

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Toe shoes? Yes. Tutus? Not so much.

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, October 3rd, 2018

L.A.'s classical ballet company struts contemporary moves in Glendale, Black and Latinx choreography showcased in Echo Park, a multi-media consideration of composer/arranger Billy Strayhorn downtown, a Lester Horton/Bella Lewitsky classic reprised in Torrance, short but sweet dances in Hollywood, a dance festival in Laguna Beach, and more SoCal dance this week.

5. Bringing back Bella

This is emerging as the year of Bella Lewitsky. Lester Horton's muse, the keeper of Horton's technique, prolific choreographer, and revered teacher responsible for launching many of the dancers who now helm SoCal dance companies. There is a documentary film in the works and several companies have announced revivals from the Lewitsky oeuvre. One Lewitsky alum, John Pennington, and his **Pennington Dance Group** revive *Beloved*, a 1948 Horton/Lewitsky consideration of ties that bind too tightly, sadly still current seven decades on. Also on the program, *Ungoverned Spaces*, a new work from Pennington with a score by Grammy-nominated Tom Peters, and two from the repertoire, *Company of Orbs* and *Out of* with scenic panels by artist Susan Rankaitis and an original score by Edgar Rothermich. El Camino Center for the Arts, 16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance; Sat., Oct. 6, 8 p.m., \$22, \$19.80 seniors, \$15 students. <https://elcaminotickets.universitytickets.com>.



Pennington Dance Group. Photo by Denise Leitner.

4. Sequencing his genome

Choreographer Wayne McGregor launches dancers in movement based on the sequencing of his own genome in *Autobiography*. The work has 23 sections, the sequence of which varies with each show. Artist Ben Cullen Williams' projections are synched to an electronic score by Jlin in partnership with Unsound. This **Company Wayne McGregor** event opens the 2018-2019 Music Center dance season and he'll be back in the spring with an even more ambitious project. Ahmanson Theatre, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri-Sat., Oct. 5-6, 7:30 p.m., Sun., Oct. 7, 2 p.m., \$18.40-\$87. <https://www.musiccenter.org>.



Company Wayne McGregor in "Autobiography". Photo by Andrej Uspenski.

3. Spotlight on Black and Latinx choreographers

Now in its 6th year, the **BlakTina Dance Festival** continues to spotlight established and emerging Black and LatinX choreographers. This edition includes mostly contemporary local choreographers plus two from Phoenix where the festival expanded last year. SoCal participants include Bernard Brown/bbmoves, A_Ordaz, FUSE Dance Co, Alan Perez & Jamal Wade, Hubbard Collective, Jose Richard Aviles, Kassy Francis and Dorcas Roman, plus visiting Phoenix choreographers RaShawn Hart and Anthony Kelly. Bootleg Theater, 2220 Beverly Blvd., Echo Park; Thurs.-Sat., Oct. 4-6, 7:30 p.m., \$20. 213-389-3856, <https://bootlegtheater.org>.



Hubbard Collective in BlakTina Dance Festival. Photo by DeMello Photography.

2. Something about Billy Strayhorn

Contemporary choreographers like to blend dance with video, audio or art installations, but many struggle to keep things in balance and not have the dance overwhelmed by the other theatrical elements. David Roussève and his troupe **REALITY** have demonstrated they know where to find that sweet spot where multiple media enhance without distracting from the dance. A stunning example was Roussève's semi-autobiographical, award-winning *Stardust*, that explored a young Black man's sexual awakening. Roussève returns with his newest, an eagerly anticipated full-length *Halfway to Dawn*, inspired by life of Billy Strayhorn, the Black, gay, composer/arranger closely associated with many of Duke Ellington's hits including *Take the A Train* and the jazz interpretation of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. Further fueling high expectations is the involvement of *Stardust* collaborator video artist Cari Ann Shim Sham and a soundscore developed by d. Sabela grimes drawn from vintage recordings of Strayhorn's songs. REDCAT, Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thurs.-Sat., Oct. 4-6, 8:30 p.m., Sun., Oct. 7, 3 p.m., \$25-\$30, \$20-24 students. 213-237-2800, <https://www.redcat.org>.



David Roussève and REALITY in "Halfway to Dawn". Photo by Rose Eichenbaum.

