
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Plaiting Desire, Daring, and Dread

Ann Haskins · Thursday, April 3rd, 2025

Pastoral contemporary in a Hollywood canyon; ballet captures Shakespeare in Costa Mesa; crowd-favorite contemporary dance downtown; cultural reflections on contemporary dance in El Sereno, Pasadena, Long Beach, and downtown; art informed dance in Hollywood and downtown; new dance in progress in Atwater Village; dance infiltrated circus in Hollywood; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

OC dance crosses the border

LA-based choreographers, Jessie Lee Thorne and Bret Easterling, each unveil a local premiere created for the vibrant OC-based contemporary company **Backhausdance**. Company artistic director Jennifer Backhaus contributes her often sly dancemaking with two repertory works to complete the program. Cal State University Long Beach, Martha B Knoebel Dance Theater, 6200 E. Atherton St., Long Beach; Sat., April 5, 2 & 8 pm, \$45-\$65, \$25 students. [Backhausdance](#).



Backhausdance. Photo courtesy of the artists

With suspicious minds

Like *Othello*, the plot of Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* is fueled by jealousy, with the noble Leontes' misreading of his friend's concern for Leontes' pregnant wife unwinding everyone's lives (literally and figuratively). Rest assured choreographer Christopher Wheeldon's ballet version articulates Shakespeare's maneuverings to have everything turn right side out by the end of the third act. Created for Britain's Royal Ballet and the National Ballet of Canada in 2014, **American Ballet Theatre** now brings the ballet to SoCal for five performances. Reviews of the Royal Ballet performances found that in Wheeldon's hands, ballet solved various problematic staging issues in the play while giving a half dozen ballet stars ample dramatic and dance opportunities to make this a winner. ABT found past success with Wheeldon's *Like Water for Chocolate* and before that with his *Alice in Wonderland*. Is this an ABT/Wheeldon three-peat? Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Thurs.-Fri., April 3-4, 7:30 pm, Sat., April 5, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., April 6, 1 pm, \$44.07-\$157.07. [SCFTA](#).



American Ballet Theatre. Photo by Tristram Kenton

To the garden

Joni Mitchell exhorted us to get back to the garden. Choreographer Jacob Jonas and the dancers of **Jacob Jonas The Company** are doing just that. Aptly dubbed *Gardening* and set in an outdoor amphitheater, the program offers a series of works in progress, including *Grip*, *Nature Sounds*, *While the IV Drips*, and the second part of *Keeping Score*, the choreographer's first work since returning from brain cancer and grappling with the effort to understand illness. Franklin Canyon, 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills; Sat.-Sun., April 5-6, 4 pm (walk at 2:30 pm) \$55. <https://jacobjonas.app.getcuebox.com/o/QB0Q71N5/shows/ZTBLWZZ8>



Jacob Jonas The Company. Photo by Jacob Jonas

Dancing the gospel

The ever-popular **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** returns with two programs, each a combination of new work and repertory favorites. All shows close with the company's signature, Ailey's gospel-infused masterpiece *Revelations*. Program A also includes *Sacred Songs*, *Many Angels*, and *Treading*. Program B includes *Grace*, *Ailey Excerpts*, and *Cry*. Specifics at the website. Based in New York, AAADT currently is in the second year of an exclusive residency, so its annual SoCal visits are exclusively at this venue. Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Wed.-Sun., April 2-6, 7:30 pm, Sat. & Sun., April 5-6, 2 pm, \$49-\$179. [Music Center](#).



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in “Revelations.” Photo courtesy of the artists

What’s new

Often drawing on her Turkish heritage, the adventurous, contemporary choreographer Seda Aybay and the dancers of her **Kybele Dance Theatre** offer two evenings of new works. Stomping Ground LA, 5453 Alhambra Ave., El Sereno; Fri.-Sat., April 4-5, 7:30 pm, \$25, \$20 students. [Kybele Dance Theatre](#).



Kybele Dance Theater. Photo by Yoshi Taniyama

Into the theater

Known for presenting minimally staged events in non-traditional venues including parks and libraries, a welcome occasion finds **Benita Bike’s DanceArt** in a more traditional venue with a fully-staged performance of Bike’s contemporary danceworks. This concert includes the premiere

of *From Where I Sit*, and from the repertoire, *Off the Path*, *Aspects of Me*, *Griot Songs*, and *For Rose*. Dancers include Sarah Chan, Lauren Gold, Dakota Merritt, Dalya Modlin, and Emily Wallace. Lineage Performing Arts Center, 920 E. Mountain St., Pasadena; Sat., April 5, 8 pm, Sun., April 6, 3 pm, \$30 in advance, \$35 at door; \$20 students, \$23 at door. [Benita Bike's DanceArt](#).



