

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Tactile Tendencies

Ann Haskins · Thursday, May 1st, 2025

Brazilian visitors merge samba and ballet downtown; Latine homecoming in Santa Monica; the LA Phil's Boulez fest features dance downtown; classical and/or contemporary ballet in Glendale, Beverly Hills, and Irvine; contemporary dance in El Sereno, Santa Monica, Glendale, and Lake Forest; flamenco infused opera downtown; more SoCal dance this busy week, plus a peek at next week.

Library dancing

Curated by choreographer/teacher/producer Jamie Nichols, the Brand Associates Dance Series opens its May series with the **Pennington Dance Group**. Known for his long career as a featured dancer with the Bella Lewitzky Company and his extended career as a teacher, choreographer, and artistic director John Pennington launches this year's series under the banner *Spirit of Dance* as the company celebrates its 25th anniversary. Come early, seating is limited. Brand Library & Art Center, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 3, 5 pm, free. [Brand Library & Art Center](#).



Pennington Dance Group. Photo by Denise Leitner

22 explore 21

Last seen here in 2011, the Brazilian contemporary company **Grupo Corpo** is known for combining contemporary ballet with cultural elements for a distinctive take on dance. The company name loosely translates from the Portuguese as “body group” and has been known for its distinctive use of classical music along with Brazilian composers. For the three-part ballet, *21*, the choreography to music by Marco Antônio Guimarães combines the energy of Brazilian folk dances with the formality of classical ballet as the company’s 22 dancers explore rhythmic and timbral combinations around the number 21. Afro-Brazilian religious rituals fuel the second work, *Gira*, as choreographer Rodrigo Pederneiras reconstructs the gestures of *Umbanda* and *Candomblé* ceremonies set to 11 musical themes by the Brazilian fusion group Metá Metá. Music Center, Ahmanson Theatre, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri.-Sat., May 2-3, 7:30 pm, Sun., May 4, 2 pm, \$27-\$78. [Music Center](#).



Grupo Corpo. Photo courtesy of the artists

Going Hollywood

Film music and MTV meet Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* and Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* in **Hollywood Ballet**’s *From Tradition to Innovation*. The classical offerings include the White and Black Swan pas de deux from *Swan Lake*, the technically demanding *Diana and Acteon*, and the romance of *Romeo and Juliet*. This mix of classics and contemporary is becoming the hallmark of this emerging addition to the LA-based ballet scene. The Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., May 3, 7:30 pm, \$50.99-\$114.99. [Tickets](#).



Hollywood Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Together again

Conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen teams with choreographer Benjamin Millepied and the dancers of **LA Dance Project** for the finale of an LA Phil program celebrating the centennial of conductor/composer Pierre Boulez. Commissioned by the LADP, the LA Phil, the Orchestre de Paris – Philharmonie, and the New York Philharmonic, *Rituel* arrives in LA after Paris and before New York, all conducted by Salonen and danced by LADP. Details on the rest of the program are at the website. Walt Disney Hall, 151 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Thurs. & Sat., May 8 & 10, 7:30 pm, Sun., May 11, 2 pm, \$55-\$219. [LA Phil](#).



LA Dance Project. Photo by Josh Rose

Sad shadows

Choreographer **Kevin Williamson** has been thinking a lot about the energy and the periphery of sadness. The result to this point, a series of meditative works under the banner *Blue*, are on view for two nights. Stomping Ground LA, 5453 Alhambra Ave., El Sereno; Fri.-Sat., May 2-3, 8 pm, \$17.85. [Eventbrite](#).



Kevin Williamson. Photo courtesy of the artist

Can you go home again?

Part of this venue's annual a/o/x series (formerly Latinx New Works), **MARYSAN** offers the duet *El Camino a Casa (Homecoming or The Road Home)*. The work explores a Latine family world where the pendulum moved between "not enough" and "too much." Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri., May 2, 8 pm, \$25, \$20 students/seniors. [Highways](#).



Jacob Jonas The Company. Photo by Jacob Jonas

Who Who?

