Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Unpressing the Pause Button

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, June 17th, 2020

This week more glimmers as SoCal dance shows signs of life onstage sans audience, live-streamed new work and reimagined classics, plus scheduled performances no longer cancelled, just postponed until theaters shift from paused to open. On the sad notes: Diavolo is cancelled at Beverly Hills' Annenberg Center and Los Angeles Ballet at UCLA's Royce Hall is postponed to June 2021. On the optimistic side, more new efforts, ongoing on-line events, and sources for submitting dance videos or finding lessons follow.

THIS WEEK'S PERFORMANCES

New On-line, Cancelled or Postponed

Instead of its usual run at the Bootleg Theater, the **BlakTinx Dance Festival** goes viral. Under the banner *Dancing on the Edge*, this year's festival has short videos from Black and Latinx choreographers including 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 created in recent weeks, expect the pandemic and the streets to be reflected onstage. After a decision to postpone two weeks in respect to the street protests, the evening now includes five pieces from earlier festivals that focused on Black Lives Matter. The event is free with reservation and will stream only once, though at some point in the future look for it on the BlakTinx website. Sat., June 20, 6–8 p.m. Pacific Time. Reservations at Eventbrite. More info at https://www.blaktinafestival.com/.

Reflect: On Youth. Photo courtesy of the artists.

After the success of its first internet incarnation, **James MahKween** returns with a new streamed installment of his *Reflect* series. The timely subject is *Reflect: On Youth*. Email James at mahkweenmethod@gmail.com for a secure password and protected link. The web link opens 30 minutes before the show. Fri., June 19, 4:30 p.m. PDT. Suggested donations of $3-$8 can be sent via Venmo to James-MahKween.

Barak Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Last week, Barak Ballet was scheduled to premiere choreographer Melissa Barak's first full length contemporary ballet *Memoryhouse*. With the statewide coronavirus shutdown closing Santa Monica's Broad Stage, the ballet's opening was also cancelled. 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 at https://www.facebook.com/BarakBallet.

"Deep South" – December 19, 1937

Created in response to her anguish at the Spanish Civil War, Martha Graham's 1937 solo *Immediate Tragedy* was never filmed. A few reviews and recently discovered photographs, some letters, and composer Henry Cowell's musical notations fueled a recent endeavor involving Martha Graham Dance Company artistic director Janet Eilber, LA-based composer Christopher Rountree and a commission from Cal State University Northridge's Soraya Theater. While the Graham company is based in New York, Eilber, a long-time resident of L.A., co-directed the American Repertory Dance Company here with Bonnie Oda Homsey before helming the Graham company where she once danced. With the commission from the Soroya, Eilber and Roundtree partnered to create a reimagined version of *Immediate Tragedy* with 14 dancers and a new score by Rountree performed by six musicians. Each dancer and musician performed in isolation in their homes, the recordings then assembled into the reenvisioned digital incarnation being premiered. Two online screenings Fri., June 19 at 4 p.m. PDT (7 p.m. EDT) during Fridays at 4 on Facebook, and Sat., June 20 at 11:30 a.m. PDT (2:30 p.m. EDT) at the Martha Matinee on YouTube.

Rangoli Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artist.

The scheduled performance celebrating 35 years of this classical South Asian dance company has been postponed by the Covid-19 virus. Director Malathi Iyengar and her **Rangoli Dance Company** have taken Bharatanatyam dance to the internet with a zoomed "Virtual Showing." The intimate event showcases works in progress by Rangoli dancers even some of the youngest. Attendance is by invitation that can be requested at rangolidancecompanyt@gmail.com. Sat., June 20, 11 a.m. PDT. https://rangoli.org/dance/upcoming-events/.

Los Angeles Ballet's "Sleeping Beauty." Photo by Reed Hutchinson.
RBPAC

Los Angeles Ballet – *Sleeping Beauty* at UCLA Royce Hall, Westwood; Fri.-Sat., June 20-21. Also at The Alex, Glendale; Sat., June 27. **Postponed to June 2021.**

Diavolo Architecture in Motion. Photo by George Simian.

Diavolo Architecture in Motion at the Wallis Center for the Arts, Beverly Hills. Thurs.-Sat., June 25-27. **Cancelled.**

SoCal Encore Streaming

Paying tribute to Don Campbellock, the creator of the Locking dance style, the street dance troupe **Versa Style** 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*. On YouTube, Facebook: @versastylela, YouTube: @versastylela. Info at http://versastyledance.org/events/.

Versa Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artist.

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.

A concentrated taste of choreographer Rosanna Gamson's consideration of a legendary storyteller is performed online 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. https://vimeo.com/407374713.

Rosanna Gamson/World Wide's "Layla Means Night." Photo by Cyrus.

Ballet and non-classical dance were two of the categories as the Music Center *Spotlight* final performance showcasing SoCal high school performers went viral last week. The performances continue to stream with this year's high school-age ballet dancers Jacob Jovanni Alvarado from San Diego and Ashley Lew from San Juan Capistrano plus Maya Alvarez-Coyne from Santa Ana and Bergundi Loyd from Riverside in non-classical dance. The event is free, but donations to support this scholarship program are invited by texting TMCSPOTLIGHT to 44-321 or at the website https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/. https://www.musiccenter.org/spotlightfinale.

Dorance Dance. Photo by Hayim Heron.

Earlier this spring, the Music Center's annual **Children's Festival** was cancelled, but its live-streamed return last week with a celebration of tap dance headlined by **Dorrance Dance** led by tap's "it girl" Michelle Dorrance is still on view for a limited time. Also on view for a limited time, the family-friendly performance by Cuba's contemporary **Malpaso Dance Company**. https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/

Other Platforms to Find Video Dance and Dance Classes

Companies are streaming past performances to compensate for cancelled spring seasons, and dance videos have gained more prominence whether a thread of solo dancers tag teaming a movement

sequence, dancing on the roof, the backyard or their kitchen. The popular long-running video competition **Dare to Dance in Public**, curated by Sarah Elgart, has been joined by her new challenge, **Six Foot Distance Dances** (details on how to submit).

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. More details on submission at https://www.nickersonrossidance.com/.

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-ine 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.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, June 17th, 2020 at 1:33 pm and is filed under Dance
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