

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Thrice, Again, Before They Go

Ann Haskins · Thursday, May 28th, 2026

Beverly Hills hosts farewell from a top tier SoCal company; surround dance in a Hawthorne toy company; *al fresco* dance in West Hollywood, Century City and Hancock Park; South Asian dance in Venice; mixed bill ballet in Brea, Santa Monica, and downtown LA; escapism in Lincoln Heights, dance-drenched musical theatre in Pasadena and Little Tokyo; more So Cal dance this week, and a peek at next week.

Live Performance This Week (thru June 4)

A so long sampler

BODYTRAFFIC is an occasion, especially when it is a return to this dance-friendly venue. Eager anticipation of this end-of-season show turned bittersweet with the March announcement the company will close after 20 years. Founded by two exceptional dancers, Lillian Barbeito who left to build the Carmel Dance Festival, and Tina Finkelman Berkett who continued as the sole artistic director, the company demanded national attention for its exceptional dancers and diverse repertoire. Berkett curated a cadre of dancers, each distinctive, all collaborative, and polished in both training and artistry that drew important choreographers. Hard to choose among the three different programs announced for these *Final LA Performances*. All three include *A reimagined work*, new from Fernando Magadan. Thursday also offers *Schachmatt*, Cayetano Soto's sly nod to Joan Rivers and Bob Fosse, and company member Joan Rodriguez' *Bloquea'o* drawing on his Cuban-American background. Friday's show includes *Mayday*, artistic associate Trey McIntyre's homage to Buddy Holly, and *O2 Joy*, Richard Siegal's tribute to movie musical dancers. Saturday reprises Siegal's *O2 Joy*, this time with McIntyre's excursion through the Etta James songbook, *Blue Until June*. A bit more summer touring, then the company closes. Berkett and the dancers all have more dance in them, just not in the alchemic magic that they make together as **BODYTRAFFIC**. At the Wallis, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Thurs.-Fri., June 4-5, 7:30 pm, Sat., June 6, 2 pm, \$42.90-\$98.90. **BODYTRAFFIC**.



BODYTRAFFIC in Trey McIntyre's "Mayday." Photo by Kevin Parry

All the Kings roads

Any performance by the dancers of Bringing a California twist to the Japanese concept of 'forest bathing,' *Park Bathing* finds **Donna Sternberg & Dancers** dancing in a WeHo park, drawing the audience through the verdant venue for an interactive, site-specific dance performance. The park's architecture and natural environment provide an indulgent, sensory experience. Appropriate clothing and shoes for a park are encouraged. At Kings Road Park, 1000 Kings Rd. West Hollywood; Sun., May 31, 2-3 pm, free w/reservation at [Donna Sternberg & Dancers](#).



Donna Sternberg & Dancers. Photo courtesy of the artists

What Paris saw

Last June, Paris saw four days of outdoor dance performances that toured the city, an effort led by Benjamin Millepied and Dimitri Chamblas, French-born choreographers who divide their time between France and LA. In France, Millepied's Paris Dance Project was behind the event, and his **LA Dance Project** presents this expanded edition. This time, *City of Dance* runs for three weeks and tours seven *al fresco* sites from downtown to Santa Monica with stops at Century City, Hollywood and Mid-City. Set to Philip Glass' score for *Koyaanisqatsi*, choreography is provided by Millepied, Chamblas, Jamar Roberts, Pam Tanowitz, and Madeline Hollander. LA is used to being an outdoor sound stage for film and tv, why not for dance? At Century Park (lawn between towers), 2000 Avenue of the Stars, Century City; Tues.-Thurs., June 2-4, 12:30 pm, free. Also at Marciano Art Foundation, 4357 Wilshire Blvd., Hancock Park; Thurs., June 4, 6:30 pm, free. Also at Hollyhock House, Barnsdall Art Park, 4800 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Sat., June 6, 4 pm, free. Also at Tongva Park, 1615 Ocean Ave., Santa Monica; Sun., June 7, 4 pm, free. Also at Hollywood Forever, 6000 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; Wed., June 17, 7 pm, free. Also at Gloria Molina Park at the Music Center, Block 4 (near City Hall), 200 N. Grand Ave., DowntownLA; Thurs., June 18, noon, free. Also at LA County Museum of Art, Plaza near Geffen Galleries, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-City; Sun., June 21, 3 pm, free. [LA Dance Project-City of Dance](#).



