Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Vibrant LA Art Dances

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, September 18th, 2024

Hollywood tap masters live and on film in Santa Monica; African dancers deconstruct Ravel in Westwood; art-inspired dance in Mid-City; locavore anniversaries in Pasadena and downtown; San Pedro park hosts dance fest; swans alight in Glendale; Canadian cirque downtown; border exploitation challenged at University Park; more SoCal dance this week, plus a peek at next week.

Live This Week

Crescendo of grief

Strains of Ravel's *Bolero* recognizably and intermittently emerge then fade, interwoven with African chant and song in Nhlanhla Mahlangu score for choreographer Gregory Maqoma's *Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Boléro.* Performances in New York City and Washington D.C. drew rave reviews for Maqoma's concept and his capture of individual and collective grief and resilience. Also, reviews heaped praise on the powerful dancers of **Vuyani Dance Theatre**, seamlessly shifting from traditional African dance to contemporary moves. Sadly there's only one show on a very busy dance weekend. *UCLA Royce Hall, 10745 Dickson Ct., Westwood; Sat., Sept. 21, 8 pm,* $42.08 – $63.37. CAP UCLA.

Vuyani Dance Theatre in Gregory Maqoma’s “Cion.” Photo courtesy of the artists

It’s a classic!

Recently discovered video interviews from 1978 with celebrated Hollywood tap dancers including Fayard Nicholas (the Nicholas Brothers), Nanette Fabray, Louis DaPron, and Jack Williams are part of **Classic Tap! Rhythm and Style** – *Celebrating Hollywood Legends.* The event honors the legacy of Classic Tap and honors six tap stars of theater, movies and television who taught and mentored a current generation of professional tap dancers, some of whom will perform live, in addition to video of their mentors’ performances, and a first look at those unearthed video interviews. A post performance reception with more videos, refreshments, and a chance to mingle is included in the ticket. Moss Theatre, 3131 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica; Sun., Sept. 22, 2 pm, $35, $17.50 youth. Eventbrite.

Mark Marchillo. Photo courtesy of the artist

Get the picture?

With the banner *This Picture Reminds Me of You*, artistic director Tina Finkelman Burkett and the superb dancers of **BODYTRAFFIC** open their 2024-2025 season with this hometown performance before leaving on a West Coast tour. The program includes *Incense Burning On A Saturday Morning: The Maestro*, a world premiere by Juel D. Lane paying tribute to Ernie Barnes, an LA visual artist known for his vibrant paintings and a style often described as “elongated and filled with movement.” Michaela Taylor’s *Snap* set to music by James Brown, and company member Joan Rodriguez’ *Bloquea’o* with original music by Pedro Osuna complete the program. Wilshire Boulevard Temple, 3643 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-City; Thurs., Sept. 26, 7:30 pm, $60. BODYTRAFFIC.

BODYTRAFFIC in “Snap.” Photo courtesy of the artists

Seen a ghost?

In *Ghostly Labor*, choreographer Vanessa Sanchez and **La Mezcla** tackle the history of labor in the U.S./Mexico borderlands. With her dance and music ensemble, Sanchez draws on tap dance, Mexican zapateado, son jarocho, and Afro-Caribbean rhythms to explore the exploitation of the vulnerable who just want to work. This marks the LA premiere after its December 2023 debut in San Francisco. Bovard Auditorium, USC, 3551 Trousdale Pkwy., University Park; Thurs., Sept. 19, 7 pm, free w/reservation at Eventbrite.

La Mezcla. Photo courtesy of the artists

And now we’re 39

Known for site-specific events that interweave dance, music, spoken word, and more and drawing audiences to unfamiliar parts of LA, **Heidi Duckler Dance** celebrates its 39th anniversary with its annual gala. This year, *Dance in the Light of the Harvest Moon* promises the company's trademark site specific performances at the venue, a Frank Geary designed law school. The evening includes the premiere of *School of Fish* from choreographer Shoji Yamasaki. It is a gala, so also a cocktail reception, awards, and an important, significant announcement. Loyola Law School, 919 Albany St., downtown; Sat., Sept. 21, 5 pm. $300 and up, Heidi Duckler.

