

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Opening Up With Caution and Hope

Ann Haskins · Friday, June 18th, 2021

Live dance in Pasadena, downtown, Long Beach, and Fullerton, online celebrations of L.A.-based dance, Juneteenth, the summer solstice, street dance, alumni reunions, plus recent online encores, where to take online dance classes, and more SoCal dance, live and online, this week.

Live This Week

One is new; one 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. The live performances with socially distanced pods are almost sold out, but the Sunday show will be a free live-stream with reservations at the link. Performances at Music Center Plaza, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Wed.-Sun., June 16-20, 7:30 p.m., \$100-\$200 (pod for 4). Livestream, Sun., June 20, 7:30 p.m., free with advance reservation. [Music Center](#).



Paul Taylor Dance Company. Photo by Paul B. Goode.

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 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., \$50 & \$175, \$25 & \$100 students w/i.d. Sun., June 20, 6:30 p.m., \$10 children. More info and seating detail at [OvationTix](#).



LA Dance Project. Photo courtesy of LADP.

Taking Steinbeck to church

Five women characters created by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath*, *East of Eden*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Pearl*, and *The Moon is Down* are celebrated in a new work from choreographer Nancy Evans Doede. Under the banner *Works 2021*, the first live performance by Nancy Evans Dance Theater in more than a year also includes works by company members Ashleigh Doede and Jenn Logan. Tickets are advance purchase only (no walk ups) and the audience is invited to bring a blanket or lawn chair for seating in the Porticos Art Space (St. James Church), 2033 E. Washington Blvd., Pasadena; Sat., June 19, 3 & 6 p.m., \$15. [Nancy Evans Dance Theater](#).



Nancy Evans Dance Theater. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Gatsby gets a new chapter

In summer 2018, choreographer Janet Roston and her **Mixed eMotion Theatrix** gave a sampling of Roston's *Gatsby Redeux*, a dance encapsulation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as part of the Music Center's *Moves After Dark* series. The full production scheduled for spring 2020 was postponed by the pandemic to September, then postponed again, but now gets two incarnations—one live, one virtual. This weekend is a live, site specific performance that promises to cover the grounds of the former Muckenthaler mansion, built in the same era as the book. An online version next weekend is part of the dance series at another mansion, now the home of the Brand Library and where the work was originally scheduled in spring 2020 before those pesky postponements. Info on the work and company at [Mixed eMotion Theatrix](#). Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 W. Malvern Ave, Fullerton; Thurs., June 24, 7 p.m., Advance purchase only: \$30, \$20 students & seniors. [Muckenthaler Cultural Center](#). Online from the Brand Library and Art Center, Sat.-Sun., June 26–27, starting at 8 a.m. [YouTube](#).



Mixed eMotion Theatrix. Photo by Erin Herzog.

Taking it outside

This outdoor performance of live dance and music teams **JoneStudio** with The Jazz Angels in *Finale!* The event promises tap, ballet, theater and jazz. Masks and temperature checks are required prior to seating. Westerly School Outdoor Amphitheater, 2950 E 29th St., Long Beach; Sat., June 19, 7 p.m., \$20 cash only at door or \$18 advance purchase at [ETIX](#).

Online This Week

At the club

In *A Night at Club Alabam*, the **Central Avenue Dance Ensemble** recreates a vintage nightclub floorshow to celebrate Juneteenth, marking Texas being forced to free its slaves on June 19, 1865, two years after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Choreography from Paulette Brockington, Chandra Chase, Gary Roberts, Sharon Sandor, Chester Whitmore and Ron Parker offer acts ranging from tap, jazz, ballroom, flamenco, mambo and tango. Online: Sat., June 19, 1 p.m., \$15-\$45. [Eventbrite](#).



Central Avenue Dance Ensemble. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Soakin' some sun

Celebrate the summer solstice as **Invertigo Dance** presents *Sol*, an free, online evening of dance, film, and poetry. Invertigo's artistic director Laura Karlin and company community engagement manager Rosa Navarrete welcome guests artists Río Oxas of RAHOK, Lauren Ballesteros and Doreen Sanchez. The films include some of Invertigo's popular "Dance Care Packages." Mon., June 21, 7 p.m., free with registration at [Eventbrite](#).