Los Angeles Dance Project "City of Dance. Photo by Lore Stressel

After the battles

SoCal has long been a home for street dance that straddles the street and the stage, but over two decades (21 years to be exact), **Versa Style Street Dance Company** has stood out in its reach and depth, even as corporate sponsors have discovered and staked out the genre. Led by Jackie Lopez, aka Miss Funk, and Leigh Foaad aka Breeze-lee, the performing company is only the tip of the Versa Style iceberg. Notably, their youth efforts have an enviable track record of participants completing school, and with many dancing on to college or professional dance. The *21st Anniversary Street Dance Festival* includes three days of battles (info at the website), concluding with Sunday's all-styles showcase at the East LA Performing Arts Magnet (ELAPA), 4211 Dozier St., City Terrace; Sun., May 31, 5 pm, (Showcase-all styles), \$20. [Versa Style Street Dance Festival](#).



Versa Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists

Surround dance

Inaugurating this new, 360 degree performance space inside a toy factory, **Mike Tyus & Co.** brings his deep contemporary dance and dance film background to an immersive launch dubbed *Welcome to the Rebellion*. At KunstHaus at Bruder Toys, 4950 W. 145th St., Hawthorne; Sat.-Sun., May 30-31, \$37.25 (includes fees). [KunstHaus](#).



Mike Tyus and Luca Renzis. Photo by Joy Isabella Brown

South Asian explorations

At 23, **Kavya Ganesh** already has gained impressive credentials in South Asian dance as a member of the Akram Khan Company and a Bharata Natyam collaborator with SoCal's own Mythili Prakash. In her solo show *Margam*, Ganesh explores Bharata Natyam repertoire at the Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Sat., May 30, 6 pm, [Kavya Ganesh](#).



Kavya Ganesh. Photo courtesy of the artist

Mesmerizing

From flashy appearances in the Emmy and the Grammy awards, and America's Got Talent, to years of worldwide tours, the jaw-dropping, split second choreography of artistic director Jacques Heim and his LA-based **Diavolo/Architecture in Motion** has earned popular and informed acclimation. The company is home, reprising *Escape* that finds the dancers and gymnasts in a visceral exploration of individuals trying to break free. The tv appearances may have spread the word but can't begin to capture the interplay of the movers and crescendo of powerful movement in a live Diavolo performance. This chance for the live experience of Diavolo should not be missed. At L'Espace Diavolo, 616 Moulton Ave., Lincoln Heights; Fri.-Sat., 8 pm, Sun., 6 pm, thru Sun., June 14, \$39. [Diavolo-Veterans Project](#).



