Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Tidal-Shifting Streams

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, July 29th, 2020

This was a week when Italy's La Scala Ballet was to perform *Giselle* and *Onegin*, two full-length story ballets that revolve around different types of revenge after mistreatment of women by men in positions of power. Meanwhile…the floor of Congress was the stage as a congresswoman articulately shredded a male colleague's non-apology for misogynistic behavior. Meanwhile…Portland's choreography of protest added dads with leaf-blowers and a bloc of Vets to the wall of moms facing militarized federal forces aggressively responding to mostly peaceful demonstrators brought to the streets by the outpouring of issues triggered by George Floyd's death. Meanwhile…Congressman John Lewis' body crossed the Alabama bridge where an earlier generation proclaimed law and order justified beating Lewis and other peaceful protestors seeking civil rights. Lewis' final journey to rotunda of Congress was the same week that congresswoman's speech marked gains made and how much still remains to be done. Meanwhile…the Covid–19 pandemic that cancelled La Scala Ballet and so much else, surges. Whether the same or a second wave, each day brings announcements cancelling live performance at major venues for the rest of this year and into next summer. Smaller performance groups including dance companies need less lead time to return to live shows, if they just can survive. Meanwhile…the creative energy in SoCal dance continues with inventive streams, reprise of timely filmed performance, on-line classes, and community outreach.

The Moms have it

The same week that memorialized the late civil rights leader congressman John Lewis was the week Emmett Till would have been 79 years old had he not been lynched at age 14 because of his skin. In 2010, Kevin Spicer curated *The Emmett Till Project* at Highways Performance Space. Choreographer Pat Taylor's contribution *A Kindred Woe* receives a timely encore. The work focuses on how mothers whose children have been murdered "take on the mantle" in the fight against racism and justice. The **JazzAntiqua Dance and Music Ensemble** performers include Terrice Banks Tillmon, Keisha Clark-Booth, Rayne Duronslet, Kacy Keys and Shari Washington Rhone. On Vimeo.

JazzAntiqua Dance Ensemble. Photo by Tim Angler.

A show of force

In what may prove a timely coincidence, military veterans are featured in a streamed film from Diavolo's Veterans Project exploring what it means to be a true warrior on the front lines. In *This*

is Me – Letters from the Front Lines, military vets and first responders explore what it means to be on the front line. Since artistic director Jacques Him and **Diavolo Architecture in Motion** launched their **Veterans Project** in 2016, more than 500 SoCal veterans have participated in the company's gymnastic approach to movement to restore physical, mental and emotional strengths. Along the way, the project developed stunning performance works, one of which was part of Diavolo's day-long 25th anniversary celebration at the Soroya which is hosting this event as part of the theater's *Fridays at 4* series. Info at https://www.thesoraya.org/. Film stream: Fri., July 31, 4 p.m., Facebook.

Diavolo Veterans Project. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Doubling Down

The always-anticipated **LA Dance Festival** was among local spring dance events postponed or cancelled by the Covid–19 shutdown. The festival now returns in two streamed formats. The LA Festival's partnership with a Korean festival is on view as several of the companies originally announced for the LA Festival are included in the stream of **Seoul International Dance Festival**. Also, this weekend Cal State University Los Angeles' Luckman Theater hosts three nights of film and performance by some of LA's premiere companies including Rosanna Gamson/World Wide, Sarah Elgart Arrogant Elbow, Luminario Ballet, BrockusRED, BB Moves, Kat Sauma, Charlotte Katherine & Co., Raymond Ejifor, Hailey Tranuse and Julienne MacKey. Info at http://www.luckmanarts.org/. Fri.-Sun., July 31-Aug. 2, 8 p.m.

LA Dance Festival's BrockusRED. Photo by Denise Leitner.

Is it a question?

Filmed during the initial Covid–19 shutdown, Emily Mast and Yehuda Duenyas' project **HOW ARE WE**, collected 15 solos, each 90-seconds including from LA choreographers. The possibilities of a plant, the bed sheets, or the corner of a room are among the starting points. Armed with a tennis racket, Carlon contributed *Anesthetized*, admitting that he wanted a socially acceptable reason to scream or grunt like Serena Williams or John McEnroe without looking like nut. Other contributors include Shannon Hafez, Jessica Emmanuel, Stacy Dawson Stearns, Jenny Marytai Liu, Constance Hockaday & Faye Driscoll, Barnett Cohen, Hana Van Der Kolk, Darrian O'Reilly, David Arian Freeland Jr., Heyward Bracey, Mireya Lucio, Dorothy Dubrule, Terrence Luke Johnson, and Mast & Duenyas. Info at How Are We. Stream on Vimeo.