Invertigo Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists

Outside online

The first dance offering of the revived free Grand Performance series is a site specific work by **Sarah Elgart** set at the Skirball Cultural Center. Described as a “cinematic music experience”, the online presentation reflects Elgart’s deep involvement with filmed dance including the Cultural Daily series *Dare to Dance in Public*, now in its fourth edition. Thurs., June 24, 8 p.m., free. [Grand Performances](#).



Sarah Elgart. Photo courtesy of the artist.

From the street to the library

For more than a decade, the street dance ensemble **Versa Style Dance Company** has been both a thrilling performance presence and a valued community asset through educational performances and social justice programs. This edition of the Brand Library Dance Series 2021 finds the troupe streaming from this elegant setting in the Glendale foothills. The venue isn't yet open to in person audiences, but this online presentation shows what happens when these high energy dancers take their dance from the street to a library and art gallery. Streaming on Sat.-Sun., June 19–20, 11 a.m., free. [Brand Library](#).



Versa Style Dance Company. 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 [Asian Pacific Virtual Showcase](#).



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

Together again

Latina Dance Project director Licia Perea and the Bootleg Theater recruited ten alumni of prior BlakTinx programs for *SMASH CUT* dances for camera. Participants include Melesio Anthony Aceves, Rosa Rodriguez Frazier, Michelle Funderburk, Keilah Glover, Nancy Rivera Gomez, Irishia Hubbard, Primera Generacion, Joshua Estrada Romero, Stacey Strickland Jr. and Rosanna Tavarez. **The BlakTinx Alumni Virtual Concert, Los Angeles** is online starting Thurs., June 24, 7 p.m. thru Tues., June 29, 10 p.m., suggested donation \$10. [Registration](#).



BlakTinx. 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. All ten episodes are now live and viewable for free on [RGWW](#) and on [Instagram](#).



Rosanna Gamson/WorldWide. Photo courtesy of the artists.

L.A. dance gets a little love

The third season of the Music Center's digital series *For the Love of L.A.* opens with two months of Tuesdays filled with curated dance, music, and visual arts. The season opens with curator Achinta S McDaniel (artistic director of Blue13 Dance Company) exploring South Asian-American artists opening with dancer **Shalini Bathina** embodying two characters inspired by Ardhanareeswara, the composite of Hindu deities Shiva (male) and Parvati (female). Online starting Tues., June 22, [Music Center](#).



Shalini Bathina. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Dear Pen Pal

Hosted by Julie Brandano and Pieter, *Scored Pen Pals* paired volunteer participants with a “pen pal” from a different place to exchange “scores” that could include instructions, drawings, and descriptions to fuel this performance event and subsequent publication of the “scores.” After a short prep time, the participants perform the result on view, online on Sun., June 20, 5 p.m., free (donations suggested \$5 to \$20 to support participants). [Pieter Performance Space](#).



Pieter’s “Pen Pals.” Photo by Juli Brandano.

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 Loring founded the department in 1965, the documentary traces the program over the decades, emphasizing the early development with interviews with 25 faculty, alumni, and staff, plus video footage, archival photos and programs. Streaming Thurs.-Sun., June 17–20, \$10 virtual access [tickets](#).

A tale of two rivers

The **Soorya Arts Academy** offers a new dance production, *AAPAHA-Story of Two Rivers*. The two rivers are India's River Ganga and L.A.'s own concrete embanked LA River. Concept, choreography, and original music by Guru Sushma Mohan. Sat., June 19, 9:30 a.m. on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).



Soorya Indian Dance. Photo courtesy of the artist

Give it a PUSH

The Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival celebrates Juneteenth with a zoomed program that includes **PUSH Dance Company** in *Dance Shorts 2020*, a collage of choreography and music by

Raissa Simpson. Zoomed on Sat., June 19, 5 p.m. PDT, \$10. [LAWTF](#).

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 [YouTube channel](#).



Joe Davis. Photo courtesy of the artist.

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 Collective'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.

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](#).



Dance classes.

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