

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Quest or Fest?

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, October 7th, 2020

Ten days of live performance concludes at a mystery site, a dance festival returns virtually for week two of four, drive-in dance films in Santa Monica, social justice dance from USC, dance with different abilities, encore streaming, dance classes, and more SoCal dance this week.

New This Week

They're back baby!

The always anticipated **LA Dance Festival** was among local spring dance events cancelled by the Covid-19 shutdown in March. Over the summer, the festival streamed virtual performances hosted by the Luckman Fine Arts Complex and also streamed performances as part of Korea's Seoul International Dance Festival. That cancelled LA Dance Festival is back, big time, as organizer Deborah Brockus and the Luckman enter the second week of this free, month-long marathon with 50 choreographers divided among four different weekends, each populated with top-notch SoCal dance companies, and each program streaming for three days that weekend. The line-up for week two includes Versa-Style Dance Company, CyberYOGA, Luminario Ballet, X2DANCECOLLECTIVE, Mixed eMotion Theatrix, Jana Taylor and Dancers, Ironstone Dance, Sandi Scheuber, Robin Bisio Films, cyan cian, Danza Floricanto/USA, Ken Morris Project, host company BrockusRED, and Kim Hyunsun, Kim Ok, and Yoo Gawon from the Seoul International Dance Festival in TANK. Sample the spectrum of SoCal dance plus visitors from South Korea from Fri., Oct. 9, 6 p.m to Sun., Oct. 11, midnight. Complete festival line-up plus other workshops and festival events at [LA Dance Festival](#) and [Luckman](#). Watch for free with tickets at [Ticketmaster](#). Meanwhile the Korean fest continues to stream at <https://ingdance.kr/22>.



Danza Floricanto/USA. Photo by Frank Sandoval.

Finishing the quest

Has it been 35 years since Heidi Duckler made her mark with dancers invading a Montana Avenue laundromat? In the decades since, Duckler and her troupe have drawn audiences into mini-adventures at vintage gas stations, an historical jail, the concrete bed of the LA River, a Chinatown theater, tunnels that once housed LA's streetcars and more. Along the way, the name evolved from the original Collage Dance Theatre to variations on Duckler's name before settling on **Heidi Duckler Dance**. After a scheduled March performance was cancelled, the troupe shifted to video, but its hallmark—engaging live audiences at sites around Los Angeles—is back with a series of live performances at ten venues over ten days to mark that 35th anniversary. Under the banner *The*

Quest, HDD moves each day to a different LA locale with shows at different times, allowing audiences to socially distance by walk-up or drive-up. The opening *Move Me*, employs a 2002 yellow Mustang at a West Hollywood synagogue (Oct. 1), followed by moves to a Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (Oct. 2), a Mt. Washington museum (Oct. 3), a DTLA Fashion District rooftop (Oct. 4), a Koreatown church (Oct. 5), a Boyle Heights music school (Oct. 6), a Culver City museum (Oct. 7), an Inglewood academy (Oct. 8), a Willowbrook medical center (Oct. 9) and a mystery surprise finale site. Complete details, addresses, performance times, and tickets starting at \$35 at [Heidi Duckler](#).



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Drive-in dance

Five Santa Monica-based dance companies usually seen on the The Broad Stage join forces for a drive-in film benefit performance under the banner *Grace and Grit*. Led by choreographer Melissa Barak, her eponymous **Barak Ballet** adapted to virtual performances after its spring Broad performances were cancelled by the Covid-19 statewide shutdown. **Ballet Folklórico Flor de Mayo**'s summer shows were cancelled, a fate that also befell Santa Monica College's long-lived contemporary company **Synapse** and its World dance company **Global Motion**. These four are joined by students and professional alumni from the highly respected training company **Westside Ballet** that also suffered cancellation of its spring performance. The drive-in event only screens this weekend. Proceeds benefit the participating companies. [More info here](#). At Santa Monica College Bundy Campus (south of Santa Monica airport), East Parking Lot, 3171 S. Bundy Drive, in West LA; Fri.-Sat., Oct. 9 & 10, 7:30 p.m. & 10 p.m., [tickets \\$50 per car](#).



Westside Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

How learning happens

Known as an inclusive dance company for individuals of various abilities, particularly those in wheelchairs, **Infinite Flow**, launches *Scoops of Inclusion*. The effort includes a short film and online learning platform with a free, virtual premiere. The free premiere does not include a live Q&A session that follows. Free premiere Sat., Oct. 10, 9 a.m. PDT. Tickets at [Eventbrite](#). Info on the DIY on-line program at [Infinite Flow](#).



