

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Russians Dance About Tortured Souls

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, June 14th, 2017

Retelling immigrant stories in East L.A., modern dance about opposites in Santa Monica, a Chinese duo debuts in San Marino, sampling Tchaikovsky ballets downtown, Russian ballet about a Russian ballerina in Costa Mesa, and more SoCal dance this week.

5. When opposites attract

The relationship between opposites and story of four distinctive moons are the subjects of choreographer **Aurora Lagattuta's** *hOlie luna*. The choreographer performs with dancer Ian Isles with music by Celeste Oram, vocalist Lauren Jones and pianist Mari Kawamura. Highways Performance Space, 18th St. Arts Center, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., June 16-17, 8:30 p.m., \$20. 310-315-1459, <http://highwaysperformance.org>.



Aurora Lagattuta's hOlie luna Photo by Julia Turnbull

4. All fall down

Marking a tragic one year anniversary, choreographer/visual artist **Brendan Fernandes' Free Fall 49** finds dancers falling 49 times, once for each victim of the mass shooting at the Orlando, Florida gay nightclub Pulse. While they fall 49 times, each time the dancers rise again, reflecting resilience and defiance. Acting as DJ, musician How To Dress Well orchestrates the music and the silence. Part of the Getty Center's *Friday Flights*. Getty Center, Museum Courtyard, 1200 Getty Center Dr., Brentwood; Fri., June 16, 6 -9 p.m., free. 310-440-7300, <http://getty.edu>.



Brendan Fernandes Photo courtesy of the artist

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3. Telling tales

Inspired by true stories, Gema Sandoval's **Danza Floricanto/USA** presents what promises to be the first installment of *Immigrant Stories*, reflecting contributions of actual individuals living in the community, their lives retold through Mexican folkloric dance. Performing Arts Theater, Lincoln High School, 3501 N. Broadway, Lincoln Heights; Sat., June 17, 8 p.m., \$7 in advance, \$10 at

door. 323-261-0385, <http://danzafloricantousa.com>.



Danza Floricanto/USA Photo by Frank Sandovaal

2. Shadows and light

Known for its expansive gardens, mesmerizing library and accessible art, this venue is not known for presenting dance. Yet this special event marks the only SoCal performance of Beijing-based choreographer **Gu Jiani** who, with dancer Wan Zuanqi, arrives on a U.S. tour that includes San Francisco, Seattle and New York. Trained in both classical Chinese dance and western modern dance, the two dancers interweave their dual training in Gu's *Right and Left*, moving in and out of projected shadow and light to a patchwork of electronica, Chopin and Dawn of Midi's experimental acoustics. The Huntington, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino; Fri.-Sat., June 16-17, 7:30 p.m., \$30. <http://huntington.org>.



Gu Jiani and Wan Zuanqui Photo courtesy of the artists

1. Boris is back!

Tortured souls are among choreographer Boris Eifman's favorite subjects around whom he builds sensual, even downright erotic ballets on some splendid dancers. Over the next two weekends, the choreographer and his **Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg** visit two SoCal venues. Each venue showcases a different ballet, each about tortured souls who happen to be Russian. This week it's *Red Giselle* nominally a bio of famous Russian ballerina Olga Spessivtseva, known for her portrayal of *Giselle*, the peasant girl betrayed by her aristocratic lover in Act I, but who then saves him in Act II when she is resurrected among vengeful female ghosts who condemn him to dance to death. Eifman braids elements of that romantic ballet story with true biographical facts from Spessivtseva's meteoric career, abusive relationship with a high ranking Soviet official, and her descent into madness. *Red Giselle* has been seen here before, but next week brings another work, Eifman's *Tchaikovsky*. The Russian composer is well-mined territory including Ken Russell's *The Music Lovers*, a fever dream film about the luscious music that emerged from the composer's troubled life, hellacious marriage and early death, possibly compelled suicide. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; 714-556-2121, Fri., June 16, 7:30 p.m., Sat., June 17, 2 & 7:30 p.m., Sun., June 18, 1 p.m., \$29-\$149. <http://SCFTA.org>. Also at Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri.-Sat., June 23-24, 7:30 p.m., Sun., June 25, 2 p.m., \$34-\$125. <http://musiccenter.org/eifman>.

Other dance of note:

The music that now belongs to the Sugar Plum Fairy's male partner in the *Nutcracker* was choreographed originally for eight women. Reconstructed from notation, **American Contemporary Ballet** includes a performance of that octet in *Tchaikovsky in Ballet* along with excerpts from other ballets set to the composer's music including *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Mozartiana* and *Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3*. American Contemporary Ballet, 700 S. Flower St., Suite 3200, downtown' Thurs.-Fri., June 15-16, 8 p.m., Sat., June 17, 6 & 8 p.m., Sun., June 18, 2 & 4 p.m., \$50-\$105. <http://www.acbdances.com/music-dance-la>.



American Contemporary Ballet Photo by Will Davidson

Works in progress by their adult students are presented by flamenco teacher Assieh LaMora and ballet teacher Rebecca Witjas. Westside School of Ballet, 1709 Stewart St., Santa Monica; Sun., June 18, 2 p.m., free. 310-828-2018, <http://westsideballet.com>.

Flamenco dance and music from Spain in *Ecos de España*. East L.A. Library, 4837 E. 3rd St., E.L.A.; Sat., June 17, 2 p.m., free. 323-264-0155.

The **Joya Kazi Unlimited Company and Academy** showcases dance drawn from India's popular Bollywood films. Curtis Theater, 1 Civic Center Circle, Brea; Sun., June 18, 4:30 p.m., \$25-\$45. <http://jkushakti.brownpapertickets.com>.

Named after **Lester Horton**, the legendary modern dance choreographer who built a multi-ethnic dance company and affirmed L.A. as a major source for dance and dancers (Alvin Ailey, Bella Lewitzky and Carmen de Lavallade are among notable Horton alums), the annual *Horton Awards* aptly honor outstanding contributions to the L.A. dance scene. In addition to celebrating the contributions of choreographers and dancers, this year's Hortons and its sponsor the **Dance Resource Center** give heartfelt thanks to Laura Zucker for her 25 years as head of the L.A. County Arts Commission, a major source of funding for local dance and other live performances. Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Sun., June 18, 4:30 p.m., free. <http://danceresourcecenter.org>.

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