

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Littoral Drift

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, May 14th, 2025

Beatles-inspired dance in Beverly Hills; global dance in Westwood and Santa Monica; contemporary dance in Sierra Madre, Glendale, Frogtown, downtown Arts District, La Crescenta, Pasadena, Irvine, Hollywood, and Santa Monica; storybook ballet in Koreatown, dance fests in Crenshaw and Huntington Beach; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

Live This Week

Seeking connections

The isolating feeling of ‘otherness’ and the impulse to connect are explored in *In Search of an Exit* by **Steven Atwater & Thomas Ford**. The duo comes to SoCal after performances at Washington DC’s Kennedy Center and New York’s Joyce Theater, the latest event in this theater’s impressive new dance series. Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Sat.-Sun., May 17-18, 7:30 pm, \$12-\$35. [Sierra Madre Playhouse](#).



Steven Atwater & Thomas Ford. Photo courtesy of the artists

Alone?

Curated by choreographer/teacher/producer Jamie Nichols, the Brand Associates Dance Series continues its May series with the **Volta Collective** led by Mamie Green. Known for compelling, highly physical contemporary dance, often on dark themes, the company brings *Loneliness Triptych: Excerpt*. The Brand Library & Art Center, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 17, 5 pm, free. [Brand Library](#).



Volta Collective. Photo courtesy of the artists

Dazzled

Choreographer Mark Morris recounts how he was ‘dazzled and confused’ when he was almost 11 and first heard the Beatles’ album *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*. At the album’s 50th anniversary in 2017, the Beatles’ home city of Liverpool commissioned Morris to create a dance work to celebrate the groundbreaking nature of that album. The result, *Pepperland*, was, and continues to be a hit for Morris and his **Mark Morris Dance Group**. The work distinguishes itself as more than just a jukebox musical with choreographed steps to a playlist. Some of the dancing is set to composer Ethan Iverson’s arrangements of iconic songs from the album, but Morris and the composer elevate the genre with Beatles-inspired extrapolations. Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Fri., May 16, 7:30 pm, Sat., May 17, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., May 18, 2 pm, \$64-\$141.90. [The Wallis](#).



Mark Morris Dance Group. Photo by Gareth Jones

Dance fest #1

Curated by Licia Perea, the 12th **BlakTinx Dance Festival** returns. A showcase for Black and LatinX choreographers and dancers, this edition arrives under the banner *Unity Through Movement*. The line up includes new works from Noel Bajandas, Boomer and Boom Squad, Taisha Clark, Shauna Davis, Victor Gonzalez, Luckie, and Diana Toledo. The evening will honor both Raëlle Dorfan, director of the Dance Resource Center of LA and Boomer for work with young dancers. Crenshaw Yoga and Dance, 5426 Crenshaw Blvd., Crenshaw; Sun., May 18, 6:30 pm, \$28.52. [Eventbrite](#).



Shauna Davis. Photo by Chris Emile

Dance Fest #2

Performances, vendors, workshops and more as Akomi Dance presents this year's **Orange County**

Dance Festival. HB Art Center, 538 Main St., #98, Huntington Beach; Sat., May 17, 2 to 8 pm, \$10-\$100 (donation). [Akomi Dance](#).



BODYTRAFFIC. Photo courtesy of the artists

Continued reminders

Continuing its SoCal tour of *This Reminds Me of You*, the splendid dancers of **BODYTRAFFIC** head south with a three part program. Trey McIntyre's *Mayday* set to Buddy Holly's songs, Matthew Neenan's *I Forgot the Start*, and Joan Rodriguez' Cuban infused *Bloquea'o* completes the triptych. Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Thurs., May 15, 8 pm, \$44-\$109. [BODYTRAFFIC](#).

Terpsichorean triptych

A trio of dance theater works take the stage as the **Nancy Evans Dance Theatre** presents *Works 2025: Bound*. The modern dance works include choreographer and artistic director Nancy Evans Doede's *Vigil* considering the ripple effects of a tragic accident, the premiere of Ashleigh Doede's *In-Yun* inspired by the Korean belief that even the briefest encounters are shaped by past lives, and guest artist Cheryl Banks-Smith joins Nancy Evans Doede for *Parallel Universe*, an improvisational collaboration. ARC Pasadena (A Room to Create), 1158 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Sat., May 17, 8 pm, Sun., May 18, 4 pm, \$30-\$100, \$25 students/seniors. [Nancy Evans Dance Theatre](#).



Nancy Evans Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists

A divided diaspora

In the two part evening *Where Are We Going Now?* **Jingqiu Guan** brings ensemble dances to consider the dislocation and chaos experienced by the Chinese diaspora. A faculty member at Duke University, the choreographer's film and performance work often focuses on migration, memory, and resilience in the Asian diaspora. Eileen Chow and Augustus Wendell collaborated in creating this work, performed by Duke MFA and undergraduate students. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., May 16-17, 8 pm, \$25, \$20. [Highways](#).



