

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Peeking Behind the Curtain

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, December 11th, 2019

Dancers in feathered knickers downtown, Greek myth meets the Stassi police in Culver City, folkloric fests in Northridge and Whittier, *Nutcrackers* coming out of the woodwork, and more SoCal dance this week.

### 5. Celebrating tradition

The dancers of **Ballet Folklórico De Los Ángeles** join the musicians of Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar in *Nochebuena*, a celebration of Mexican-American holiday traditions as well as traditions rooted in different regions of Mexico. After opening in Orange last week, the show travels to Northridge for two more performances. The Soroya, Cal State University Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge; Sat., Dec. 14, 3 p.m. & 8 p.m., \$34-\$86. <https://www.thesoraya.org>.



Ballet Folklórico De Los Ángeles. Photo courtesy of the artists.

### 4. For the family that sambas together

Come early for the Samba instruction by Gisella, director of **Samba Soul Dance Company**, before the company dancers take the stage at 4 p.m. The *Brazilian Christmas Party* continues with music and song from Calisamba and headliner **Jorge Aragão**. Catch One, 4067 W. Pico Blvd., Country Club Park, sun., Dec. 15, 3 p.m.-8 p.m., \$45-\$65. Free children 12 & younger. <https://braziliannites.com>.



Samba Soul Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

### 3. Piñata anyone?

Now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, **Danza Floricanto/USA**'s *Navidad en Whittier* has become an annual seasonal celebration with traditional dance, music and song from different regions of Mexico. Highlights include Zacatecas' polkas and quadrilles, *Jaranas* from the Yucatan, the procession honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe considered the mother of all Mexicans, and the traditional breaking of the piñata. Ruth B. Shannon Center for the Performing Arts, Whittier College, 6760 Painter Ave., Whittier; Sat., Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m., \$25, \$20 for children. <http://shannoncenter.org/events/navidad-en-whittier-with-danza-floricanto-usa>.



Danza Floricanto/USA's "Navidad en Whittier." Photo by Frank Sandoval.

## 2. A winner comes home

The original show opened in Britain in 1997 where it was seen by then Center Theater Group artistic director Gordon Davidson who booked it into the Music Center's Ahmanson Theatre. Thus L.A. became the American launch of *Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake* before it went on to become a Broadway and international phenomenon. Along the way, Matthew Bourne showed how danced theater could be a game changer for both arts. Bourne kept the Tchaikovsky score but turned the classical ballet from a tale of some once upon a time kingdom into a recognizable contemporary British monarchy, replaced the female corps with male dancers in feathered knickers, and transformed the lead swan into a male who comforts and seduces the neglected prince then goes on to entice and seduce the queen herself. And now Bourne is back, the show's 20-year old audacity still ringing curiously true. As the British crown reels once more from revelations about a current prince's involvement with a notorious sexual predator, the return of the ballet continues to resonate. Ahmanson Theater, Music Center, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Tues.-Fri., 8 p.m., Sat., 2:30 p.m. & 8 p.m., Sun., 1:30 p.m. & 7 p.m., thru Jan. 5, \$35-\$145. <https://www.centertheatregroup.org/>.



Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake. Photo by Johann Persson.

## 1. Getting used to being watched

Continuing this museum's involvement with dance inspired by life behind the Iron Curtain during the decades between the end of World War II and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the dancers, musicians and performers of **Heidi Duckler Dance** take over the museum garden with *What Remains*. Taking the title from a short story by East German author Christa Wolf about being under surveillance by the Stasi police and also drawing on the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, Heidi Duckler's choreography is backed by music by Sarah Belle Reid, Justin Scheid and an opera for seven voices by Leaha Maria Villareal. The dancers include Tess Hewlett, Roberto Lambaren and Himerria Wortham. Wende Museum, 10808 Culver Blvd., Culver City; Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 12-13, 7 p.m., \$50, \$35 seniors & students. <https://hddwhatremains.eventbrite.com>.



