Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

TED-Talking Street Dancers On What Ails Us

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, May 15th, 2019

Street dance closes a Glendale library series, masculinity from a trans perspective in Santa Monica, contemporary dance in Irvine, Brazilian dance downtown, ballet in Burbank, gaga in Highland Park, and more SoCal dance this week.

5. They have magic to do, just for you

With the current tv series tracking the relationship of dancer Gwen Verdon and choreographer/director Bob Fosse who choreographed and directed *Pippen* on Broadway, the new production of *Pippen* from **Lineage Dance** is well timed. For this dance-drenched show, Lineage's dancers are joined by singers and actors to fully realize the musical, a supposed biography of Pippen, the son of the conqueror Charlemagne and his *Candide*-like travails. First United Methodist Church, 500 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Fri.-Sat., May 17-18, 8 p.m., Sun., May 19, 7 p.m., $20-$35. https://www.lineagepac.org/.

Lineage Dance's "Pippen". Photo courtesy of the artists.

4. Boys will be boys…or will they?

In 1989, Highways Performance Space opened its doors with a commitment to include and showcase LGBT issues and artists among its dance, performance and theater presentations. Over the years, the venue's outreach has expanded from LGBT to the more expansive and inclusive LGBTQIA. Despite setbacks, disappointments and tragedy, the venue has been a force and a forum for progress and acceptance. Under the banner *Behold!*, Highways declared May and June a two month celebration of its 30th birthday presenting veteran Highways performers who gained national fame interspersed with a new generation of artists younger than the venue. This weekend's dance festivities offer new works with a transgender perspective from **Sean Dorsey Dance** under the banner *Boys in Trouble.* Known for tackling issues along the masculinity spectrum, his athletic choreography, and breakneck dances, Dorsey's highly skilled and committed dancers include Brian Fisher, ArVejon Jones, Nol Simonse, and Will Woodward. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., May 17-18, 8:30 p.m., $25, $20 students & seniors. https://highwaysperformance.org/.

Sean Dorsey Dance. Photo by Lydia Daniller.

3. Relationship layers in motion

World premieres from guest Dwight Rhoden and company director Jennifer Backhaus promises **Backhaus Dance**'s signature blend of high-energy contemporary dance with classically trained dancers. Director and choreographer for Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Rhoden contributes *Scene Unseen* described as exploring "the tangled layers of relationships". Backhaus' *One Continuous Line* focuses on motion that is handed off then ricochets, taking on a life of its own. Choreographer Walter Matteini's 2018 *Beyond the Noise* completes the program. Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Wed., May 22, 8 p.m., Tickets $40-$100.

Backhaus Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

2. And while there, check out a book

For more than a decade, Jackie Lopez (aka Miss Funk) and Leigh Foaad (aka Breeze-lee) have led the street dance troupe **Versa Style Dance**, gaining attention for its range of styles and for doing good things, not just bringing great dance. Company members, many who join while still in high school, commit to completing school and the troupe has an admirable 100% graduation rate. Many dancers go on to college, some of whom return to perform and teach in the organization's outreach efforts. This performance is distinctive in bringing street dance into a venue and long-running free series that generally has focused on modern dance, until now. Brand Library & Art Center, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale; Sat., May 18, 6 p.m., free. https://www.brandlibrary.org.

Versa Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

1. Joining jointless forces

Two veteran street dancers who both started on the Santa Monica promenade, **Jon Boogz and Lil Buck** went on to national fame in their own right and in collaboration under the banner MAI (Movement Art Is). Their graphic video *Color of Reality* and TED Talk *A Dance to Mother Earth* both became viral hits (viewable at http://movementartis.com). Live performance remains the best way to experience their distinctive individual styles and the impact of their combined forces to employ dance to articulate larger cultural and political issues The two arrive with a handful of accomplished street dancers for a single performance of their highly praised *Love Heals All Wounds*. Despite its Hallmark Channel title, the dancers confront issues of mass incarceration, the environment, diversity, and the power of empathy to cut through the noise. The performance ticket is also good for a post party with the dancers, DJs, appetizers and drinks. UCLA Royce Hall, 10745 Dickson Court, Westwood; Thurs., May 23, 8 p.m., $29-$99. 310-825-2101. https://cap.ucla.edu/.

