

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Roussève's Route Halfway to Dawn

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, September 26th, 2018

Black and Latinx choreography showcased in Echo Park, mindful dance in Santa Monica; contemporary Latina choreography in East L.A., a multi-media consideration of composer/arranger Billy Strayhorn downtown, and more SoCal dance this week.

5. Movement liquidity

Now an annual event, **SOMafest** assembles dancers and other movement artists committed to concepts loosely described as mind/body or mindful movement. A week of workshops and classes exploring the interconnectivity between mind, movement and the larger world culminates with a performance titled *Fluid Being—Fluid Body* capturing the elements that characterize this contemporary art. Announced performers include Teri Carter, Caryn Heilman, Kendra Adler, Ruth Gould-Goodman, John William Johnson, Nana Simopoulis, Ann-Marie & Jones Talmadge, Elian Chalendu, Banafsheh and musician Jeff Ali. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri., Sept. 29, 8 p.m., \$20-\$25. 310-315-1459, <https://highwaysperformance.org>.



Somafest's Ann-Marie Talmadge. Photo by Mansour Rachid.

4. A royal visit

Regarded by many as royalty among contemporary African dancers, Senegalese dancer/choreographer **Germaine Acogny** performs another choreographer's moves in Olivier Dubois' *Mon Élué Noire-Sacre #2*. Dubois set the solo work on the 74-year old Acogny who defies gravity and age in this interpretation of the Chosen One in Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps (Right of Spring)*. UCLA Glorja Kaufman Dance Theater, 120 Westwood Plaza, Westwood; Fri.-Sat., Oct. 5-6, 8 p.m., Sun., Oct. 7, 7 p.m., \$49. <https://cap.ucla.edu>.



Germaine Acogny in "Mon Elue Noire". Photo by Francois Stemmer.

3. Showcasing Latina choreographers

The New York-based **Ballet Hispánico** blends contemporary dance with flamenco, mambo, salsa and other Latin dance styles. The program features vibrant choreography from noteworthy Latina choreographers including Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Michelle Manzanales, and Tania Pérez-Salas. This performance marks the troupe's debut as the venue's resident dance company. Luckman Theater, 5151 State University Dr., East L.A.; Sat., Sept. 29, 8 p.m., \$28-\$48.

323-343-6600, <http://www.luckmanarts.org>.



Ballet Hispanico. Photo by Paula Lobo.

2. Spotlight on Black and Latinx choreographers

Now in its 6th year, the **BlakTina Dance Festival** continues to spotlight established and emerging Black and Latinx choreographers. This edition includes mostly contemporary local choreographers plus two from Phoenix where the festival expanded last year. SoCal participants include Bernard Brown/bbmoves, A_Ordaz, FUSE Dance Co, Alan Perez & Jamal Wade, Hubbard Collective, Jose Richard Aviles, Kassy Francis and Dorcas Roman, plus visiting Phoenix choreographers RaShawn Hart and Anthony Kelly. Bootleg Theater, 2220 Beverly Blvd., Echo Park; Thurs.-Sat., Oct. 4-6, 7:30 p.m., \$20. 213-389-3856, <https://bootlegtheater.org>.



Hubbard Collective in BlakTina Dance Festival. Photo by DeMello Photography.

1. Something about Billy Strayhorn

Contemporary choreographers like to blend dance with video, audio or art installations, but many struggle to keep things in balance and not have the dance overwhelmed by the other theatrical elements. David Roussève and his troupe **REALITY** have demonstrated they know where to find that sweet spot where multiple media enhance without distracting from the dance. A stunning example was Roussève's semi-autobiographical, award-winning *Stardust*, that explored a young Black man's sexual awakening. Roussève returns with his newest, an eagerly anticipated full-length *Halfway to Dawn*, inspired by life of Billy Strayhorn, the Black, gay, composer/arranger closely associated with many of Duke Ellington's hits including *Take the A Train* and the jazz interpretation of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. Further fueling high expectations is the involvement of *Stardust* collaborator video artist Cari Ann Shim Sham and a soundscore developed by d. Sabela grimes drawn from vintage recordings of Strayhorn's songs. REDCAT, Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thurs.-Sat., Oct. 4-6, 8:30 p.m., Sun., Oct. 7, 3 p.m., \$25-\$30, \$20-24 students. 213-237-2800, <https://www.redcat.org>.



David Roussève and REALITY in "Halfway to Dawn". Photo by Steve Guthier.

Other dance of note:

Songs by Tony Bennett provide the soundtrack for the West Coast premiere of choreographer Jessica Lang's *This Thing Called Love*. Other scheduled works for this visit of **Jessica Lang Dance** include *Lyric Pieces* set to music by Edvard Grieg and *Aria* to music by Handel. Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Fri., Sept. 28, 8 p.m., \$55-\$150. 949-854-4646, <http://www.thebarclay.org>.



Jessica Lang Dance. Photo by Todd Rosenberg Photography.

Next weekend starts the serious dancing in this year's **Laguna Dance Festival**, but in something of a preview this year's star attraction, **Complexions Contemporary Ballet** offers a free one-hour onstage demonstration. Full line up of festival performances and events

at <https://lagunadancefestival.org>. Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach; Thurs., Oct. 4, 7 p.m., free. <https://lagunadancefestival.org>.



Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

The Consulate of Mexico is a co-sponsor of **México Vibra!**, a free event celebrating Mexican culture. The afternoon includes regional dances, music and handcrafts from Mexico's many states. Also, food and crafts for sale. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Sun., Sept. 30, 4 to 6 p.m., free. <http://www.thebarclay.org>.

Under the banner **Chinese Warriors of Peking**, this assemblage of jugglers, acrobats, weapon handlers evoke a tale of two rival martial arts disciplines competing during the Ming Dynasty. Smothers Theatre, Pepperdine University, 24255 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu; Fri., Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m., \$20-\$45, \$20 age 17& under. <https://arts.pepperdine.edu>.



Chinese Warriors of Peking. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Not sure if skateboards moving to music count as dance, but in the spirit of generous interpretations there is **Finding a Line: Skateboarding, Music and Media**. Jason Moran and The Bandwagon provide jazz improvisations as the skateboarders display their tricks. Ford Theatres, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood; Sat., Sept. 29, 8 p.m., \$30-\$45. 323-461-3673, <https://fordtheatres.org>.

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