Choreographer Jonas and his **Jacob Jonas/TheCompany** last gathered outdoors in a sunlit Hollywood canyon. This time, they are bringing the audience into the industrial indoors for *OWL*, an evening titled after that nighttime raptor. Promising a blend of dance, sculpture and sound, the company invites the adventurous to a private warehouse to freely wander through the space or stand and watch (limited seating will be available for those who require or with disabilities). The program includes several works and the premiere of *RIVER*. Private warehouse, address w/ticket purchase, Santa Monica; Fri., May 2, 8 pm, \$55. [Jacob Jonas](#).

It's a ten

Ten performers, including dancers, each with ten minutes to win over the audience. It's the mostly monthly, first Monday series, **Max 10**. Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Mon., May 5, 8 pm, \$15, [Eventbrite](#).

Going solo

In *Welcome to the Dream Factory*, American Ballet Theatre principal **Herman Conejo** makes a solo appearance with the musical ensemble **MUSE/IQUE** to explore the musical impact of European immigrants on film music in the 1930s and 1940. Two chances to see at two venues. The Huntington, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino; Wed., April 30, 7:30 pm. Also at The Wallis, 9390 N

Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Sat., May 3, 7:30 pm, Sun., May 4, 2:30 & 7:30 pm, \$75 donation for single admission, trial and season membership at [MUSE/IQUE](#).



Herman Cornejo. Photo courtesy of the artist

New plus tried and true

Excerpts from the repertoire and new contemporary dances are part of *An Evening of Dance & Community*, a fundraiser and reception from **Nannette Brodie Dance Theater**. Spectrum Dance Center, 22661 Lambert St., Suite 204, Lake Forest; Sun., May 4, 7 pm, \$50, \$30 students. [Nannette Brodie Dance Theatre](#).



Nannette Brodie Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists.

A hurtful heritage

Is trauma inheritable to be passed on to subsequent generations? That epigenetic question is explored by the contemporary company **Donna Sternberg & Dancers** in *Ancestor Voices*. As a choreographer, Sternberg is known for her many years partnering with distinguished scientists to translate scientific fields into movement. The venue may focus on the Jewish community, but the concerns sadly apply to far too many other communities. **Donna Sternberg & Dancers** — *Ancestors Voices* at the Skirball Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Brentwood; Thurs., May 1, 8 pm, \$15-\$20. [Skirball Center](#).



Donna Sternberg & Dancers. Photo courtesy of the artists

Expanding dance

Professional dancers highlight **Dance & Dialogue**'s event *Celebrate LA*. Led by Ricka Glucksman Kelsch, the non-profit offers multi-generational programs expanding dance knowledge and participation. Announced performers include LA Jazz Dance Company under the direction of Jackie Sleight as well as dancers Jorge Rivas, Shantel Urena, G'bari Gilliam, and Darrell (Friidom) Dunn, along with a special performance by LA's seasoned (60+) dancers under the direction of Bill Goodson. at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre, 4401 W. 8th St., Hancock Park; Wed., April 30, 7:30 pm, free w/reservation [Eventbrite](#).



LA Jazz Company. Photo by Denise Leitner

Persuasive percussion

Grammy-nominated composer Jose Luis de la Paz provides the score for *Quinto Elemento (Fifth Element)*, the 75-minute work for six dancers of **Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana**. Grammy-nominated composer Jose Luis de la Paz provided the score; dancer Patricia Guerrero provided the choreography as the popular flamenco company stops off on its current tour. Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Thurs., May 1, 8 pm, \$34-\$130. [Irvine Barclay](#).



Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana. Photo by Steve Johnson

Pre-pro mixed bill

A pas de deux from *Paquita* and contemporary ballet works highlight *Momentum 2025*, from the training company **Orange County Ballet Theater**. Students from the Dmitri Kulev Classical Ballet Academy are joined by former Mariinsky soloist Alexander Saveliev. Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Tues., May 6, 7:30 pm, \$44-\$54. [Irvine Barclay](#).

Quebec callers

Combining contemporary dance and performance with a circus show, the Quebec-based **N.Omes** arrives for a single performance. Theatre Raymond Kabbaz, 10361 W. Pico Blvd., W.LA; Thurs., May 1, 7 pm, \$44.52, \$28.52. [Eventbrite](#).



