

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Probability Distribution

Ann Haskins · Thursday, July 23rd, 2026

Dancing with paintings in East LA; a choreographic swan song in Irvine; de- and re-constructing a dance in Orange; SoCal dance films showcased in Downtown LA Arts District; commercial choreographers' night moves in East Hollywood; a festival flock of companies in Lakewood; plus more SoCal dance this week, and a peek at next week.

Live Performance This Week (ending July 30)

A contemporary color palette

Contemporary choreographer Raiford Rogers fills the stage with polished dancers in three works with projections of the color-drenched paintings of Mike Nava. Rogers took inspiration from Christina Rossetti's 1852 poem for *Who Has Seen the Rain?* Grammy Award-winning string ensemble Parker Quartet joins pianist Hui Wu to provide music by Maurice Ravel, Handel and Arvo Pärt for this premiere. A second world premiere, *Landscape in Blue* draws on music by John Cage. *Islands in the Sea* returns with music by Arvo Pärt and Zbyněk Matějka. At Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State University Los Angeles, 5151 State University Dr., East LA; Sat., July 25, 7 pm, \$24-\$63. [Raiford Rogers Modern Ballet](#).



Raiford Rogers Modern Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Curtain call

After 35 years cultivating new ballet choreography, celebrated founder/artistic director Molly Lynch announced that the 2026 **National Choreographers Initiative** this Saturday, will be *The Last Dance*. For this important institution's finale, NCI brought together four choreographers and 16 professional ballet dancers for three weeks of unrestricted choreographic explorations, culminating in this final performance showing what new dance directions emerge when creative possibilities are pursued without expectation of a finished product. What emerges from the NCI and the final showing often evolves to become repertoire in national and international ballet companies. The show is always intriguing, always beautifully danced, and has built a strong returning audience. Move quickly. As of press time this NCI finale is close to sold out. At the Irvine Barclay Theatre,

UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Sat., July 25, 8 pm, \$28-\$105. [National Choreographers Initiative](#).



National Choreographers Initiative. Photo by Dave Friedman

A summer festival

More than a dozen professional, pre-professional, college, and youth companies perform at the *SoCal Dance & Choreography Festival 2026* presented by the **Southern California Dance Theatre**. Announced participants include Mt. SAC Repertory Dance Company, Jose Costas Contempo Ballet, Jazz Spectrum, Felix Galavis, WLMJ & Artists, Strong Pre-Professional Company, LV Dance Collective, Bhakti Bhav Kou, Hannah Livier Mercado, Maggie Ogle & Nathan Waters, Santa Ana Dance Touring Ensemble, and the host company. at Lakewood High School, 4400 Briercree Ave., Lakewood; Sat., July 25, 5:30 pm, \$30, \$35 at door (includes fees). [SoCal Dance & Choreography Festival](#).



Backhausdance. Photo by Shawna Sarnowski

Lesson in deconstruction

The professional dancers of **Backhausdance** join participants in the company's summer intensive for a cast of 25 dancers in *Deconstructed: Hive*. The event deconstructs and reconstructs choreographer Jennifer Backhaus' percussive *Hive*. At Chapman University, Waltmar Theatre, 315 E. Palm Ave., Orange; Fri., July 24, 6 pm, \$48.75, \$38.25 students. [Backhausdance](#).

Only 147 shopping days

Alongside the freeway between Downtown LA and Pasadena, an assemblage of Victorian homes, church, and streetcar depot known as Heritage Square provides a glimpse of LA's architectural past. Defying the summer heat, Heritage Square this weekend becomes a storybook village for *Christmas in July*. The immersive event includes the youthful dancers of **Pasadena Civic Ballet** joining Santa in a 30 minute performance as the neighborhood becomes a village of storybook characters. More details at the website. At Heritage Square, 3800 Homer St., Montecito Heights; Sat.-Sun., July 25-26, 11 am & 5 pm, \$43.45-\$93.61. [Pasadena Civic Ballet](#).



Pasadena Civic Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Trading camera for stage

Commercial choreographers are usually in service to others and having their moves be sliced and diced by editors for music videos, advertisements, television, and film. **Choreographer's Carnival** allows uninterrupted stage time for choreographers to show their creative side, and maybe audition for their next commercial gig. At the Vermont Hollywood, 1020 N. Vermont Ave., East Hollywood; Thurs.- July 30-Aug. 2, 9:30 pm, \$31.86-\$43.87 (includes fees) [Choreographer's](#)

Carnival.

Getting together

Dance as seen by SoCal filmmakers, curated by the savvy eyes at **LA POP UPS**, **Dance Camera West**, and **MVMT Fest LA**, are presented in this one night only event. The screening includes a ‘talk back’ session with the filmmakers. At LA Dance Project, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Downtown LA Arts District; Wed., July 29, 8 pm, \$22.50 – \$38.50. [LA Pops Up](#).