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

### *Other dance of note:*

The dancers of **Anaheim Ballet** join Orange County musicians and singers in *A Southern California Christmas*. Now in its third year, the program draws on regional choral and musical groups in addition to the ballet company. Musco Center for the Arts, Chapman College, 415 N. Glassell Ave., Orange; Sat., Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 4 p.m., \$25-\$58. <https://www.muscocenter.org>.



Anaheim Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

A mix of hip hop and contemporary dance from choreographer Kitty McNamee and kuchipudi dance from Bhavana Reddy come into play as Marta Gardolińska conducts the LA Phil in

Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Part of the **Toyota Symphonies for Youth** series, the performance includes dancers Angelica DeWitt, Wilson Mayo, Justin Porter, Russel Ridgeway, Sasha Rivero, Derek Schiesel and Reddy. Disney Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Sat., Dec. 14, 11 a.m., \$25-\$29. <https://www.laphil.com>.

**And where to find a *Nutcracker* this week:**

Set in 1912, the **Los Angeles Ballet's** "*Nutcracker*" is an L.A. original, choreographed by company co-artistic directors Thordal Christensen and Colleen Neary, with set design by L.A. artist Catherine Kanner. Now in its 14th season, L.A.'s own professional classical ballet company continues to demonstrate how well it understands this city. This year the company performs in Cerritos, Glendale, Westwood, Redondo Beach, and Hollywood (with a live orchestra), bringing ballet to the audience rather than expecting folks to overcome hours of gridlocked traffic. The superb company dancers have proven themselves a home team to root for. In full disclosure, your scribe volunteered to watch the goings on from a chimney. Info and tickets at <https://www.LosAngelesBallet.org>. UCLA Royce Hall, Westwood; Fri., Dec. 13, 8 p.m., Sat.-Sun., Dec. 14-15, noon & 5 p.m., \$34-\$109, 10% discount for children, students, seniors & military. Also at Dolby Theatre, Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Fri., Dec. 20, 8 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 5 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, noon, Tues., Dec. 24, 3 p.m., \$45-\$131. Also at Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Sat., Dec. 28, noon & 5 p.m., Sun., Dec. 29, noon, \$34-\$109, 10% discount for children, students, seniors & military. 310-998-7782, <https://www.LosAngelesBallet.org>.



Los Angeles Ballet. Photo by Reed Hutchinson.

Celebrated Russian choreographer Alexei Ratmansky's interpretation of the classic ballet for **American Ballet Theatre** returns with ABT's splendid dancers to SoCal. The announced casting includes many of ABT's top stars including local alum Misty Copeland on Dec. 15, 18 and 21 evening. (Current casting for leads at <http://scfta.org>.) Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Fri., Dec. 13, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 14 & 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec 15 & 22, 12:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m., Wed.-Fri., Dec. 18-20, 7 p.m., \$29-\$209. 714-556-2787, <https://www.scfta.org/events/2019/the-nutcracker>.



American Ballet Theater. Photo by Doug Gifford.

Choreographer Laurence Blake and artistic director Victoria Koenig created **Inland Pacific Ballet's** version of the "*Nutcracker*" that has become an Inland Empire tradition. IPB's professional dancers are joined by students from IPB's respected ballet academy. Three Friday performances on Dec. 6, 13, and 20 are devoted to its popular "*Nutty Nutcracker*." Fox Performing Arts Center, 3801 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside; Fri., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. (Nutty Nut), Sat., Dec. 14, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 2 p.m. Also at Bridges Auditorium, 450 N. College Way, Claremont; Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. (Nutty Nut), Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 2 p.m., \$29-\$69, discounts for seniors & children 12 & under. 951-779-9800, <http://www.IPBallet.org>.



Inland Pacific Ballet. Photo by E.Y. Yanagi.