N.Omes. Photo courtesy of the artists

Lorca lore

Directed and choreographed by Deborah Colker, **LA Opera's** *Ainadamar* draws on Flamenco and Spanish dance as well as a libretto by David Henry Hwang to recount poet/playwright Federico Garcia Lorca's last days. The opera takes its title from the site where Lorca was executed as part of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco's reign of terror after the Spanish civil war to eliminate artists whose work opposed Franco's dictatorship. Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Sat., May 3, 7:30 pm, Sun., May 4 & 18, 2 pm, Wed., May 7 & Thurs., May 15, 7:30 pm, \$32.50- \$296. [Ainadamar – LA Opera](#).



LA Opera's "Ainadamar." Photo by Marty Sohl

Greek roots

Choreographer/dancer **Esther Mira** is part of the creative team and also dances in the cast of *Hellas*, written and directed by Christopher William Johnson. This new play surveys the Greek

roots of western civilization, complete with dance and fight choreography. The saga is present in part on Fridays, while Saturday and Sunday offer the full marathon production. The Broadwater Mainstage, 1076 Lillian Way, Hollywood; Fri., 7:30 pm, Sat.-Sun, 2 pm, thru May 11, \$25-\$30, \$20-\$25 students. [Tickets](#).



Hellas. Photo courtesy of the artists

Gala No. 1

In case anyone doubted that she is the pre-eminent patron of dance in LA, Gloria Kaufman is the honoree at the 10th anniversary celebration of her eponymous Gloria Kaufman School of Dance at USC (her name is also on a dance building at UCLA, the Music Center dance season, and a performance venue in Cheviot Hills, among others). Performances by known stars, students, and alums are scheduled along with a film about Kaufman by choreographer Mandy Moore. USC, Gloria Kaufman School of Dance, 849 W. 34th St., University Park; Sat., May 3, 5 pm reception, 6 pm performance, 8 pm dinner/dancing, \$1,500-\$7,000. [USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance 10th Anniversary Gala](#).



USC Kaufman students rehearsing. Photo by Diego Lopez

Gala No. 2

Marking its 20th anniversary, **Laguna Dance** takes flight, figuratively, hosting its annual gala at an air museum. Dance performance, food, drinks, and other fundraising activities. Lyon Air Museum, 19300 Ike Jones Rd., Santa Ana; Sat., May 3, 5 pm reception/dinner, 7 pm performance, \$250. [Laguna Dance Festival](#).

A Peek at Next Week May 9 to 15

BODYTRAFFIC at Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Thurs., May 15, 8 pm, \$44-\$109. [Tickets](#).

Benita Bike's DanceArt at Buena Vista Branch Library, 300 N. Buena Vista St., Burbank; Wed., May 14, 7 pm, free. [Benita Bikes Danceart Company](#).

LA Unbound — *Spring Show* at Mainstage Theatre, Glendale Community College, 1601 E. Mountain Ave., Glendale; Sat., May 10, 4 & 7:30 pm, \$20-\$30, [Tickets](#).

Afro-Peruvian Experience Dance Co. at the Brand Library & Art Center, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 10, 5 pm, free. [Brand Library](#).

MOMentum Place at Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga Canyon; Sun., May 11, Optional brunch – noon – 1:30 pm \$40; performance — 2 pm, \$45, \$35 students/seniors, \$15 children 12 & under; [Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum](#).



MOMentum Place. Photo courtesy of the artist

Milka Djordjevich — *Bob* at MOCA, Geffen Contemporary, Fri., May 9, 7:30 pm, Sat., May 10, 4 pm, \$12. [MOCA](#).

Paul Donald — *In Grain* at Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri., May 9, 8 pm, \$25, \$20 students/seniors. [Highways](#).

CalArts Spring Dance at REDCAT, Disney Hall, 621 W. 2nd St., downtown; Tues.-Wed., May 13-14, 8:30 pm, \$20. [REDCAT](#).

HomeLA — *Garden Party* at Rodriguez House, 2567 Glendower Ave., Glendale; Sat., May 10, 11 am-2 pm. \$200-\$350. [Garden Party](#).

State Street Ballet — *The Brilliance Program* at the Lobero Theatre, 33 E. Canon Perdido St., Santa Barbara; Fri., May 9, 7:30 pm, Sat., May 10, 2 pm, \$35-\$65, \$24 students/children. [Lobero Theatre](#)

This entry was posted on Thursday, May 1st, 2025 at 8:53 am and is filed under [Theatre](#), [Music](#), [Dance](#), [Uncategorized](#), [Performing](#), [Visual Art](#)

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