Carlon. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Alone again

Butoh dancer *Oguri* offers a solo performance *Inhabit the Skin*. The event will be live-streamed from the "tree and sky stage" in Venice California. Sun., Aug. 2, 10 a.m. PDT. On Vimeo.

Oguri. Photo courtesy of the artist.

SoCal Encore Streaming

More in the lunchbox

In June, **Dohee Lee**'s scheduled REDCAT performance was cancelled. The venue hopes one day to reschedule a live performance. In the meanwhile, the Korean artist whose skills span dance, drumming, singing and musical composition hosts a live episode of the venue's streamed series. That live session will join the venue's instagram channel's line-up of prior dance performances from artists including Austyn Rich, Genna Moroni, Tzong-Han Wu, and Rosanna Gamson/World Wide. Info at https://www.redcat.org/. Instagram Channel.

Dohee Lee. Photo by Pak Han.

Seven minutes for seven dancers

Teaming up for the second time, filmmaker Nathan Kim and **Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Company** (LACDC) stream *BLINK*, a seven minute film choreographed by artistic director Genevieve Carson in collaboration with the LACDC dancers. Exploring timely issues of solitude and connection, the film features dancer Hyosun Choi with Christian Beasley, Kate Coleman, Tess Hewlett, Ryan Ruiz, Drea Sobke, and Tiffany Sweat. The short film was an official selection in the Hollyshorts Film Festival 2019, Cucalorus Festival 2019, and the San Francisco Dance Film Festival 2019. Information on other LACDC virtual programming: lacontemporarydance.org. Film on Vimeo.

LA Contemporary Dance Company. Photo by Nathan Kim.

For the small screen

Among the SoCal artists selected for KCET's *Southland Sessions*, **Viver Brasil** reworked its popular family show *Celebrating Samba* for the small screen and now it's online. This version may have company members performing from their homes, but through the power of Afro-Brazilian dance and live music they promise a cultural journey to Salvador, Bahia to explore royal orixá dances, high-flying capoeira, and samba from a Bahian Carnaval. Streaming at KCET.

Viver Brasil. Photo by Susan Goines.

More Offstage

The **Music Center Offstage** continues to stream new and encore video clips and performances from Swing 2020, Cuba's Malpaso Dance Company, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy, Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, Infinite Flow, and Spotlight classical and non-classical dance finalists Jacob Jovanni Alvarado, Ashley Lew, Maya Alvarez-Coyne and Bergundi Loyd. https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/.

Malpaso Dance Company. Photo by Bill Hebert.

Coming to a sidewalk near you

With theaters somewhere in stage 4 of that elusive reopening, CAP UCLA paired with the National YoungArts Foundation to bring local performers to where the audience lives with **The Sidewalk Sessions**. For $50, artists will show up and perform on a sidewalk or driveway for the sponsor and

invited and socially distanced friends and neighbors. Sponsors can indicate a preference for type of artist, but organizers will schedule artists based on geographical proximity and availability. The plan is for performances to last approximately 15 minutes and all proceeds will go to the artists. For more information or to schedule for July, August or September: Google Doc.

King of Arms Art Ball. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Striding on

The semi-annual **The King of Arms Art Ball** streamed live last week, but continues online. The organizer Rashaad Newsome Studios took the event virtual with several co-sponsors including the LA County Museum of Art. YouTube.

Kevin Williamson. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Something to think about

Subtitled “a dance medition,” in *Safe and Sound*, choreographer **Kevin Williamson** and his collaborators: Kayla Johnson, Justin Morris, Alexandra Rixx, Kevin Williamson, Anna Luisa Petrisko, Taso Papadakis, Kelsey Vidic, Katelan Braymer stream their recent performance hosted by Stomping Ground LA. The performance was performed at Dixon Place’s Hot! Festival – the NYC Celebration of Queer Performance. Free, but donations accepted. Tickets for the stream are still available, http://dixonplace.org/performances/safe-and-sound-a-meditation-07-07-20/.