Infinite Flow. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Talking about this generation

Dancer/choreographers **DaBrianna Mims** and **Jakevis Thomason** each graduated from USC's Kaufman School of Dance. They return as part of *New Leaders Now: Artists Advancing Racial Justice*, a program marking Indigenous Peoples Day sponsored by USC's Visions and Voices. They are joined by Anushka Joshi, co-founder and editor-in-chief of *GEN-ZiNE*. The virtual event streams on Mon., Oct. 12, 5 p.m., free with reservation at [Eventbrite](#).



DiBrianna Mims. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Postponed

Two to choose from

In response to poor air quality from the wildfires, the parking lot performances *Drive-In Dances* have been suspended until Oct. 13, with additional shows added into November. New schedule at and tickets at [LA Dance Project](#).

Encore Online

They dance LA

In the absence of touring companies inside its theaters, the Music Center is giving a little love and attention to LA's dance companies showcasing filmed performances from six SoCal companies. After the films premiere on [Instagram](#), the films are available for viewing at [Music Center](#). This week's streaming duo (Tues., Sept. 29) are Albertossy Espinoza's **LA Fusion Dance Theater** and Pat Taylor's **Jazz Antiqua Dance & Music Ensemble**. Espinoza draws on his Ecuadorian heritage in a Flamenco fusion duet filmed on the streets of East LA. Taylor brings jazz trumpeter Terence Blanchard's *Avgo* to life with solos filmed in parks, alleys, and a pedestrian bridge and other sites spread around LA. Earlier streams from **Versa-Style Dance Company** sent its street dancers to the beach, folkloric troupe **Pacifico Dance Company**'s had nine dancers, each at a different location representing different areas of Mexico, the tap group **Syncopated Ladies** took an existing routine to the great outdoors, and five members of Malathi Iyengar's **Rangoli Dance Company** premiered a new work for a quintet of dancers celebrating a South asian goddess of dawn and hope. All can viewed at [Music Center](#).



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

A digital Ford

Among the subtle and not so subtle changes of new management by the LA Phil, what used to be the Ford Theater is now The Ford and while the theatre itself remains closed, four digital series were announced through the end of the year. A quartet of festivals includes mostly music, but one in November is focused on dance. The Saturday morning family dance classes includes lots of dance and the streaming of past performances reflects how well the theater served as an informal summer dance festival. Up this week, a prior Ford show by **Lula Washington Dance Theater** on Thurs., Sept. 24. [Facebook](#). All events are free. Complete calendar and information at [the Ford](#).



Lula Washington Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists.

A show of force

In what may prove a timely, if unnerving coincidence, military veterans are featured in a streamed film from Diavolo's Veterans Project exploring what it means to be a true warrior on the front lines. In *This is Me – Letters from the Front Lines*, military vets and first responders explore what it means to be on the front line. Since artistic director Jacques Heim and **Diavolo Architecture in Motion** launched their **Veterans Project** in 2016, more than 500 SoCal veterans have participated in the company's gymnastic approach to movement to restore physical, mental and emotional strengths. Along the way, the project developed stunning performance works, one of which was part of Diavolo's day-long 25th anniversary celebration at the Soroya which hosted this event as

part of the theater's *Fridays at 4* series. Info at <https://www.thesoraya.org/>.



Diavolo Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian.

Silver screen shifting

After discovering their admiration for the others work was mutual, **LA Contemporary Dance Company** and Vitamin String Quartet's planned collaboration for a live performance was put on hold by the pandemic shutdown. The effort took a different turn to film, two films so far with the first now streaming. That initial release, *The Box*, managed to adhere to CDC guidelines while putting two dancers (Jamila Glass and Angel Tyson) and four musicians (Elizabeth Baba, Amanda Lo, Filip Pogády, Caleigh Drane) in the historic Heritage Square Museum. The roughly three-minute film streams on YouTube. Now a second collaboration has been added with *Blinding Light* with dancers Christian Beasley, Hyosun Choi, Jamila Glass, Nicole Hagen, Tess Hewlett, Malachi Middleton, JM Rodriguez, Ryan Ruiz, and Angel Tyson. An earlier LACDC collaboration, this time with filmmaker Nathan Kim continues to stream. The seven-minute film *BLINK*, was choreographed by artistic director Genevieve Carson in collaboration with the LACDC dancers. An official selection in the Hollyshorts Film Festival 2019, Cucalorus Festival 2019, and the San Francisco Dance Film Festival 2019, *BLINK* features dancer Hyosun Choi with Christian Beasley, Kate Coleman, Tess Hewlett, Ryan Ruiz, Drea Sobke, and Tiffany Sweat. The two films and information on other LACDC virtual programming on [their website](#).



LA Contemporary Dance Company. Photo by Nathan Kim.

