

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Moseying Into the New Now

Ann Haskins · Thursday, June 10th, 2021

Live dance with a stroll at an historic Chinatown park, contemporary moves in an Arts District parking lot, a downtown plaza hosts a New York visitor, and ballet with a live orchestra in a Pasadena gazebo, plus online offerings of recent live concerts and considering the era Little Tokyo was Bronzeville, and lessons from a prior plague, plus recent online encores, where to take online dance classes, and more SoCal dance, live and online, this week.

This Week

Going with the flow

Emerging from pandemic constraints on live performance, the site specific dance company **Heidi Duckler Dance** returns to one of its favorite outdoor venues with a new edition of its popular *Ebb and Flow* festival. With an overall theme of climate change, the event combines dance, visual arts, music, and interdisciplinary art events throughout the historic Chinatown park. For 90-minutes, visitors can stroll among the stations populated by SoCal choreographers, dancers and visual artists. Details at <https://heididuckler.org/events-cal/>. Los Angeles State Historic Park, 1245 N. Spring St., Chinatown; Sat.-Sun., June 12-13, 1-2:30 p.m., free with reservation at <http://ebbflow21.eventbrite.com>.



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo by Teri Weber.

Ballet al fresco

Conducted by Daniel Suk, the Dream Orchestra of Los Angeles provides live music for **Pasadena Civic Ballet**'s abbreviated version of *Giselle*. Los Angeles Ballet principal dancers Petra Conti and Eris Nezha guest as the namesake peasant lass and Albrecht the disguised nobleman he romances. First performed in 1841, the plot—he dazzles then betrays her trust, she dies, then her afterlife spirit forgives and saves him—is very 19th century, but the exquisite Adolphe Adam score and timeless choreography continues to make this a classic for ballet-lovers. Outdoor Gazebo Salon at Pasadena Civic Ballet: 253 N. Vinedo Ave, Pasadena; Sat.-Sun., June 12-13, 8 p.m. (festival seating starting at 7 p.m.), \$45-\$75. Advanced sale only at <https://www.pcballet.com/giselle>



Petra Conti and Eris Nezha in Pasadena Civic Ballet's "Giselle." Photo by Rudy Amisano.

Something new and something that never gets old

The legendary **Paul Taylor Dance Company** becomes the third out-of-town visitor in the Music Center's *Dance at Dusk* series. From its trove of luminous works by the legendary dancemaker, the troupe brings Taylor's *Promethean Fire*, created in 2002 after the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks. The second work is the West Coast premiere of Kyle Abrahams *Only the Lonely* (2019), the final work commissioned by Taylor before his death in 2018. The highly praised result is set to music/songs from jazz pianist/singer Shirley Horn. All the live performances with socially distanced pods are sold out, but the Sunday show will be a free live-stream with reservations at the link. In something of a preview this weekend, L.A.'s Tamica Washington-Miller moderates a panel discussion with the company artistic director Michael Novak and Kyle Abraham on Sun., June 13, 4 p.m., free with registration at <https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/inside-look-shaping-a-new-generation-of-dance/>. Performances at Music Center Plaza, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Wed.-Sun., June 16-20, 7:30 p.m., close to sold out. Livestream on Sun., June 6, 7:30 p.m., free with advance reservation. **Music Center**.



Paul Taylor Dance Company. Photo by Christopher Duggan.

Take it to 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 hosting 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., 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 LADP.

Online This Week

Celebrating 40 years and making it through the last one

For four decades, **Benita Bike's DanceArt** has been a Johnny Appleseed for dance. Most of the year, choreographer Bike and her dancers travel throughout SoCal to non-traditional venues like libraries and parks germinating new dance audiences with programs that demystify dance and how dance is created. That is the troupe's performance motif for most of the year. Traditionally, once a year the troupe settles into a proper theater and presents a straightforward dance concert to celebrate. As live performance feels its way forward, Bike and her troupe celebrate their 40th anniversary with a hybrid of last week's live Madrid Theater show and this week's online video of that show. The current dancer roster includes

Clare Kiklowicz, Mikensie Johnson, Trudy Niess, Sarah Gertler and Liza Barskaya. Last week's Madrid Theater performance online Thurs.-Sun., June 10-13, \$25. <http://www.danceart.org/40years/>.



