

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

More Uncertainties Than Usual

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, February 4th, 2026

New federal travel bans jeopardize African dancers' tour to SoCal; new choreography showcased in West LA festival; a legacy modern dance in Orange; contemporary choreography in Santa Monica, Frogtown, Westwood, and Pasadena; Ohio visitors open Laguna dance fest; ballet two ways in Santa Barbara; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at what's coming next week.

Live This Week (thru February 12)

A two-fer

This week the *Dance at the Odyssey* festival brings a double bill — a premiere that draws from traditional Greek dances and two choreographers who ponder struggles half a world apart. In their world premiere, *In Default: Joy*, **Marianna Varviani** and **Selcouth Dance Theatre** consider how ritual and gesture can channel energy into movement. The new work is danced by co-creators Simon Chernow, Tyler Law and Maya Peterson. In *LlamadoKodo*, choreographer/performers **Efrén Olson-Sánchez** and **Chie Saito** explore cultural and ecological struggles of Mexico and Japan. *Dance at the Odyssey* at the Odyssey Theatre, 2955 S. Sepulveda Blvd., West LA; Fri.-Sat., Feb. 6-7, Sun., Feb. 8, 2 pm, \$28. [Dance at the Odyssey](#).



Efren Olson Sanchez and Chie Saito. Photo by Michael Blendermann

Giving voice

Returning to the *Dance at the Odyssey* festival, formerly incarcerated and self-described “free world” members of **Dancing Through Prison Walls** bring *FREEDOM TIME* to the stage. Over the years, the group has built a platform to articulate and amplify the voices of the incarcerated. Dancers this time include Mohamed Abo-Bargs, Suchi Branfman, Jay Carlon, Selina Ho, Kenji Igus, Brianna Mims, Amy Oden, Terry Sakamoto and Tom Tsai. Odyssey Theatre 2, 2955 S. Sepulveda Blvd., West LA; Fri.-Sat., Feb. 6-7, 8 pm, Sun., Feb. 8, 2 pm, \$25 (+\$3 for credit cards).

Dance At the Odyssey.



Dancing Through Prison Walls. Photo by Alessia Zanobini

Visa cancel culture?

As of publication, the U.S. tour by **Les Ballets Africains**, including stops this week in Santa Barbara and Malibu, is in jeopardy because new federal travel bans and restrictions on some African countries are holding up visas for dancers and drummers. The celebrated company of 35 dancers and drummers cancelled last week's opening shows in Florida, and the Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper announced the Feb. 10 Santa Fe show is uncertain. As of press time, both the Santa Barbara and Malibu presenters were waiting to hear if the tour is going ahead. Check with the theater for the latest and the refund policy if the tour is cancelled or postponed. (maybe) at the Granada Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara; Fri., Feb. 6, 7:30 pm, \$40-\$70. [Granada Theatre-Santa Barbara](#). Also (maybe) at Smothers Theatre, Pepperdine University, 24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu; Sun., Feb. 8, 5 pm, \$30.50-\$58. [Les Ballets Africains](#).



Les Ballets Africains. Photo courtesy of the artists

Dance with snacks

Kicking off 2026 with the first of roughly ten shows this year, the high energy dancers of **BrockusRED** conjure up a *JAZZ Club* with theatrical performance, food and drink. The company offers single tickets, discounts for two, and a pass to all 2026 shows for \$160. Brockus Project Studios, Black Box Theater, 618 B Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Sat., Feb. 7, 8 pm, Sun., Feb. 8, 6 pm, \$25 (2 for \$40), note date you are buying for at Zelle: 562-412-7429, Venmo: @brockusProjectStudios, Paypal, cash at the door, [Brockus Project Studios](#).