Locking it up

Paying tribute to Don Campbellock, the creator of the Locking dance style, the street dance troupe **Versa Style Dance Company** and its youth organization **Versa-Style Next Generation** unveil *Finding Creativity and Fun in Our Personal Space*. The streamed performance gets help from musician Cody "CoFlo" Ferreira's *Playground Samba*. [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#). Info at <http://versastyledance.org/events/>.



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Feel like screaming?

Originally developed as a stage piece by choreographer Sophia and the dancers of **Iris Company**, the creators in 2018 presciently reworked *Screaming Shapes!* into a film. After a year on the festival circuit including SoCal's Dance Camera West, the company has released the work online. The performers include Bryanna Brock, Hyosun Choi, Cat Cogliandro, Casey Gonzalez, Kristen Holleyman, Amanda MacLeod, Joan H. Padeo, Shane Raiford, and Jamal Wade. [Iris Company](#).



Iris Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

The Moms have it

The same week that memorialized the late civil rights leader congressman John Lewis was the week Emmett Till would have been 79 years old had he not been lynched at age 14 because of his skin. In 2010, Kevin Spicer curated *The Emmett Till Project* at Highways Performance Space.

Choreographer Pat Taylor's contribution *A Kindred Woe* receives a timely encore. The work focuses on how mothers whose children have been murdered "take on the mantle" in the fight against racism and justice. The **JazzAntiqua Dance and Music Ensemble** performers include Terrice Banks Tillmon, Keisha Clark-Booth, Rayne Duronslet, Kacy Keys and Shari Washington Rhone. <https://vimeo.com/441671503>.



JazzAntiqua Dance & Music Ensemble. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Toughing it

Dancers Emara Neymour, Santiago Villarreal, and Matt Luck join choreographer **Micaela Taylor** in her video *Toughskin* now streaming. <https://www.thetlcollective.com/toughskin>.



Micaela Taylor's TL Collective. Photo by Steve Gunther.

Busy screens

Adding to its trove of streaming options, **Viver Brasil** adds a weekly spotlight on past performances. The Afro-Brazilian dance and live music ensemble offer journeys to Salvador, Bahia to explore royal orixá dances, high-flying capoeira, and samba from a Bahian Carnival. Current and past spotlight events [now available](#). Viver Brasil also was among the SoCal artists selected for KCET's *Southland Sessions*, reworking its popular family show *Celebrating Samba* for the small screen with company members performing from their homes. But through the power of Afro-Brazilian dance and live music they promise a cultural journey to Salvador, Bahia to explore royal orixá dances, high-flying capoeira, and samba from a Bahian Carnival. Streaming at [KCET](#).



Viver Brasil. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Is it a question?

Filmed during the initial Covid-19 shutdown, Emily Mast and Yehuda Duenyas' project *HOW ARE WE*, collected 15 solos, each 90-seconds including from LA choreographers. The possibilities of a plant, the bed sheets, or the corner of a room are among the starting points. Armed with a tennis racket, Carlon contributed *Anesthetized*, admitting that he wanted a socially acceptable reason to scream or grunt like Serena Williams or John McEnroe without looking like nut. Other contributors include Shannon Hafez, Jessica Emmanuel, Stacy Dawson Stearns, Jenny Marytai Liu, Constance Hockaday & Faye Driscoll, Barnett Cohen, Hana Van Der Kolk, Darrian O'Reilly, David Arian Freeland Jr., Heyward Bracey, Mireya Lucio, Dorothy Dubrule, Terrence Luke Johnson, and Mast & Duenyas. Info at [How Are We](#). Stream on [Vimeo](#).



Carlon. Photo courtesy of the artists.

More in the lunchbox

In June, **Dohee Lee**'s scheduled REDCAT performance was cancelled. The venue hopes one day to reschedule a live performance. In the meanwhile, the Korean artist whose skills span dance, drumming, singing and musical composition joins the line-up of prior dance performances from artists including Austyn Rich, Genna Moroni, Tzong-Han Wu, and Rosanna Gamson/World Wide.

Info at <https://www.redcat.org/>. [Instagram Channel](#).



Dohee Lee. Photo by Pak Han.

Moving Offstage

The *Music Center Offstage* continues to stream new and encore video clips and performances from Swing 2020, Cuba's Malpaso Dance Company, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy, Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, Infinite Flow, and Spotlight classical and non-classical dance finalists Jacob Giovanni Alvarado, Ashley Lew, Maya Alvarez-Coyne and Bergundi Loyd. <https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/>.