Pony Box Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Putting the best foot forward

Two events from the all-male contemporary troupe **Pony Box Dance Theatre** and the artistic director Jamie Carbetta continue on-line. The Muticultural Festival *Best Foot Forward* page has an intro from Raymond Ejiofor and the two dance excerpts are introduced by choreographer/performer Elijah Laurant. Another example of how the City of LA, Department of Cultural Affairs is funding and supporting LA dance. Info at https://www.ponyboxdance.org/. Stream on Facebook.

BlakTinx. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Street to stage

Instead of its usual annual live performances from Black and Latinx choreographers at the Bootleg Theater, the BlakTinx Dance Festival returned with a viral format in late June. For those who missed that live stream of *Dancing on the Edge*, the show now continues on-line in four parts with works from Nancy Rivera Gomez, Shantel Ureña, Anthony Aceves, Bernard Brown, Joshua Estrada-Romero, Keilah Lomotey, Michelle Funderburk, Primera Generación, Vannia Ibargüen, Marina Magalhães, Regina Ferguson, Rubi Morales, Amber Morales, Alan Perez, Dorcas Román, Yarrow Perea, Andrea Ordaz, Eluza Santos, Briseyda Zárate, and Sadie Yarrington. With many of the works recently created, the pandemic and the streets were subjects and five pieces from earlier festivals that focused on Black Lives Matter were last minute additions. More info at https://www.blaktinafestival.com/. Program One, Program Two, Program Three, Program Four.

Jacob Jonas The Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Knock twice & tell them Jacob sent you

Reminiscent of what one did to enter a speakeasy in the 1920s or a Cold War spy meet-up, six weeks ago a select, paying audience was given the address of a Santa Monica airport parking lot with strict instructions on arriving in their cars, remaining in the cars wearing face masks, and turning on their headlights when cued. In perhaps the first “drive in” dance event, Jacob Jonas and his eponymous **Jacob Jonas The Company** performed *Parked* with those vehicles encircling the “stage,” their headlights illuminating the socially spaced dancers performing to live music by Anibal Sandoval. The one-night only event was filmed by Ivan Cash and Daniel Addelson. The five minute final cut debuted this week. With the film covering interviews with the choreographer and dancers, the actual performance footage is brief, but if the cars flashing their headlights at bows was a kind of applause, the experiment garnered a vehicular standing ovation from the audience. Hopefully, the performance itself will have a separate streaming life. Info at http://jacobjonas.com/. Film on Vimeo.

Sean Greene. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Looking back

Despite an extensive career in dance here and abroad, **Sean Greene** locally will always be identified with his decade with the Bella Lewitzky Dance Company. With her career based mostly in New York, notably with Laura Dean, **Liz Maxwell** is less well know in SoCal, but both Greene and Maxwell are on the Chapman College dance faculty and were the focus of *Always a Dancer*. The live interview included several clips of Maxwell dancing and then commenting on the roll, the choreography, and the choreographer. Sadly, only still photos were available for Greene’s work for Lewitzky. The conversation and visuals are facilitated gently by Napoleon W. Gladney quietly demonstrating his own background as a performer and arts administrator (he’s now audience development administrator for the Musco Center for the Arts which hosted the program). The live-streamed interview is now up and available for viewing. Info on Musco Online. Stream on YouTube.

Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Alone with a chandelier

The site specific performance ensemble **Heidi Duckler Dance** has been actively exploring the possibilities in combining live and virtual performance. Last week’s *Ebb & Flow: Chinatown 2020* allowed audiences to stroll about installations with dance projected into some of the constructs. Other ongoing streamed projects include a five-minute video drawn from the live performance of *The Chandelier*based on a work by Brazilian author Clarice Lispector about a woman experiencing isolation and trying to connect. Choreographed by Duckler, the performers include Himerria Wortham, Rafael Quintas, Myles Lavallee, Nicole Flores, Maureen Asic, Magdalena Edwards, Jessica Emmanuel, Jaeme Velez, David Guerra, and Paula Rebelo. Vimeo. Video of the full zoomed performance.

Barak Ballet. Photo by Djeneba Aduayom.