For two decades, **Moscow Ballet** has brought its touring version titled “*Great Russian Nutcracker*” to approximately 50 cities during November and December. This Russian company stops off at four SoCal venues. The cast of 40 includes international ballet competition winners. Jacobs Music Center, Copley Symphony Hall, 750 B St., San Diego; Wed., Dec. 18, 3 p.m. & 7 p.m., \$27-\$87. <https://www.nutcracker.com/>. Also at The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles; Sat., Dec. 21, 3 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. & 5 p.m., \$40-\$250.



Moscow Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Over the years, artistic director David Wilcox’ version of the “*Nutcracker*” for **Long Beach Ballet** has acquired an array of special effects, performers fly and perform magic. The production boasts a live orchestra and professional guest artists fill the leads joined by students from the affiliated ballet school. A pre-show luncheon with special photo ops and VIP seating is available for Sun. Dec. 17 (additional charge). Terrace Theatre, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach; Sat., Dec. 14 & 21, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15 & 22, 2 p.m., Fri. Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m., \$34-\$115. 877-852-3177, <http://www.LongBeachNutcracker.com>.



Long Beach Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Two years ago, **American Contemporary Ballet** debuted “*The Nutcracker Suite*,” a one hour, immersive experience. ACB returns at a new venue with even more shows. Metropolis Los Angeles, 877 S. Francisco St., Upper Level, downtown; Fri., Dec. 13, & 20, 8 p.m., Sat., Dec. 14 & 21, 2 p.m. & 5 p.m., Sun. Dec. 15, & 22, 2 p.m. & 5 p.m., Thurs., Dec. 12, & 19, 8 p.m., Mon., Dec. 23, 8 p.m., Tues., Dec 24, 1 p.m. \$55-\$137. <https://www.acbdances.com>.



American Contemporary Ballet. Photo by Anastasia Petukhova.

**Pasadena Dance Theatre** – Company director Cynthia Young choreographed this version of “*The Nutcracker*” for the students of her well-regarded ballet academy. The Dec. 16 & 17 shows offer refreshments and a chance to meet the heroine Clara at a “*Nutcracker Party*” before the performance (additional charge). San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, 320 Mission Dr., San Gabriel; Sat.-Sun., Dec. 14-15 & 21-22, 2 p.m., Mon., Dec., 23, 1 p.m., \$22-\$68. <http://www.PasadenaDance.org>. <https://www.pdtnutcracker.com/>.

**Festival Ballet Theatre** – More than 100 students from Southland Ballet Academy perform in this training company’s “*Nutcracker*.” Announced professional guest stars include Beckanne Sisk with Chase O’Connell (Ballet West) on Dec 13-15, Maria Kochetkova and Vitor Luis (both formerly with San Francisco Ballet) on Dec. 20-22, Jeraldine Mendoza and Dylan Gutierrez (Joffrey Ballet) on Dec. 23 & 24. The company also hosts a related “*Nutcracker Tea*,” details at <https://www.festivalballet.org/>. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Drive, Irvine; Fri., Dec. 13 & 20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 14 & 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15 & 22, 1 p.m. & 6 p.m., Mon., Dec. 23, 6 p.m., Tues., Dec. 24, 11 a.m., \$45-\$90. 949-854-4646. <http://www.theBarclay.org>.



Festival Ballet Theatre. Photo by Dave Friedman.

**Ballet Conservatory West** – Smothers Theater, Pepperdine University, 24255 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu; Sat. Dec 14, 1 p.m. & 6 p.m., \$30-\$50. <https://arts.pepperdine.edu/>.

**Red Chair Children's Production Company** – Children age five to 18 take the stage. Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., Dec. 14, 1:30 & 6:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 2 p.m., \$15-\$45. 626-683-3459. <https://alextheatre.org>.

**Palos Verdes Ballet** – Norris Theatre, 27570 Norris Center Dr., Rolling Hills Estates; Sat., Dec. 14, 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 1 p.m. & 5 p.m., \$38, \$28 age 10 & under. 310-377-6663, <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=107882>.