Malpaso Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

When one was not enough

Instead of its usual annual live performances from Black and Latinx choreographers at the Bootleg Theater, the BlakTinx Dance Festival returned with a viral format in late June. For those who missed that live stream of *Dancing on the Edge*, the show now continues on-line in four parts with works from Nancy Rivera Gomez, Shantel Ureña, Anthony Aceves, Bernard Brown, Joshua Estrada-Romero, Keilah Lomotey, Michelle Funderburk, Primera Generación, Vannia Ibargüen, Marina Magalhães, Regina Ferguson, Rubi Morales, Amber Morales, Alan Perez, Dorcas Román, Yarrow Perea, Andrea Ordaz, Eluza Santos, Briseyda Zárate, and Sadie Yarrington. With many of the works recently created, the pandemic and the streets were subjects and five pieces from earlier festivals that focused on Black Lives Matter were last minute additions. More info at <https://www.blaktinafestival.com/>. View all four programs on [YouTube](#).



BlakTinx. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Knock twice & tell them Jacob sent you

Reminiscent of what one did to enter a speakeasy in the 1920s or a Cold War spy meet-up, a select, paying audience was given the address of a Santa Monica airport parking lot with strict instructions on arriving in their cars, remaining in the cars wearing face masks, and turning on their headlights when cued. In perhaps the first "drive in" dance event, Jacob Jonas and his eponymous **Jacob Jonas The Company** performed *Parked* with those vehicles encircling the "stage," their headlights illuminating the socially spaced dancers performing to live music by Anibal Sandoval. The one-night only event was filmed by Ivan Cash and Daniel Addelson. With the five minute final cut covering interviews with the choreographer and dancers, the actual performance footage is brief, but if the cars flashing their headlights at bows was a kind of applause, the experiment garnered a vehicular standing ovation from the audience. Hopefully, the performance itself will have a separate streaming life. Info at <http://jacobjonas.com/>. Film on [Vimeo](#).



Jacob Jonas The Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Mask breathing

The scheduled premiere of choreographer Melissa Barak's first full length contemporary ballet *Memoryhouse* for her **Barak Ballet** was cancelled when Santa Monica's Broad Stage closed

with the statewide coronavirus shutdown. On what would have been the closing night, **Barak Ballet** instead went online with the premiere of *Breathe In*, a short ballet filmed at the grounds at the Holocaust Museum in what formerly was known as Pan Pacific Park in the Fairfax district. The film features Peter Chursin with Andrew Brader, Lucia Connolly, Jessica Gadzinski, Chasen Greenwood, Stephanie Kim, and with choreography by Barak. Also, there's an opportunity to sign up for the company's new YouTube channel. Info and streaming at <https://barakballet.org/> and [Facebook](#).



Barak Ballet. Photo by Djeneba Aduayom.

Alone with a chandelier

The site specific performance ensemble **Heidi Duckler Dance** has been actively exploring the possibilities in combining live and virtual performance. Earlier this summer, *Ebb & Flow: Chinatown 2020* allowed audiences to stroll about installations with dance projected into some of the constructs. Other ongoing streamed projects include a five-minute video drawn from the live performance of *The Chandelier* based on a work by Brazilian author Clarice Lispector about a woman experiencing isolation and trying to connect. Choreographed by Duckler, the performers include Himerria Wortham, Rafael Quintas, Myles Lavalley, Nicole Flores, Maureen Asic, Magdalena Edwards, Jessica Emmanuel, Jaeme Velez, David Guerra, and Paula Rebelo. [Vimeo](#). Video of the [full zoomed performance](#).



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Wonder who's watching

Drawing inspiration from the travails of Orpheus and Eurydice as well as from East German author Christa Wolf's short story about being under surveillance by the Stasi police choreographer Heidi Duckler and her eponymous Heidi Duckler crafted a tale of life behind the iron curtain. Titled *What Remains*, the work was aptly presented in the garden of a museum dedicated to the cold war and was presented in conjunction with the museum's exhibit *The Medea Insurrection: Radical Women Artists Behind the Iron Curtain*. The filmed event takes on new life with an online screening plus a discussion with the museum's chief curator Joes Segal. [Wende Museum](#).

Platforms to Submit Video Dance

Dare dancing

With cautions about staying safe while filming, organizers **Sarah Elgart** and Cultural Weekly announced round 4 of *Dare to Dance in Public* with the theme of *Pandemia*, meaning a hyper energized state. Info on the judges, prior winners, plus rules and regulations for submission at: www.dare2danceinpublicfilmfestival.com. The group's other film endeavor *Six Foot Dances* is still accepting one-minute films. Current submissions on [Instagram](#) and [Cultural Weekly](#).

Where to Find Online Dance Classes

Pandemic depression? 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.

<https://www.ladancechronicle.com>.



Dance classes listed on LA Dance Chronicle.

VOTE!

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