Jingqiu Guan. Photo courtesy of the artist

Acquired wisdom

Under the banner *Endurance*, **LA Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE)** fills the stage with re-stagings and new commissions capturing the wisdom, experience, challenges, as well as opportunities that come with age and aging. The announced line up of performance and literary artists includes Gloria Enedina Álvarez, Kamau Daáood, Anna Homler, Jeff Schwartz, and David Javelosa, Ulysses Jenkins and The Dark Bob (“who dat” band), Juanita and Juan (Alice Bag + Kid Congo Powers), Sharon Kagan, Hirokazu Kosaka, Oguri, Sheree Rose, Barbara T. Smith, and Awilda Sterling-Duprey. LA Dance Project, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Arts District; Fri.-Sat., May 16-17, 7 pm, free w/reservation at [Eventbrite](#).



Psychopomp. Photo courtesy of the artists

They are bend-y

The acrobatic dance company **Psychopomp** provides the performance component of this event exploring Jewish folklore and community. In *Der Golem*, the dancers reconsider the Jewish mythological and culturally ubiquitous creature of the Golem. Fiesta Hall, Plummer Park 1166 N. Vista Street West Hollywood; Thurs., May 15, 7 pm, \$23.02. [Psychopomp](#).

Eight with ten

Eight choreographers offer a ten minute glimpse at a new work as **MashUp Contemporary Dance Company** hosts a new edition of *Choreography Open Mic Night* of 2025. The series continues to showcase choreographers and give audiences an early look at what is coming in dance. Frogtown Studios, 2828 Gilroy St., Frogtown; Sat., May 17, 7 pm, \$15. [MashUp](#).



Okinawa Association of American. Photo courtesy of the artists

Okinawan dance

In the native Okinawan language, *Utayabira*, *Wuduyabira* means “Let’s Sing, Let’s Dance,” and that’s what the **Okinawa Association of American** offers in this concert. The event offers a rare opportunity to see Ry?ky?an performing arts in a theatre setting. James R. Armstrong Theatre, 3330 Civic Center Dr., Torrance; Sun., May 18, 2 pm, \$30. [Ticket Form](#).

Encore

The dancers of **Philippine Folk Arts** return to this venue for a second family friendly performance, bringing global dance to this venue’s new dance season. Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Sat., May 17, 11 am, \$12-\$35 (sold out, but waitlist at website.) [Sierra Madre Playhouse](#).



Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts. Photo courtesy of the artists

A world view

Santa Monica College's **Global Motion** performs dance from around the world under artistic directors Raquel Ramirez and Sri Susilowati. The selections for this year's annual spring concert include West African, flamenco, ballet, Hawaiian, Mexican folklórico, salsa, and Asian dances, as well as some surprises. The Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Sat., May 17, 7:30 pm, \$23, \$20 students. [SMC](#).



Global Motion. Photo courtesy of the artists

Storybook ballet (preview) #1

A preview of its upcoming production of Edwaard Liang's *Cinderella* highlights this year's *Gala 2025* benefiting **Los Angeles Ballet**. Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills; Sat., May 17, 6:30 pm, \$1,000-\$100,000. [Los Angeles Ballet](#).

Storybook ballet

With 55 members, including some professional dancers with Ukraine connections, **Classical Arts**

Entertainment presents and performs under the name **State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine**. The company is based in Brooklyn, New York and its founder and leaders have Armenian, Moldovan, and Russian backgrounds, but has legitimate claims to producing in Ukraine before the war. Those 55 includes both professional dancers and students, some drawn from CAE's *We Dance* program. The organization tours with full length classics, this visit presenting *Sleeping Beauty* with a live symphony orchestra directed by Aaron Collins. The press material touts lavish, hand painted sets, exquisite costumes, but does not provide any casting information, even in the critical leads. The website lists many dancers, but only biographies of the four principals. E-mail inquiry to the presenter did not elicit a response or more info. Saban Theatre, 8440 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Sat., May 17, 6 pm, \$65.96-\$105.90. [Tickets](#). Also at Long Beach Performing Arts Center, Terrace Theater, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach; Sun., May 18, 2 & 7 pm, \$58-\$160. [Ticketmaster](#).



Life of Pi. Photo courtesy of the artists

Who needs CGI?

