and *Hive* from artistic director Jennifer Backhaus. McCallum Theatre, 73000 Fred Waring Dr., Palm Desert; Thurs., Jan. 16, 8 p.m., \$20-\$55. <https://www.mccallumtheatre.com>.



BackhausDance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

3. Prize-winning seekers and finders

Presented in conjunction with Capezio, **Moves At The Montalbán** returns with four nights devoted to emerging contemporary choreographers. Opening night is packed with the 26 finalists under consideration for this year's Capezio's A.C.E. Awards. Each of the next three nights is devoted to last year's winners. Thursday offers hip hop from Erik Saradpon. Friday belongs to Mary Grace McNally and her troupe MG + Artists. Saturday wraps up with Rudy Abreu and JA Collective. The Montalbán Theatre, 1615 Vine St., Hollywood; Wed.-Sat., Jan. 15-18, 8 p.m., \$40-\$100. <https://www.themontalban.com/moves>.



Moves at the Montalbán's Erik Saradpon. Photo courtesy of the artists.

2. Caught on film

In 2001, long before TikTok, instagram, or facebook live streaming, Kelly Hargraves and Lynn Kessler founded **Dance Camera West**, a festival of dance films. Today dance film and dance videos are everywhere and anywhere someone has a smart phone. The key to DCW's longevity and stature as one of the premiere dance film fests is its curated nature with festival audiences viewing the cream selected by organizers, led once again by Hargraves. Opening night of this year's four day festival boasts 17 short dance films plus two internationally acclaimed guests for a Q&A. Friday offers another 17 films with films selected from around the world and Saturday

promises a marathon wrap up with 26 more short films including the best submissions to the *Dare to Dance in Public* challenge organized by choreographer and Cultural Weekly contributor Sarah Elgart. The action moves to Chinatown for Sunday's free screening, bringing the total number of films to 55. REDCAT at Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thurs., Jan. 9, 8:30 p.m., Fri., Jan. 10, 6:30 & 8:30 p.m., Sat., Jan., 11, noon, 3:30 p.m. 5:30, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., \$12 per program, \$72 all festival pass. Also at The Automata, 504 Chung King Ct., Chinatown; Sun., Jan. 12, noon-5 p.m., free. <http://www.dancecamerawest.org>.



Dance Camera West. Photo courtesy of the artists.

1. Just stringin' along

A bastion for live theater for four decades, over the past four years the Odyssey Theatre also has extended a welcome mat for dance with **Dance at the Odyssey**, presenting five weeks of LA-based, mostly contemporary dance companies. The 2020 fest opens with the stunning **String Theory**. Led by Holly and Luke Rothschild, this collective of dancers, musicians, choreographers, composers and harp builders forge what its members call "sonic sculpture" with an assemblage of stringed instruments, most striking, visually and aurally, is its signature giant harp. The evanescent String Theory performs *Layers and Landscapes* with subsequent weekends bringing new works from Acts of Matter sharing the stage with Dance Aegis (Jan. 17-19), then the JA Collective Jan. 24-26), followed by LA Contemporary Dance Company (Jan. 30-Feb. 2), and the closing weekend is Victoria Marks (Feb. 7-9). Odyssey Theatre, 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A.; Fri.-Sat., Jan. 10-11, 8 p.m., Sun., Jan 12, 5 p.m., \$15-\$25. <http://odysseytheatre.com/>.



String Theory at the Odyssey Dance Festival. Photo by crista mae.

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