Mask breathing

The scheduled premiere of choreographer Melissa Barak's first full length contemporary ballet *Memoryhouse* for her **Barak Ballet** was cancelled when Santa Monica's Broad Stage closed with the statewide coronavirus shutdown closed Santa Monica's Broad Stage. On what would have been the closing night, Barak Ballet instead went online with the premiere of *Breathe In,* a short ballet filmed at the grounds at the Holocaust Museum in what formerly was known as Pan Pacific Park in the Fairfax district. The film features Peter Chursin with Andrew Brader, Lucia Connolly, Jessica Gadzinski, Chasen Greenwood, Stephanie Kim, and with choreography by Barak. Also, there's an opportunity to sign up for the company's new YouTube channel. Info at https://barakballet.org/. Streaming on Facebook.

Versa Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Locking it up

Paying tribute to Don Campbellock, the creator of the Locking dance style, the street dance troupe **Versa Style Dance Company** and its youth organization **Versa-Style Next Generation** unveil *Finding Creativity and Fun in Our Personal Space*. The streamed performance gets help from musician Cody "CoFlo" Ferreira's *Playground Samba*. YouTube, Facebook. Info at http://versastyledance.org/events/.

AkomiDance. Photo by Vytas-Barauskas.

Festival in a box

After Covid–19 shelter at home caused cancellation, the **Orange County Dance Festival** was among the first to shift to streaming. Throughout April and May, a recorded version of the work each company or artist was scheduled to perform was streamed for three days in show order. Bonuses included company photos, artistic statements, and links to websites and social media platforms. Now the OCDF website has collected the individual events from AkomiDance, Contempo Ballet, 7th Street Dance Company, ISSA Dance Company, Animus Dance Co., Jazz Spectrum Dance Company, Emergent Dance Company, Pacific Ballet Dance Theatre, Louise Reichlin & Dancers, The Hubbard Collective, Kairos Dance Co., and Fuse Dance Company. AkomiDance.

Rosanna Gamson/World Wide. Photo by Cyrus.

She tells stories

A concentrated taste of choreographer Rosanna Gamson's consideration of a legendary storyteller is performed on-line in *Layla Means Night*. Drawn from her company **Rosanna Gamson/World Wide**'s performance, the work is inspired by *The Persian tale of Shahrzad* or *Scheherazade* who entranced her husband and kept herself alive telling stories for 1001 nights. Vimeo.

Alia Mohamed. Photo courtesy of the artist.

The hips have it

Grand Performances offers Lebanese belly dancer **Alia Mohamed** as part of its summer streaming series. A performance concludes the one hour workshop. Mohamed's credits include work with burlesque star Dita Von Teese. Wed., July 29, 6 p.m., Reservations on Facebook.

Getting together

Organized by performance/butoh artist Josie J (divinebrick), **Tuesday Night Stream**, is a two part event. The second portion belongs to specific performers, but the opening portion is dedicated to women identified, BIPOC, or otherwise underrepresented avant garde artists. Tues, 7 p.m. PDT thru Aug. 4. Free ($10-$23 donation suggested). For info and event, or email. For tickets.

Platforms to Submit Video Dance

Dare dancing

With cautions about staying safe while filming, organizers **Sarah Elgart** and Cultural Weekly announced round 4 of *Dare to Dance in Public* with the theme of *Pandemania*, meaning a hyper energized state. Info on the judges, prior winners, plus rules and regulations for submission at: www.dare2danceinpublicfilmfestival.com. The group's other film endeavor *Six Foot Dances* is still accepting one-minute films. Current submissions on Instagram and Cultural Weekly.

Think about December

Known for its eclectic assemblage of youth, adult, community and professional performers in a spectrum of dance genres (not to mention music and choral groups), the annual **LA County Holiday Celebration** is accepting applications for the December 24, 2020 performance which traditionally is broadcast and streamed on SoCal PBS stations. The deadline for electronic applications is August 2, 2020 at midnight. Guidelines and applications at http://www.holidaycelebration.org.

A call to a desert festival

Over the next few months, the **Palm Springs International Dance Festival** is accepting submissions for an October performance under the title *MERDE! A Dance Makers Moment*. Six submissions will be selected for presentation on October 23 with by the voting audience and an expert panel. The winner of the voting will be presented as part of the Festival's gala in March 2021. No fee to apply. Deadline Aug. 1. More details on submission at https://www.nickersonrossidance.com/.

Where to Find Online Dance Classes

On-line dance classes continue on zoom, instagram and other on-line platforms, many classes free, low cost or suggesting a donation. One central, constantly updated source on dance classes and in-depth reporting on SoCal dance, LA Dance Chronicle lists on-line dance classes including any cost and contact info. Grab a chair or clear off a corner of the room and use this time to dance.

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