Jaw-dropping puppetry anchors **The Life of Pi**, the award-winning theatrical retelling of Yann Martel's best-selling novel about a 16-year old shipwreck survivor adrift in a lifeboat with four animals, notably a Bengal tiger. Nick Barnes and Finn Caldwell created the puppetry for the original, Olivier award-winning British production that went on to Broadway and won several Tony awards. Anyone who sniffs that puppetry isn't dance or choreography should watch the multiple actors' tightly orchestrated manipulations as well as the puppet's choreographed moves, and then just shush up. Everyone else can sit back and marvel. Music Center, Ahmanson Theatre, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Tues.-Fri., 8 pm, Sat., 2 & 8 pm, Sun., 1 & 6 pm, also Thurs., May 29, 2 pm, thru Sun., June 1. \$37.95 -\$166.75 (w/fees). [>Life of Pi](#).

The last move

Choreographer **Marissa Herrera** set the moves for hip hop infused *The Last Play* by Rickérby Hinds. The play, written by Hinds and directed by Daphnie Sicre, was commissioned by the Latino Theater Company. The action follows an Afro-Latino playwright as he conjures characters from previous plays, seeking inspiration for what he believes will be his final play. What could possibly go wrong? The Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St., downtown; Thurs.-Sat., 8 pm, Sun.,

4 pm, thru Sun., May 25, \$10 (Thursdays), \$48, \$24 students/seniors/veterans/LAUSD teachers w/ ID. [Latino Theater Company at The Los Angeles Theatre Center.](#)



LA Opera's "Ainadamar." Photo by Marty Sohl

Lorca lore

Directed and choreographed by Deborah Colker, **LA Opera's** *Ainadamar* draws on Flamenco and Spanish dance as well as a libretto by David Henry Hwang to recount poet/playwright Federico Garcia Lorca's last days. The opera takes its title from the site where Lorca was executed as part of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco's reign of terror after the Spanish civil war to eliminate artists whose work opposed Franco's dictatorship. Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Sun., May 18, 2 pm, \$32.50- \$296. [LA Opera.](#)

A Peek at Next Week: (May 23-29)

Ocandeniye Dance Company & Shine Masuwi — *Arts in the Park* at People Street Plaza, Leimert Park, 4337 Degnan Blvd, Leimert Park; Sun., May 25, 1-5 pm, free. [ArtsInThePark.](#)

bodies in play — *Dance is Pleasure* at WeHo Pride Arts Festival, Los Angeles LGBT Center, the Village at Ed Gould Plaza, 1123 N. McCadden Pl., #229, Hollywood; Sun., May 25, 3 pm, free. [bodies in play.](#)

REALM — *Phoenix Rising* at Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Sat., May 24 & Fri., May 30, 7:30 pm, Sun., May 25 & Sat., May 31, 3 pm., \$69.40 (w/fees). [Realm-Phoenix Rising.](#)

Little Women Ballet at Heritage Square Museum, 3800 Homer St., Montecito Heights; Fri., May 23, 6:30 pm, Sat.-Sun., May 24-25, 3 & 6:30 pm, \$66 (w/fees). [Little Women Ballet.](#) Also at Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena; Sat., June 22, 2 & 7 pm, Sun., June 23, 2 pm, \$42-\$42. [Little Women-Pasadena Playhouse.](#)



Versa Style Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Versa-Style Dance Company — *20th Anniversary Street Dance Festival* at Mihran K Studios Burbank, 135 N. Victory Blvd., Burbank; Battles- Sat., May 24, 2 pm, \$20 (spectators), Street Dance Theater Showcase — Sun., May 25, 5 pm, \$10. [Versa-Style Street Dance Company](#).

Benita Bike's DanceArt at La Crescenta Library, 2809 Foothill Blvd., La Crescenta Sat., May 24, 2 pm. free. [Benita Bike's DanceArt](#).



LA Jazz Dance Company. Photo by Denise Leitner

Jazz Dance Concert at CSU Dominguez Hills, University Theater, 1000 E. Victoria St., Dominguez Hills; Sat., May 24, 7 pm, Sun., May 25, 7:30 pm, \$25. [Jazz Dance Concert](#).

The Wooden Floor — *42nd Annual Concert* at Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine;

Thurs.-Fri., May 29-30, 8 pm, Sat., May 31, 2 & 8 pm, \$20-\$50, children half-price. [Tickets](#).

Arts in the Park 2025 at Leimert Park & Peoples Street Plaza, 4337 Degnan Blvd, Leimert Park; Sat., May 25, noon-4 pm, free w/reservation at [Tickets](#).

Lear Redux: A Quantum Fantasia at the Odyssey Theatre, 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd., WLA; opens Thurs., May 22, 8 pm, then Fri.-Sat., 8 pm, Sun., 2 pm, Wed. June 11 & 25, 8 pm, \$20-\$43. [Odyssey Theatre Ensemble](#).

Note: **Maddie Showonek** schedule for the *Fowler Out Loud* series at UCLA Fowler Museum on May 29, has been postponed until further notice. [Fowler Museum](#).

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