Diavolo's "Escape." Photo by Cheryl Mann

Ballet bites

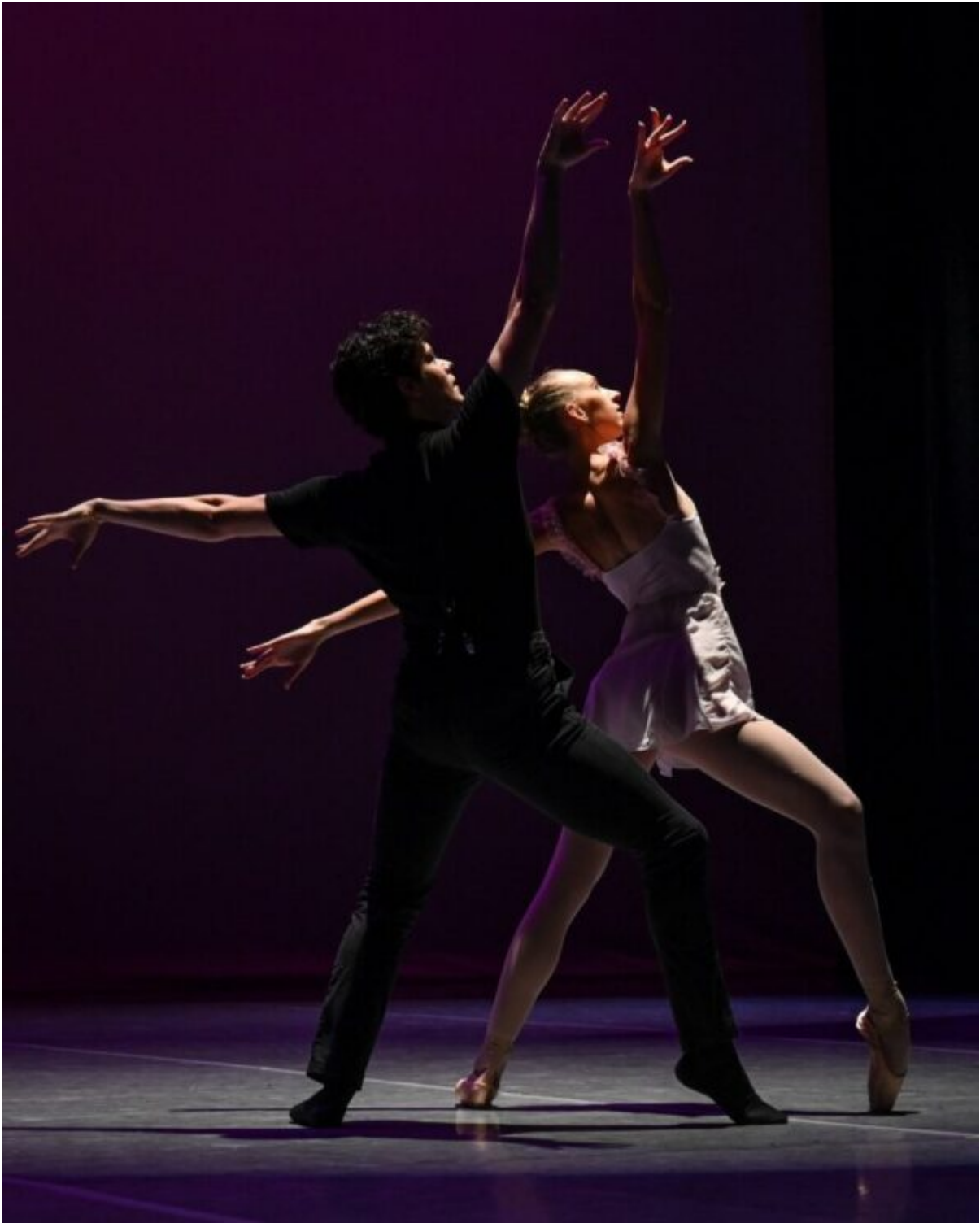
Excerpts from various ballets by George Balanchine are assembled by **American Contemporary Ballet** under the banner *Spectacular Balanchine*. Listed items on this terpsichorean tasting menu include *Union Jack*, *Western Symphony*, *Who Cares?*, and *Stars and Stripes*. American Contemporary Ballet, 333 S. Hope St., CO 150, Downtown LA; Thurs.-Sat., 8 pm. June 4 to 20, \$65-\$105. [American Contemporary Ballet](#).



Maté Szentes and Madeline Houk of American Contemporary Ballet. Photo by Anastasia Petukhova

More ballet bites

Not too much info on the mixed bill program *Vivo* from artistic director Ally Helman, yet the company name has evolved, suggesting more permanence. The chamber company that began as Ballet Project OC, is now **Ballet Orange County** or **Ballet OC**, for short. Past programs presented choreography from Helman and affiliated choreographers. The company dancers at the website include some excellent SoCal freelance dancers including several alums of Los Angeles Ballet. At Brea Curtis Theatre, One Civic Center Circle, Brea; Fri., May 29, 7 pm, \$75. [Ballet OC](#).



