Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Thoughtful Provocations

Ann Haskins · Saturday, February 24th, 2024

A jazzy salon in Culver City, street dance battles in Burbank, ballet meets tap meets New Zealand in Laguna Beach, a contemporary triptych in mid-Wilshire, African diaspora considered in Santa Monica and University Park, modern dance deciphered in Sylmar, Lewis Carroll revisited in Orange and Malibu, the finale for dying lovers, more SoCal dance this week and a peek at next week.

Live This Week

Three to provoke

Inspired by the events of January 6 and the reality of late stage democracy in America, the contemporary company **Laurie Sefton Creates** premieres *Herd. Person?* Choreographer Laurie Sefton is a thoughtful provocateur and this time considers how a person can retain or be robbed of the capacity for independent thought and action while part of a larger group or tribe. The new work is joined by two other Sefton works: *Triptych: Experience in Defiance,* her 2018 collaboration with LA-based hip hop and spoken word artist Jason Chu and an excerpt from *Girl, Get Off*, her 2017 plea for sexual tolerance. LA Dance Project, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., Arts District; Thurs.-Sat., Feb. 22-24, 8 pm, $30. Laurie Sefton Creates.

Laurie Sefton Creates. Photo by Denise Leitner

At last!

The stature of **BODYTRAFFIC** and its splendid dancers is underscored by the caliber of choreographers company artistic director Tina Finkelman Berkett attracts to set their works on the company. Trey McIntyre for one, does not let just anyone dance his ballets. The upcoming program, *In Pursuit of Love*, offers a triptych including *Blue Until June*, McIntyre's rapturous tribute to Etta James (yes, *At Last* is one of the songs). Also on the program, Micaela Taylor's reconsideration of the Puccini opera *Madame Butterfly* and Ethan Colangelo's *Recurrence*. Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Audrey Irmas Pavilion, 3663 Wilshire Blvd, Mid-City; Thurs., Feb. 29, 7:30 pm, $50. Home Season.

BODYTRAFFIC. Photo courtesy of the artists

A trio pairs up

The mainstage performances of this year's **Laguna Dance Festival** brings a first look at New Zealand's **Black Grace**, directed by Neil Ieremia. The company offers a free (with reservation) Thursday preview of its merging of Pacific Islander dance with contemporary movement. The company is showcased in a ticketed performance on Friday, and returns Saturday to share the evening with **Los Angeles Ballet,** which has a second show Sunday shared with the tap troupe **Sophisticated Ladies.** Festival director Jody Gates is also contributing a new work. Details at the website. Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach; Thurs, Feb., 22, 6 pm, free w/reservation, Fri.-Sat., Feb. 22-24, 7:30 pm, Sun., Feb. 25, 2 pm, $60, $30 students Laguna Dance Festival.

Black Grace. Photo courtesy of the artists

And all that jazz

Salon meets cabaret as producer/artistic director Deborah Brockus presents *Blue*, promising a jazzy night of contemporary dance from her **Brockus *RED*** and several collaborating

companies. Veterans Memorial Complex, Garden Room, 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City; Fri.-Sat., Feb. 23-24, 7:30 pm, $15. Reservations at Esmeralda.danceinla@gmail.com.

BrockusRED. Photo by Denise Leitner

Philly visitors

Gospel music and speeches from the Civil Rights Movement provide the soundtrack as Philadelphia-based **waheedworks** presents the west coast premiere of *Bodies as Site of Faith and Protest.* USC, Bovard Auditorium, 3551 Trousdale Pkwy, University Park; Wed., Feb. 28, 7:30 pm, free w/reservation at Event Calendar | USC Visions & Voices.

waheedworks. Photo courtesy of the artists

Interwoven

The African diaspora and its traditions of dance and music have been captured in traditional quilting. In *The Fabric of Our Country*, **Tashara Gavin-Moorehead** with **Keisha Clark-Booth, Alli Gray Odeniyide** & **Malani Janel** explore the historical sweep of that tradition. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., Feb. 23-24, 8:30 pm, $25, $20 seniors/students. EVENTS | Highways.

Tashara Gavin-Moorehead. Photo by Louis Kenqi Carr

Lovers' last gasp

The British choreographer who transformed *Swan Lake* into a tale of ballet men in feathered knickers arrives with the 2019 **Matthew Bourne's Romeo & Juliet**. Shakespeare's star-crossed central lovers remain, as does Prokofiev's seductively dissonant score, but the action has been moved from Verona, Italy to a dystopian asylum and Juliet's vile cousin Tybalt is now a sexually abusive warden. Bourne does darker with the best, yet still sets a standard for drawing out the poignant moments and bits of light in his shadowy retellings. Music Center, Ahmanson Theatre, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Tues.-Fri., 8 pm, Sat., 2 & 8 pm, Sun., 1 & 6:30 pm, thru Sun., Feb. 25, $35-$155. CTG.