BrockusRED. Photo by Denise Leitner

Legacy with spine

Among the dance (and other performing artists) withdrawing after the renaming of Washington D.C.'s John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the **Martha Graham Dance Company** recently announced it would not go forward with its scheduled performance there this spring. The company is continuing with its tour, *Graham at 100*, marking the centenary of the legendary choreographer, bringing five works to the stage. On the program, *Cortege*, *Diversion of Angels*, *Lamentation*, and *En Masse*. For *Steps in the Street*, company members are joined by dancers from Chapman Dance. Musco Center for the Arts, Chapman University, 415 Glassell, Orange; Wed., Feb. 11, 7:30 pm, \$58-\$98. [Musco Center](#).



Martha Graham Dance Company. Photo by Brigid Pierce

Stretching limits

The trio of Lena Kira Martin, Mandolin Noelani Burns, and Celeste Oliver join forces for **Free All Night Long**, exploring exhaustion, moments of release, and their physical limits in real time with live soundscapes. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., Feb. 6-7, 8 pm, \$20. [Highways Performance Space](#).



Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists

Backstage and onstage

This year's jam-packed **Laguna Dance Festival** opens with an informal "backstage" showcase with Ohio's **Dayton Contemporary Dance**, in advance of its mainstage performance on Friday. Saturday's Valentine-themed show *Heart 2 Heart*, features pas de deux from a line up of visiting dancers. SoCal dancers and dance companies take the stage on Sunday. Check the website for more details. All performances at Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach; *Backstage with Dayton Contemporary Dance* — Thurs., Feb. 12, 6 pm, free with ticket; *Dayton Contemporary Dance* — Fri., Feb. 13, 7 pm, \$75, \$25 students; *Heart 2 Heart (multiple companies in pas de deux program)* — Sat., Feb. 14, 7 pm, \$75-\$250, \$25 students, So Cal dance companies—Sun., Feb. 15, 3 pm, \$75, \$25 students. [Laguna Dance Festival](#).



Will Rawls. Photo by Sarah M Golonka

Museum dancing

As part of the biennial *Made in LA* events, choreographer **Will Rawls** stages the final site-specific performances titled *Unmade* that travel in, around, and outside the museum's galleries. The dancers include Gurmukhi Bevli, Maya Billig, Ajani Brannum, Jeremy De'jon Guyton, Tiara Jackson, and Kensaku Shinohara. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Sat., Sat., Feb. 7 & 28, noon to 4 pm, free. [Hammer Museum](#).

When dancers make dances

Santa Barbara's professional ballet company, **State Street Ballet**, invites the audience into its studios for *Evenings*, showcasing choreography by company members. The evening includes refreshments. Gail Towbes Center for Dance, 2285 Las Positas Rd., Santa Barbara; Fri-Sat., Feb. 6-7, 7:30, \$35 in advance, \$40 at door (if space allows). [State Street Ballet](#).



State Street Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Shoes will be lost

Later this month, **World Ballet**'s *Swan Lake* will be making the rounds, but this week, the touring company brings its *Cinderella* to the stage. Granada Theatre, 1214 State St, Santa Barbara; Thurs., Feb. 12, 7 pm, \$54-\$129 (w/fees). [World Ballet — Santa Barbara](#).



World Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Togetherness

Not strictly a dance concert or just providing back up, **Lineage Dancers** join singer/guitarist **Chris**

Pierce in Concert on their home stage. Lineage Performing Arts Center, 920 E. Mountain St., Pasadena; Sat., Feb. 7, 7 pm, \$33.42, \$23.02 students/seniors. [Lineage Dancers](#).



Lineage Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists

New takes

Eleven choreographers present in this quarterly installment of the informal preview series **MashUp Contemporary Dance Open Mic**. Based on a first-come, first-served selection, each edition offers work from choreographers and a chance for audience input. This edition features choreographers Shanti Topzand, Erika Mentzer, Maryam Malmir, Isaac Knuteson, Samuel Macias, Yoko Hasebe, Anastassia Yavorski, Khala Brannigan, Mia Moraru, Rishi Sharma, and Katie Cavalt. Frogtown Creative Space, 2926 Gilroy St., Elysian Valley; Sat., Feb. 7, 7:30 pm, \$15. [MashUp Open Mic](#).