San Pedro City Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

**San Pedro City Ballet** – The studio where American Ballet Theatre's Misty Copeland trained showcases its current students. Warner Grand Theater, 478 W. 6th St., San Pedro; Fri., Dec. 13, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 14, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 2 p.m., \$29-\$39, \$19 seniors & children under 13. <http://www.SanPedroCityBallet.org>.

**California Dance Ensemble** – Agoura Hills Performing Arts Education Center, 2855 W. Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas; Sat., Dec. 14, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 1 p.m. & 5:30 p.m., \$22-\$32. 818-889-8058, <https://www.californiadanceensemble.org/>, <http://PerformingArts.lvusd.org>.

**Santa Clarita Ballet** – College of the Canyons, 26455 Rockwell Canyon Rd., Santa Clarita; Fri., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m., Sat., Dec. 14, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 2 p.m., \$32-\$38, \$32 seniors & children 10 & under. 661-251-6844, <http://santaclaritaballet.net>, <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=107330&pr=1>

**Antelope Valley Ballet** – Lancaster Performing Arts Center, 750 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster; Sat., Dec. 14, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 2 p.m., \$25-\$30, \$15 youth. 661-723-5950, <http://www.lpac.org/thenutcracker.php?id=2566>.

**Ballet Repertory Theatre** – Golden West College Mainstage Theater, 15751 Gothard St., Huntington Beach; Fri., Dec. 13 & 20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 14 & 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15 & 22, 1 p.m. & 5 p.m., Mon., Dec. 23, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Tues., Dec. 24, 1 p.m., \$20-\$25, \$16 seniors & under 12 years. 714-895-8150 x1, <http://www.gwctheater.com>.

**Ballet Etudes** – Huntington Beach Historic Theater, 1905 Main St., Huntington Beach; Sat., Dec. 7, 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 8 & 15, 2 p.m., Sat., Dec. 14, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., \$20-\$30. 714-902-9423, <https://www.tututix.com/client/balletetudes>.

**Laguna Ballet** – McKinney Theatre, Saddleback College, 28000 Marguerite Parkway, Mission Viejo; Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 19-20, 7 p.m., Sat., Dec. 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. & 6 p.m., \$29, \$27 students & seniors, \$25 children 12 & under. 949-582-4656, <http://www.lagunadancetheatre.com/nutcracker>, <https://www.saddleback.edu/news/arts/Laguna-Ballets-Nutcracker-2>.

**Conejo Civic Ballet Company** – Bank of America, Performing Arts Center, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks; Sun., December 15, 1:30 p.m., \$23-\$39. <http://www.balletarts.org>, <http://bapacthousandoaks.com>.

**Santa Barbara Festival Ballet** – Arlington Theater, 1317 State St., Santa Barbara; Sat., Dec. 14,

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2:30 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 2:30 p.m., \$25-\$50.  
<https://santabarbarafestivalballet.com/buy-nutcracker-tickets/>,  
<http://www.theArlingtonTheatre.com>.

**California Ballet** – A new production of the “*Nutcracker*” from artistic director Jared Nelson. San Diego Civic Theatre, 1100 3rd. Ave., San Diego; Fri., Dec. 13 & 20, 2 p.m. (1-hour version for young children), Sat., Dec. 14 & 21, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15, 2 p.m., Thurs.-Fri., Dec. 19-20, 7 p.m., Sun., Dec. 22, 1 p.m. & 5 p.m., Mon.-Tues., Dec. 23-24, 1 p.m., \$15-\$91. 858-560-5676, <http://www.sandiegotheatres.org/the-nutcracker>.

**City Ballet** – Spreckels Theater, 121 Broadway, San Diego; Fri., Dec.13 & 20, 7:30 p.m., Sat., Dec. 14, & 21, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sun., Dec. 15 & 22, 2 p.m., \$27-\$92. 858-272-8663, <https://www.cityballet.org>.

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