1. Ballet in the "no tutu" zone

Not a tutu in sight, well not until dancers show up with cowboy hats as **Los Angeles Ballet** opens its 2018-2109 season flexing its contemporary ballet chops. The program features works from two rising choreographers Alejandro Cerrudo (recent resident choreographer at Hubbard Street Dance) and Aszure Barton (recently announced as a resident artist at USC). Later in the season, Los Angeles Ballet reprises its popular *Nutcracker* and in the spring brings a double bill of two classics, *La Sylphide* and George Balanchine's *Serenade*, but the opening burst is Cerrudo's *Lickety Split* to songs by Devendra Banhart and Barton's *Les Chambres de Jacques*. And the cowboy hats? They arrive in Balanchine's exuberant *Western Symphony* that closes the program. Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m. Also at UCLA Royce Hall, 10745 Dickson Court, Westwood; Sat., Oct. 13, 7:30 p.m. Also at Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center, 1935 Redondo Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach; Sat., Oct. 20, 7:30 p.m., \$36-\$104. 310-998-7782, <https://losangelesballet.org>.



Los Angeles Ballet's Bianca Bulle & Tigran Sargsyan. Photo by Reed Hutchinson.

Other dance of note:

This weekend starts the serious dancing in this year's **Laguna Dance Festival**, but as a preview, this year's star attraction Complexions Contemporary Ballet appears in a free, one-hour onstage demonstration. On Friday, Complexions pays tribute to David Bowie performing *Stardust*. Saturday evening and Sunday matinee shows include duets and solos with dancers from Ballet West, National Ballet of Canada, San Francisco Ballet, and repertoire excerpts from Complexions. The main festival may end but later in October look for a bonus event with Columbian dance ensemble Sankofa Danzafró with dancers, live drumming and singing. Full festival line up at <https://lagunadancefestival.org>. Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach; Thurs., Oct. 4, 7 p.m., free; Fri., Oct. 5, 7:30 p.m., \$75, \$35 students; Sat., Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m., Sun., Oct. 7, 2 p.m., \$65, \$35 students. <https://lagunadancefestival.org>.



National Ballet of Canada's Skylar Campbell at Laguna Dance Festival. Photo by Rick Guest.

Choreography from Kevin Williamson, Keith Johnson and graduating students Sarah Culotta, Catalina Eddy, Allie Miks and Nancy Fernanda Rivera Gomez highlights **Variance: 2018 Fall Dance Concert**. Directed by Rebecca Lemme, the concert presents a mix of faculty and guest choreographers plus dance works from the Bachelor of Fine Arts candidates. Martha B. Knoebel, Cal State University Long Beach, 6200 Atherton, Long Beach; Thurs.-Fri., Oct. 11-12, 8 p.m., Sat., Oct. 13, 2 & 8 p.m., \$20. 562-985-7000, <https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pr/997076>.

Regarded by many as royalty among contemporary African dancers, Senegalese dancer/choreographer **Germaine Acogny** performs another choreographer's moves in Olivier Dubois' *Mon Élué Noire-Sacre #2*. Dubois set the solo work on the 74-year old Acogny who defies gravity and age in this interpretation of the Chosen One in Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps (Right of Spring)*. UCLA Gloria Kaufman Dance Theater, 120 Westwood Plaza, Westwood; Fri.-Sat., Oct. 5-6, 8 p.m., Sun., Oct. 7, 7 p.m., \$49. <https://cap.ucla.edu>.



Germaine Acogny in "Mon Elue Noire". Photo by Francois Stemmer.

Since its start in 2002, this festival of brief dance, film, and stage works has spread to 30 cities in nine countries and now here as the **Short + Sweet Hollywood Dance Festival**. The five day festival kicks off with a masterclass on Wednesday followed by program A on Thursday and Friday with choreographers Ironstone, Ashley Menestrina, Corinne Shearer, Zoe Rappaport, Shendoah Harris, and Sofia Nappi. Program B on Saturday and Sunday includes live performance from Kacei Womack, Elicia Kraus, Juli Kim, Ramya Harishankar, Monica Sarin, Emmy Queliz, Benita Bonger, Aida Landeros, plus more choreographers on film. Marilyn Monroe Theatre, Lee Strasberg Creative Center, 7936 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood; Thurs.-Sun., Oct. 11-14, 7:30 p.m., \$15. <http://buytickets.at/shortandsweethollywood>.

Voices Carry, Inc presents *With Memories on the Their Backs* considering refugees, the situations they leave and the new situations they face. Burton Chase Park, 13650 Mindanao Way, Marina Del Rey; Sat., Oct. 6, 4 p.m., free. <http://voicescarryinc.net>.



Chinese Warriors of Peking. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Under the banner **Chinese Warriors of Peking**, this assemblage of jugglers, acrobats, and weapon handlers evoke a tale of two rival martial arts disciplines competing during the Ming Dynasty.

Musco Center for the Arts, Chapman University, 415 N. Glassell, Orange; Fri., Oct. 5, 7:30 p.m., \$20-\$50. 844-626-8726, <http://muscocenter.org>.

The New World Flamenco Festival brings the mercurial footwork of **Jesus Carmona** in *Amator*. Sold out as of press time. Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Fri., Oct. 5, 8 p.m., \$45-\$100. <http://thebarclay.org>.

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