Stomp. Photo courtesy of the artists

Keeping the beat

Yes, it is technically a percussion show, but in showing the myriad potentialities of percussion—from metal structures and wooden implements to plastic bags and brooms—the performers of **Stomp** move and drum in a highly choreographed event. From its roots in the UK, the show can claim 50 countries and audiences exceeding 26 million. Along the way, **Stomp** picked up Britain’s Olivier Award for Best Choreography. The current edition, *Let’s Make Some Noise* arrives at the only SoCal stop on its North American tour. Cerritos Center for the Arts, 18000 Park Plaza Dr., Cerritos; Wed.-Thurs., Feb. 4-5, 7:30 pm, \$48-\$132. [Stomp](#).

Cautionary return

Presenting itself as “China before communism,” the touring company **Shen Yun** built its reputation on the athleticism, flexibility, and group precision of its dancers, but dodged questions about its connections with China’s banned Falun Gong. More recently, the organization has faced accusations of dancer abuse and a lawsuit alleging child labor violations. In that context, the company concludes its tour of local venues. Long Beach Terrace Theater, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach; Fri., Feb. 6, 7:30 pm, Sat.-Sun., Feb. 7-8, 1 pm, \$89-\$218. [Shen Yun](#).

A Peek at Next Week (February 13-19)

UCI Claire Trevor Department of Dance — *Dance Visions 2026* at UC Irvine, Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Thurs.-Fri., Feb. 19-20, 8 pm, Sat., Feb. 21, 2 & 8 pm, \$34, \$30 seniors, \$13 students. [The Barclay](#).

Compagnie Hervé Koubi — *Sol Invictus* at the Wallis, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly

Hills; Thurs.-Fri., Feb. 19-20, 7:30 pm, Sat., Feb. 21, 2 pm, [The Wallis](#).



Compagnie Hervé Koubi. Photo by Melaniem Lhote

Benise — *25 Years of Passion* at Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 18000 Park Plaza Dr., Cerritos; Sat., Feb. 14, 7:30 pm, \$48-\$142. [Benise](#).

World Ballet — *Swan Lake* at The Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Tues.-Wed., Feb. 17-18, 7 pm, \$67.05-\$147.45 (w/fees). [Swan Lake The Alex](#). Also with live orchestra at Fred Kavli Theatre, 2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks; Wed., Feb. 19, 7 pm, \$61.25 – \$143.25. [Swan Lake Fred Kavli Theatre](#). Also at Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center, 26455 Rockwell Canyon Rd, Santa Clarita; Fri., Feb. 20, 7 pm, \$50-\$115 (w/fees) [Swan Lake — Santa Clarita](#). Also at Irvine Barclay Theatre (with live orchestra), UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Tues.-Wed., Feb. 24-25, 7 pm, \$91-146 (w/fees). [Swan Lake-Irvine Barclay Theatre](#).



World Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Intrepid Dance Project — *Dance at the Odyssey* at Odyssey Theatre 2, 2955 S. Sepulveda Blvd., West LA; Fri.-Sat., Feb. 13-14, 8 pm, Sun., Feb. 15, 2 pm, \$25 (+\$3 for credit cards). [Dance At the Odyssey](#).

Hannah Millar + Imprints — *Dance at the Odyssey* at Odyssey Theatre 3, 2955 S. Sepulveda Blvd., West LA; Sat., Feb. 14, 8 pm, Sun., Feb. 15, 2 pm, \$25 (+\$3 for credit cards). [Dance At the Odyssey](#).

News of Note

SoCal Dance Company Closing — After two decades as a positive creative force in SoCal dance, **LA Contemporary Dance Company** has shuttered. Founding artistic director Kate Hutter announced the decision had been made to cease operations.

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