Jon Boogz and Lil Buck. Photo by Tim Salez.

Other dance of note:

Variations from ballet classics *Swan Lake* and *Le Corsaire* are joined by two new contemporary ballet works in *Up Close & Personal II* from **Pacific Ballet Dance Theatre** led by Natasha

Middleton**.** This in-studio show will support PBDT's upcoming summer performances. Media City Dance, 237 E. Palm Ave., Burbank; Sun., May 19, 3 p.m., $32. https://www.pacificballetdancetheatre.com/performances.

Pacific Ballet Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Danielle Agami and the dancers of her troupe **Ate 9** perform in an intimate setting, the living room at The Ruby Street, 6408 Ruby St., Highland Park; Thurs., May 16, 23 & 30, 8 p.m., $20, $40 only May 30 includes end of season party. https://www.ate9dancecompany.com/.

Ate 9. Photo by Cheryl Mann.

The second of three weekends of studio shows coming out of the Los Angeles Dance Project's residency program features new work by two choreographers. **Ghislain Grellier** is researching mythology in ballet while **Katherine Helen Fisher** focuses on movement and dance for camera. Proceeds from the showcase go to the artists. Los Angeles Dance Project Studio 2245, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., downtown; Sat., May 18, 8 p.m., $10. https://www.artful.ly/store/events/17874.

UCLA Taara. Photo by SPV Studio.

The competitive South Asian classical dance team **UCLA Taara** joins with Naya Zamaana, UCLA's South Asian *a cappella* singers in a program of traditional and innovative South Asian dance and music. Fowler Museum, UCLA, 308 Charles E Young Dr, North, Westwood; Wed., May 22, 6 p.m., free. https://www.fowler.ucla.edu/events/fowler-out-loud-ucla-taara-and-naya-zamaana/.

Jmy James Kidd and **Tara Jane O'Neil** share the stage with *new paintings, patterning, music and dance.* Pieter, 420 W. Avenue 33, #10, Lincoln Heights; Sat., May 18, 7 p.m., non-monetary contribution to free bar or boutique. **https://pieterpasd.com/.**

Benita Bike's DanceArt. Photo courtesy of the artists.

For an easy intro to how dance is created, consider this **Benita Bike's DanceArt** performance. Three dances are performed with a chance for a Q&A with the performers. This program includes a new work *Plugged* considering how interacting with machines affects people. Culver City Senior Center, 4095 Overland Ave., Culver City; Sun., May 19, 1:30 p.m., free. http://danceart.org/.

Viver Brasil. Photo by Susan Goines.

Brimming with Afro-Brazilian dance, **Viver Brasil** brings its family-friendly *Celebrating Samba* to the stage in this free performance. L.A. Central Library, Mark Taper Auditorium, 630 W. 5th St., downtown; Sun., May 19, 2 p.m., free with ticket. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/la-made-viver-brasil-celebrating-samba-tickets-59587761599?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete.

Milka Djordjevich.
Photo courtesy of France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX).

The interplay of the architecture contained in R.M. Schindler's famous concrete "Slab-Tilt" Schindler House in West Hollywood and artist Alison Knowles' 1960's intermedia piece The Play House is grist for *Shelter or Playground-The House of Dust at the Schindler House*, a series of performative investigations. The four month exhibit launched with a day of performances from an international roster of choreographers including locally-based **Milka Djordjevich**. Djordjevich's work is the only dancemaker getting a repeat showing, twice a month until June. Details on the architecture and avant garde movement that inspired this event and the extended endeavor that incorporates Djordjevich's performances at https://makcenter.org. Schindler House, 835 N. Kings Rd., West Hollywood; Sat., May 18, June 1, 3 p.m., free.

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