Ballet OC's Ally Helman and Nick Sedano. Photo courtesy of the artists

A dancer appreciation

The addition of traditional Chinese dance alongside the jazzy nightclub numbers weaves stronger non-verbal story elements into David Henry Hwang's reconsideration of Rogers and Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song* running at Little Tokyo's Aratani Theatre to May 31. Co-presented by **East West Players** and the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, the Aratani Theater is the larger stage this stunning show and its powerhouse dancers deserve. Hwang's libretto surrounds the beloved Rogers and Hammerstein songs with a story that refocuses the experience of Chinese immigrants in San Francisco, moves the action to the mid-1960s while

striking chords that echo contemporary conundrums. Not to slight the leads or the direction, but theater reviewers' raves have given those elements most of their words, with scant nod to the dancers. Since this space is about dance, it's rightly the spot to give a shout out to the show's triple threat dancer/singers' quicksilver acting shifts among multiple characters, and especially their instantaneous shapeshifting from Communist intimidators to desperate refugees to sexy chorines. Bonus applause for dancers and leads who segue from sizzling jazz moves to the elegant serenity of the classical Chinese dance that requires artful manipulation of diaphanous 'water sleeves' extending several feet beyond the hands. Hopefully, Hwang and everyone who brought *Flower Drum Song* and these dancers to the stage will continue the show beyond this run. At the JACCC Aratani Theatre, 244 S. San Pedro St., Little Tokyo; Thurs.-Fri., 7:30 pm, Sat., 2 & 8 pm, Sun., 1 & 7 pm, thru Sun., May 31, \$25-\$119. [East West Players-Flower Drum Song](#).



East West Players' "Flower Drum Song." Photo by Mike Palma

Scottish dance in mythical Scotland

Extended time in Scotland strongly influenced Alexandra Silber's new adaptation of Lerner & Loewe's *Brigadoon*. The playwright, joined by director/choreographer Katie Spelman, draws on Scottish dance to strengthen authentic Scottish presence in this musical about an American duo who stumble upon a magical Scottish village that appears only once a century. Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molina Ave., Pasadena, Tues.-Wed. & Fri., 8 pm, Thurs., 7 pm, Sat., 2 & 8 pm, Sun., 2 pm, thru Sun., June 14, 7:30 pm, \$63-\$152. [Pasadena Playhouse-Brigadoon](#).



Pasadena Playhouse's "Brigadoon." Photo by Jeff Lorch

Coming together

Choreographer and widow Louise Reichlin and her **LA Choreographers and Dancers** bring insights, humor, and dancing in *Tap Dance Widows Club*. Performers in this free public performance include Anisa Johnon, Sophie Kim, Mauricio La Fuente, Emily McGuire, Coree McKee Gonzalez, Carmen Tienda, Patrick Fitzsimmons, and Evan Lavo. At the Culver City Senior Center, 4095 Overland Ave., Culver City, Sat., May 30, 1:30 pm, free. [LA Choreographers & Dancers](#).



Tap Dance Widows Club. Photo courtesy of Louise Reichlin

It's a ten

Ten performers, frequently including dancers, each with ten minutes to win over the audience. It's the mostly monthly, first Monday series **Max 10**. This week, a special edition hosts Hollywood Fringe Festival performers. Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; [Max 10-Hollywood Fringe Edition](#).



Max 10. Photo courtesy of the artists

Shag on over

Dancers who know their stuff are a big part of the musical *Shag with a Twist*. Led by *Shag* (Josh Agle), a Tupperware party in the 1960s becomes the scene of the murder, a mystery that must be solved amid the pupu platters and bouffant hair styles. Guests are encouraged to come in their best 'mod' fashion and enjoy the fun. At the Grand Annex Music Hall, 434 W. 6th St., San Pedro; Sat., May 30 (may be sold out), June 6 (may be sold out), Aug. 29, Sept. 26, & Oct. 3. \$55.20-\$65.87. [Shag with a Twist](#).



Shag With a Twist. Photo by J. Hill Photo

What they learned

More than a recital, **The American Ballet Theatre William J Gillespie School** *End of Year Showcase* is programmed to showcase the technical and artistic progress of its students. Act I focuses on dancing by younger students through age 13, while Act II focuses on the older, pre-professional students, including an excerpt from *Giselle*. At Musco Center for the Arts, Chapman University, 415 N. Glassell, Orange; Sat., May 30, 2 & 6 pm, \$25-\$103. [End of Year Showcase](#).



