

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Romance Interlaces Racism: an Early California Love Story

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, September 5th, 2018

Urban Latin dance in University Park, contemporary dance travels to Long Beach and Pasadena, early California romance and racism in San Gabriel, Michoachan dance in Bell Gardens, a festival preview in San Pedro, and more SoCal dance this week.

5. Flamenco and food

Now past the quarter century mark, this venue continues to offer Spanish food (think paella) and flamenco with current dancers Claudia Moren and Jennifer “La Yeni” Larson, plus singer Antonio de Jerez and guitarist Borislav Solakov. Café Sevilla, 140 Pine Ave., Long Beach; Sat., Sept. 8, 7 p.m., \$59 <http://cafesevilla.com/long-beach-flamenco>.



Flamenco at Café Sevilla. Photo courtesy of the artist.

4. Last dance of summer

Days are still warm but that touch of chill means summer’s end and a last chance to dance under the stars with *Dance Downtown*. The eclectic ‘90’s *Night* begins with a free beginner dance lesson at 7 p.m. followed by a chance to dance or to just watch and enjoy until 11 p.m. With the Music Center Plaza closed off for renovation, the action moves to nearby Grand Park. Grand Park, 200 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri., Sept. 7, 7 p.m., free. <http://www.musiccenter.org/dancedtla>.



Dance Downtown. Photo by Javier Guillen.

3. New guy in town

Introducing new associate artistic director Elijah Laurant, it’s something of an unofficial **Pony Box Dance Theatre** weekend. Opening on Thursday (the weekend does begin with Thursday, doesn’t it?) with Laurant and choreography by Lisa deSchmidt at the Long Beach Collaborative Gallery and continuing Friday in Pasadena with a sample of Laurant’s first work for the all-male troupe and *the collective* from the repertoire. On Saturday, a private residence hosts the dancers, Laurant, and artistic director Jamie Carbetta for a performance plus wine and dinner. Art & Dance, Collaborative Gallery, 421 W. Broadway, Long Beach; Thurs., Sept. 6, 6-8 p.m., free. <http://www.artslb.org>. Floored-at ARC, 1158 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Fri., Sept. 7, 8:30 p.m., \$15. <https://www.arcpasadena.org>. Private residence, 5411 El Cedral St., Long Beach, Sat., Sept. 8, 6 p.m., \$50. <http://www.ponyboxdance.org/upcoming-performances-2/>.



Pony Box Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists.

2. Not just about US

With a delightful play on words L.A.-based **Contra Tiempo**'s *joyUS justUS* draws attention to the concept of joy along with considerations of community and concerns about justice. Choreographed by company artistic director Ana Maria Alvarez and company dancers, the new work recently was selected as a 2018 award winner by The MAP Fund which supports original live performance. After this weekend's premiere, the urban Latin dance theatre troupe takes its new work on a U.S. tour. L.A. audiences get a second look in November when Contra Tiempo reprises the work in Long Beach. USC Bovard Auditorium, 3551 Trousdale Parkway, University Park; Thurs., Sept. 13, 7:30 p.m., free w/reservation at http://visionsandvoices.usc.edu/events/listing.php?event_id=1297220. Also at Carpenter Center, Cal State University Long Beach, 6200 E. Atherton St., Long Beach; Sat., Nov. 10, 8 p.m., \$50. <http://carpenterarts.org/2018-2019/contra-tiempo-with-las-cafeteras.html>



Contra Tiempo. Photo by Eric Wolfe.

1. Retelling *Ramona*

Based on the popular 1884 story by Helen Hunt Jackson, a dramatization of *Ramona* was a regular pageant at the San Gabriel Mission for many decades and became something of a branding tool for the romantic ideal of California. **Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre** with its band of dancers, musicians, actors and performers descend on this site that actually figures in the Jackson story for *Ramona After Dark*. Choreographer Duckler combines the troupe's site-specific chops with dance, American music and contemporary perspectives on female empowerment and racial discrimination that interlace with the romanticism in this timeless coming of age tale. The two performances after the opening are dubbed *The Story of Ramona*. Same show, different pre- and post-show events. Details at <https://www.HeidiDuckler.org>. San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, 320 S. Mission Dr., San Gabriel; Fri., Sept. 7, 9 p.m., Sun., Sept. 16 & 23, 7 p.m., \$50, & students, \$15 youth. <https://missionplayhouse.org/event/ramona-after-dark>.



Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre in "Ramona" Photo by Mae Koo.

Other dance of note:

Traditional Michoachan dance, music, song and food are part of the four day festival **El Grito 2018**. Veterans Park, 6662 Loveland Ave., Bell Gardens; Thurs.-Sun., Sept. 13-16, all day, free. <https://www.facebook.com/fiestapatriaselgrito>.



San Pedro Festival of the Arts' Robin Friend's Firuze Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Later in September, the full **San Pedro ? Festival of the Arts** will unfold, but organizer Louise Reichlin and her eponymous dance troupe offer this preview with several participating performers offering a taste of what is to come. First Thursday Art Walk, People's Place, 365 W. 6th St., San Pedro; Thurs., Sept. 6, 7 p.m., free. <http://www.lachoreographersanddancers.org>, <https://triantsp.com>.

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