Matthew Bourne’s Romeo and Juliet. Photo by Johan Persson

Alice redeux

The imaginative, gymnastic, contemporary dance company **MOMIX** returns with its *Alice*, its theatrical retelling of Alice in Wonderland. Two chances at two venues. Chapman College, Musco Center for the Arts, 415 N. Glassell, Orange; Fri., Feb. 23, 7:30 pm, $32.75 -$73. Musco Center. Also at Pepperdine University, Smothers Theater, 24255 Pacific Coast Hwy, Malibu; Wed., Feb. 28, 8 pm, $32.50-$65. MOMIX: Alice | Lisa Smith Wengler Center for the Arts | Pepperdine.

Momix. Photo by opuscactus

Samba on down

If a quick trip to Rio de Janeiro is not on the schedule, consider the *23rd Annual LA Brazilian Carnaval – Carna-Folia* with **LA Samba Dancers**. Teragram Ballroom, 1234 W. 7th St., downtown; Sun., Feb. 25, 4 pm, $25. Brazilian Nites Events.

LA Samba Dancers. Photo courtesy of the artists

Woven spaces

A new work using fabric to carve and connect the space and dancers as well as a remembrance of the love and challenge of the relationship with her mother, highlight this performance of Benita Bike's choreography by her **Benita Bike's DanceArt**. LA Mission College, AMP Theatre, 13356 Eldridge Ave., Sylmar; Thurs., Feb. 29, 7 pm, free. Benita Bikes Danceart Company.

Benita Bike’s DanceArt. Photo by Dean Walraff

Let the battles begin

The first battle launches the preliminary qualifying rounds for **Versa-Style’s Annual Festival 2025** with *House Dance Battle 1 v 1*. The winner of this upcoming jam gets special elevation, qualifying for the festival and skipping the prelims. Mihran K Studios, 135 N. Victory Blvd., Burbank; Fri., Feb. 23, 8 pm, $15, Versa Style Dance.

Versa Style Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

A vision in view

Faculty choreography in an array of genres and a staging of George Balanchine's *Serenade* highlight **UCI Dance Visions**, the annual performance by the university's dance department**.** Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Thurs.-Fri., Feb. 22-23, 8 pm, Sat., Feb. 24, 2 & 8 pm, $30, $26 seniors, $10 students & children. Irvine Barclay.

UCI Dance Visions Photo courtesy of UC Irvine Dance Department

An homage

In *Continuing the Legacy*, choreography by **Jazz Spectrum Dance Company** founder Christine Baltes has been re-staged and re-created by current director Janell Burgess to celebrate the company's 42nd anniversary. Spectrum Dance Center, Studio Theatre, 22661 Lambert St., Suite 204-205, Lake Forest; Sun., Feb. 25, 5 pm, $42. Jazz Spectrum Dance Company.

Jazz Spectrum Dance Company. Photo by Tony Mierzwicki

Dance with the fish

As part of this day-long family friendly event, look for **African American Dance.** Aquarium of the Pacific, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach; Sat.-Sun., Feb., 24-25, 9 am to 5 pm, $45, $42 seniors, $30 youth. Aquarium Events Landing Page.

A Peek at Next Week

Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo — *Coppél-i.A.* at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Thurs.-Fri., March 7-8, 7:30 pm, Sat., March 9, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sun., March 10, 1 pm, $39-$149. SCFTA.

Ladies of Hip Hop, **Toyin Sogunro** of the **Nefer Global Movement**, and **Breakthrough Hip Hop** – *Cypher Summitt Block Party* at USC, Glorya Kaufman International Dance Center, 849 West 34th St., University Park; Sat., Mar. 2, 2 pm, Cypher Summit Block Party 2024.

Jazzantiqua Dance & Music Ensemble — *The Stories We Tell* at Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Sat., March 2, 8:30 pm, $25, $20 seniors/students. Performance | Highways.

JazzAntiqua. Photo courtesy of the artists

American Contemporary Ballet — *Jazz* at ACB Studios, Bank of America Plaza, 333 S. Hope St., Suite C-150, downtown; Fri.-Sat., March 1-2, Thurs.-Sat., March 7-9 & 14-16, Thurs.-Fri., March 21-22, 8 pm, $60-$140. Season XII Jazz — ACB.

LA International Flamenco Festival — Karime Amaya & Mizuho Sato at Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Thurs., March 7, 8 pm, $35-$90. Also, José Maya & Mizuho Sato at Wilshire Ebell Theatre, 4401 W. 8th St., Mid-Wilshire; Sat., March 9, 8 pm, $40-$90. LA International Flamenco Festival.

Mizuho Sato Photo by Gennia Cui

Batsheva Dance Company — *MOMO* at the Granada Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara; Tues., March 5, 8 pm, $46-$106. UCSB.

Footloose the Musical at the Colony Theater, 555 N. Third St., Burbank; opens Sat., March 2, 8 pm, then Fri., 8 pm, Sat., 2 & 8 pm, Sun., 3 pm, thru Sun., March 17, $55-$75, Colony Theatre.

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