Benita Bike's DanceArt. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Coming "Back"

After a year of pandemic, choreographer Jennifer Backhaus and her eponymous **Backhaus Dance** offered their first live performance in early May accompanied by the six musicians of the Pacific Symphony who perform as Block x Block. The dancers included Josie Badeaux, Christopher Blank, Michael Kerr, Dave Lewis, and Martha Ryan. Health and safety guidelines limited the audience, but the performance by this respected Orange County contemporary troupe is now available online. Sat., June 12. <http://www.backhausdance.org/spring-forward>.



Backhaus Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Last call for a dancer's dozen

Deborah Brockus and **Kelly Hargraves** combined their considerable talents for *SHIFT/west*

resident—*Women Choreographers Online*. Brockus is the powerhouse producer of the Los Angeles Dance Festival and her choreography is showcased by her BrockusRED as well as Brockus Project Dance. While Hargraves' credentials include choreography, she is perhaps best known for her work in dance film, as a filmmaker and as the prime force behind the Dance Camera West, one of the premiere dance film festivals. With the shift to online performance and dance films, the two secured a California Arts Council grant to fund twelve women choreographers in a five-month residency. The 12, all based in Los Angeles, include Malia Baker, Letxia Cordova, Brittany Delany, Helen Duros, Toni Fuller, Kelsey Guy, Hanna Millar, DaEun Jung, Alyssa Junious, Corina Kinnear, Charlotte K. Smith, and Rourou Ye. After their selection in January, the twelve were mentored first by Brockus, then in February Hargraves assumed the mentor role. Over the next three months, the choreographers created, filmed and edited works for this week's online showing. Viewable to Thurs., June 10, 11:59 p.m., \$15 per household. **Brockus**.



SHIFT/west resident—*Women Choreographers Online*. 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 nine weeks are live and viewable for free on <https://www.rgww.org/projects/decameron> and on **Instagram**.



Rosanna Gamson/WorldWide. Photo courtesy of the artists.

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. Take a deeper dive with a panel discussion with Osato, composer Sara Sithi-Amnuai, and moderator Scott Oshima Thurs. June 17, 8:30 p.m. PDT. The film screens through June 30 at <https://watch.eventive.org/apvs/play/609c5ad552960d004c1bdf>



Marissa Osato's "peering through veils." Photo courtesy of the artist.

In the Swing

Two films and a panel discussion are featured in the Getty Center's *Dancers on Film: Two by Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich*. In the Thursday discussion research specialist Kristin Juarez talks with the filmmaker about how cinema histories and archival material were sources of African-American narratives for her films. Registration also includes a pre-screening of the George Stevens' musical *Swing Time*. What is the connection between Hunt-Ehrlich's films and this 1936 Fred and Ginger movie musical? Undoubtedly one of the questions that can be submitted before the Thursday online zoom discussion. Thurs., June 10, noon., free online with reservation at https://www.getty.edu/visit/cal/online_events.html.



Dancers on Film: Two by Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich. Photo courtesy of the artist.

The heart goes on

Over five decades, the dance department at UC Irvine has built an enviable national reputation and that legacy is celebrated in the documentary **UCI Dance Legacy Project**. Produced by Rita Marks Penrod, wife of James Penrod who with Eugene Losing founded the department in 1965, the documentary traces the program over the decades. The trove of information includes interviews with 25 faculty, alumni, and staff, plus video footage, archival photos and programs. Streaming Thurs.-Sun., June 17-20, \$10 virtual access <https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/52586>.

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.

A scientific match-up

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 of *Revealed* 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.

Online Dance Classes

Pandemic exhaustion? Post-pandemic retrofit needed? 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](#).



Dance classes.

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