The Great Clown Bank Show. Photo by John Dlugolecki

Send in the clowns

Created and directed by Hank Jacobs, who also acts as the “ringmaster,” **The Great Clown Bank Show** is described as a “burlesque on income inequality in 15 circus acts.” Promising a blend of dance and circus, including a clown pas de deux, the show will include a weekly guest circus act. At the Open Fist Theater Company @ the Atwater Village Theater, 3269 Casitas Ave., Atwater Village; Fri., 9 pm, Sat., 8 pm, Sun., 7 pm, thru Sat., Aug. 1, \$35.25, \$31.25 seniors, \$22.25 students. [The Great Clown Bank Show](#).



Mexodus. Photo by Thomas Mundell

Southbound escaping

Choreographer **Tony Thomas** provides the moves as the award-winning hip-hop musical *Mexodus* unearths the story of a southbound Underground Railroad that led 4,000 to 10,000 enslaved people to seek freedom in Mexico. The two-person show began at Berkeley Repertory Theater which also nurtured *Ain’t Too Proud*, the hit Motown musical about The Temptations. *Mexodus* moved east after highly successful runs, including off-Broadway where it picked up impressive attention. Thomas is the choreography part of the artistic team led by creators/performers Brian Quijada and Nygel D. Robinson and director David Mendizábal. At the Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena; Thurs.-Fri., 8 pm, Sat., 2 & 8 pm, Sun. 2 pm, thru Sun., Aug. 2, \$40-\$127. [Mexodus](#).

Sign of summer

Watch or join in as the Friday night summer series **Dance DTLA** celebrates *disco* this week. Instruction precedes the free dance. All free. A complete list of upcoming dance genres at the website. At the Music Center, Jerry Moss Plaza, 135 N. Grand Ave., Downtown LA; Fri., July 24 & 31, Aug. 7 & 14, 7-11pm, free. [Dance DTLA](#).



Dance DTLA. Photo courtesy of the Music Center

Another sign of summer

Part public performance, part participatory dance party, and free! The outdoor **Tuesday Night Dance** series hosts a second Tuesday devoted to *hula* dance. See the website for dance styles coming up on Tuesdays thru Aug. 25. Line Dance Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Argyros Plaza, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Tues., July 28, 6:30 pm. free. [Tuesday Night Dance](#).

A Peek at Next Week (July 31 to August 6)

Ballet Now: *Superstars of Paris* at the Music Center, Disney Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., Downtown LA; Fri., July 31, 7:30 pm, Sat., Aug. 1, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., Aug. 2, 2 pm, \$36-\$163. [Ballet Now: Superstars of Paris](#).

LA Dance Project — *Performance Lab with Jobel Medina, Rebecca Laufer & Mats Van Rossum* at LA Dance Project Studios, 3325 E. Washington Blvd., Downtown LA Arts District; Fri.-Sun., July 31 – August 2, 8 pm, \$40-\$75. [Performance Lab](#).

MovementFest LA — *Performance Lab Showcase* at LA Dance Project at 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Downtown LA Arts District; *Frame 001*-Fri.-Sun., Jul 31-Aug 2, 8 pm, *Body of Work*-Fri.-Sat., Aug. 7-8, 8 pm, Sun., Aug. 9, 5 pm, \$40-\$75. [LADP PRESENTS: MOVEMENTFEST LA – LA Dance Project](#).



Versa-Style Street Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists

Versa Style Street Dance Company — *Laguna Dance Festival* at Main Beach Cobblestone, Laguna Canyon Rd & Beach St., Laguna Beach; Thurs., Aug. 6, 5 pm, free. [Versa Style Street Dance Company](#).

Pan America Chinese Dance Alliance — *Laguna Dance Festival* at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach; Thurs., Aug. 6, 7 pm, free. [Pan America Chinese Dance Alliance](#).

MashUp — *Choreography Open Mic Night* at the Pickle Factory, 2828 Gilroy St., Frogtown; Sat., Aug. 1, 8 pm, \$15. [Choreography Open Mic Night](#).

Festival Ballet Theatre at Segerstrom Concert Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Thurs., Aug. 6, Inspired Young Proteges-6 pm, 17th Annual Gala of the Stars- 7 pm, \$101.50-\$169.50. [Festival Ballet Theatre](#).



Brian Henson Presents – Puppet Up! Uncensored. Photo courtesy of Center Theatre Group

Brian Henson's Muppet Up! at the Montalban Theatre, 1615 Vine St., Hollywood; Fri., July 31 & Aug. 7, 8 pm, Sat., Aug. 1 & 8, 3 & 7 pm, Sun., Aug. 2 & 9, 5 pm, \$71.70-\$87.10. [Puppet Up!](#)

Dance DTLA — *cumbia* at the Music Center, Jerry Moss Plaza, 135 N. Grand Ave., Downtown LA; Fri., 31, Also Aug. 7 & 14, 7-11pm, free. [Dance DTLA](#).

Tuesday Night Dance — *hip hop* at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Argyros Plaza, 600 Town

Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Tues., Aug 4 & 11, 6:30 pm. free. [Tuesday Night Dance](#).

This entry was posted on Thursday, July 23rd, 2026 at 6:27 am and is filed under [Theatre](#), [Film](#), [Music](#), [Dance](#), [Performing](#), [Visual Art](#)

You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.