The American Ballet Theatre William J Gillespie School. Photo courtesy of the artists

The beat goes on

One of SoCal's admirable youth dance programs that is so much more. Founded more than four decades ago as an afterschool supportive refuge for disadvantaged students, **The Wooden Floor** became known for producing accomplished, joyful dancers who finished high school and pursued further education. This *43rd Annual Concert: Grounded Orbits* continues the annual celebration that has attracted name choreographers to create or stage their works on these dancers. At the Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Thurs.-Fri., May 28-29, 8 pm, Sat., May 30, 2:30 & 8 pm, \$13-\$54. [The Wooden Floor](#).



Westside Ballet. Photo by Todd Lechtick

Gala Season 1

In addition to three mixed bill performances under the banner *Masters of Movement*, **Westside Ballet** hosts an additional gala performance with its pre-professional students augmented with professional guests led by American Ballet Theatre's Calvin Royal III. The gala marks a leadership change as Martine Harley steps down and Adrian Blake Mitchell assumes the role of the school's artistic director. At the Broad Stage, Fri., May 29, 7 pm, Sat.-Sun., May 30-31, 1 pm, \$50, Gala, Sat., May 30, 5:30 pm, \$195. [Westside Ballet](#).

Gala Season 2

Libations, food, and the chance to raise funding for **Laguna Dance Festival**, this gala performance also features Gibney Dance artistic director Jake Tribus performing his choreography inspired by David Bowie. At Surf & Sand Resort, 1555 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach; Sun., May 31, 5 pm, \$350. [Laguna Dance Festival](#).



Jake Tribus. Photo courtesy of the artist

Sign of summer

Part public performance, part participatory dance party, and free! — the outdoor **Tuesday Night Dance** series hosts three Tuesdays all devoted to Broadway dance. See the website for other dance styles coming on Tuesdays thru Aug. 25. At Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Argyros Plaza, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Tues., June 2, 9 & 16, 6:30 pm. free. [Tuesday Night Dance](#).

A Peek at Next Week (June 5 to 11)

Spectrum Dance Invitational — Summer Edition at Studio Theater, Spectrum Dance Center, 22661 Lambert St., Unit 204, Lake Forest; Fri., June 5, 8 pm, \$30. [Spectrum Dance Invitational](#).

Paul Salerni's Haunted — a dance/opera at Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Fri.-Sat., June 5-6, 8 pm, \$35. [Paul Salerni's Haunted](#).

Sammy Macias, Naked with Shoes, Steven Vargas — *a/o/x dance* at Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri., June 5, 8 pm, \$25.63, \$20.50 student/senior (includes fee). *a/o/x dance*.

Seaweed Sisters — *WEED OH NO!* at the Los Angeles Theater Center, 514 S. Spring St., Downtown LA; Fri., June 5, 8 pm, Sat., June 6 & 13, 2 & 8 pm, Sun., June 7 & 14, noon & 5 pm, \$38.50-\$60.50, \$38.50-\$110 Fri., June 5. [Seaweed Sisters – WEED OH NO!](#)



The Seaweed Sisters. Photo by Jingzi Zhao

Damaris Perez — *Dance Show* at the Hollywood Fringe Festival, LA City College, Caminito Theater, 855 N. Vermont Ave., East Hollywood; Thurs., June 11 & 18, 8 pm, Tues.-Wed., June 23-24, 7 pm, free. [Damaris Perez](#).

Dimple Kaur —, *Split, Between Two Nervous Systems* at the Hollywood Fringe Festival, Hudson Main Stage, 6539 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; Tues., June 9, 6:30 pm, Sun., June 14, 6:15 pm, Fri., June 20, 4:30 pm, \$20. [Dimple Kaur](#).

Ruthie Danziger — *My Great Turnaround* at the Hollywood Fringe Festival, the Zephyr Theater, 7456 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood; Fri., June 5, 3:30 pm, Thurs., June 18, 7:30 pm, \$18. [Ruthie Danziger](#).

Jiyoung Choi — *K-Cordelia: Sword of the Wind* at the Hollywood Fringe Festival, Hudson Theaters, 6539 Santa Monica Boulevard, Hollywood; Thurs., June 11, 8:15 pm, Sat., June 13, 3:30 pm, Tues., June 16, 8:30 pm, \$20. [Jiyoung Choi](#).

High Voltage — *Dance* at Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice, Fri., June 6, 8 pm, \$15. [High Voltage](#).

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