Benita Bike's DanceArt. Photo by Dean Walraff

Moving on up

His art installation *Drama 1882* just wrapped at MOCA's Geffen Museum in Little Tokyo. Now, just a few blocks up Bunker Hill, **Will Rawls'** *siccer* provides the artist's dance perspectives on the documentation and distortion of Black bodies. Using stop-action film that serves as a metaphor for gaps in surveillance. The title *siccer* references the Latin word "sic" that usually appears in brackets to indicate incorrect spelling, part of Rawls' exploration of inaccuracies in the depiction of Black bodies. REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thurs.-Sat., April 10-12, 8:30 pm, \$27. [REDCAT](#).



Will Rawls. Photo by Jared Sorells

In the works

Organized by choreographers Kate Wallich, Stephanie Zaletel and Belize Wilhelm, this artist-run collective partners with the venue to “stir up deep dance discourse” in the LA dance community. The changing line up for the monthly Monday events concludes its spring season with contemporary dance through a Filipino-American lens from **Jay Carlon** and contemporary dance fused with street dance through a racial lens from **Tsiambwuom Akuchu**. In its short life, the series has proved a valuable addition to local dance with a preview of what some of LA’s cutting edge choreographers are up to. G-Son Studios, 3218 Glendale Blvd. (enter through the alley), Atwater Village; Mon., April 7, 7:30 pm, \$15. [WIP LA](#).



Jay Carlon. Photo by Nyah Rodriguez

Shifting to the light

The weekend brings the actual performance of Doug Aitken’s *Lightscape*, but first, a free mid-week rehearsal preview. Aitken sets five dancers moving through a shifting visual and immersive sonic environment that requires dancers to make real time movement responses. The rehearsal includes a Q&A with movement director Daphne Fernberger and LADP dancers Lorrin Brubaker, Jeremy Coachman, Courtney Conovan, Audrey Sides and Hope Spears. *Open rehearsal* at LA Dance Project Studio, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Arts District; Wed. April 9, noon, free w/reservation at [Tickets](#); Performance of *Lightscape* at Marciano Art Foundation, 4357 Wilshire Blvd., Hancock Park; W April 12, noon & 2 pm, free w/reservation at [Marciano Art Foundation](#).



LA Dance Project and Doug Aitken’s “Lightscape.” Photo courtesy of the artists

Audience dance

Choreography from **Melissa Carvajal** and **Vicki Liv** enlivens the circus-themed musical *Adanza – Show Me Your Dreams*. Written and directed by Brooke Ferri and Joseph (Jilbér) Ferri, the show promises a new type of musical circus by adding dance and audience participation. Eastwood Performing Arts Center, 1089 N. Oxford Ave., Hollywood; Fri., April 4, 7 pm, Sat., April 5, 3 & 7 pm, \$46. [Adanza](#).



Adanza. Photo courtesy of the artist

It's a ten

Ten performances, often including dance, each with ten minutes to showcase their talents. **Max 10** at Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Mon., April 7, 7:30 pm, \$10. [Eventbrite](#).



Max 10. Photo courtesy of the artists

A Peek at Next Week, 4/11 to 4/17

Wen Hui & Eiko Otake — *What is War* at UCLA, The Nimoy, 1262 Westwood Blvd., Westwood; Thurs., April 17, 8 pm, \$38.08. [Eiko Otake / Wen Hui: What is War | Apr. 17, 2025 | CAP UCLA](#).

Blue 13 Dance Company at Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Sat., April 12, 2 & 7:30 pm, \$12-\$35. [Sierra Madre Playhouse](#).

Parsons Dance Company at Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Thurs., April 17, 8 pm, \$34-\$130. [Irvine Barclay Theatre](#).

A.I.M by Kyle Abraham at The Wallis, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Fri., April 11, 7:30 pm, Sat., April 12, 2 pm, \$75.90-\$86.90. [A.I.M BY KYLE ABRAHAM](#).



A.I.M by Kyle Abraham. Photo courtesy of the artists

Steph Dai and Sophia Oddi — *Double Bind* at Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St.,

Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., Apr 11-12, 8 pm, \$25.63. [Highways Performance](#).

Aimar Pérez Galí with **Daniel Méndez Piña** — *A System in Collapse Is a System Moving Forward* at USC, Joyce J Cammilleri Hall, 3620 McClintock Ave., University Park; Wed., April 16, 7 pm, free w/reservation at [Visions and Voices USC](#).

Esther Mira — *Hellas* at The Broadwater Mainstage, 1076 Lillian Way, Hollywood; Fri., 7:30 pm, Sat.-Sun, 2 pm, thru May 11, \$25-\$30, \$20-\$25 students. [Tickets](#).

Festival Ballet — *Sleeping Beauty* at Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Sat., April 12, 7 pm, Sun., April 13, 2 pm, \$54-\$74. [Irvine Barclay Theatre](#).

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