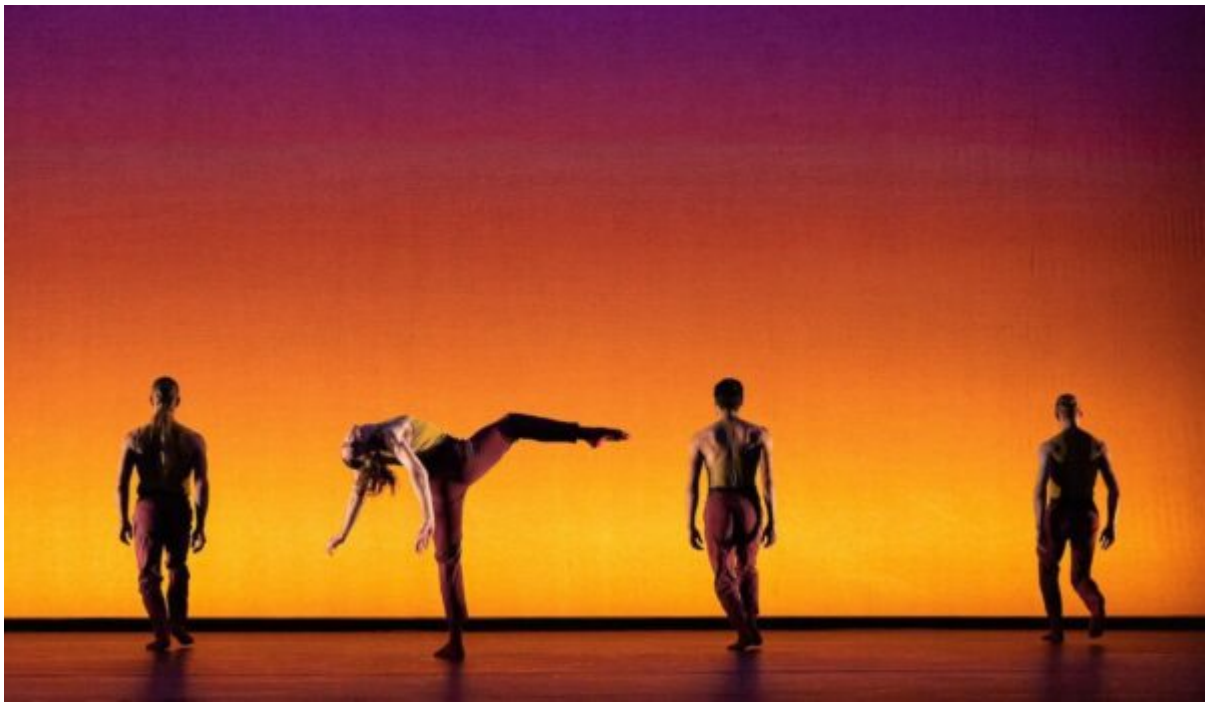
Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo by Caleb Coppola

To mark its 25th anniversary, **Lineage Dance** brings three performances of *Lineage Live,* looking back at its history and taking a peek at what's next. Live music, dance and storytelling by a cast of 20 promise to jump start the celebratory occasion. Lineage Performing Arts Center, 920 E. Mountain St., Pasadena; Fri.-Sat., Sept. 20-21, 7 pm, Sun., Sept. 22, 5 pm, $40, $30 seniors/students. Lineage Performing Arts Center.

Lineage Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists

Chicago visitors

In its only SoCal visit this fall, **Hubbard Street Dance Chicago** brings a mixed bill of contemporary choreography to the stage. Musco Center for the Arts, Chapman College, 415 N. Glassell, Orange; Fri., Sept. 20, 7:30 pm, $41.25-$78. Musco Center for the Arts.



Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Photo courtesy of the artists

Flow like a river

Blending theatre and dance, **Nil Bosca** references the legendary river to recount the story

of *Euphrate*, the child of a French mother and Turkish father, whose literal and figurative travels lead her from one home in France to find another home in Turkey. The performance is in French with English subtitles. Theatre Raymond Kabbaz, 10361 W. Pico Blvd., WestLA; Thurs., Sept. 26, 8 pm, $40, $30 seniors/students. Théâtre Raymond Kabbaz.

Nil Bosca. Photo courtesy of the artist

It’s all dance

This year’s **Laguna Dance Festival** opening event teams two very different choreographers to take an audience *Behind the Dance*. Festival director and contemporary ballet choreographer Jodie Gates is joined by Jacques Heim, creative director of Diavolo and choreographer for Cirque du Soleil’s *Kà*. The two artists delve into how very different choreographers make very different dance. The Forum Theater, 650 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach; Thurs., Sept. 26, 6:30 pm, $50. Laguna Dance Festival.

Jacques Heim with Diavolo Architecture in Motion. Photo by George Simian

Lucky 7

The Canadian force of nature known in English (and French) as **The 7 Fingers (Les 7 doights de la main)** blends dance with acrobatics, along with lots of humor. Visits in recent years solidly established the troupe's appeal and distinctive identity, far more impressive than its usual comparison to the bigger tent Cirque du Soleil. Yes, there is cirque, but so much more, especially more dance. The troupe brings all their powers to *Duel Reality* opening for a two week run on a Music Center main stage. Ahmanson Theatre, Music Center, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Thurs.-Fri., Sept. 19-20, 8 pm, Sat., Sept. 21, 2 & 8, pm, Sun., Sept. 22, 1 pm, $25-$125, Center Theatre Group.

7 Fingers (Les 7 Doigts de la Main). Photo courtesy of the artists

Summerfest

Whether known as the **San Pedro ? Festival of the Arts** or by its original name TriArt Festival, for 18 years the original producer Joe Caccavalla and for more than ten years choreographer/producer Louise Reichlin have gathered representative performers from across SoCal's dance spectrum for this late summer fest. This year, Reichlin and her team have 18 professional and pre-professional companies lined up to perform including Degas Dance Studio Performance Team, Dhoon Dance, Encore Dance Company, Jazz Spectrum Dance Company, Jose Costas Contempo Ballet, Kairos Dance Company, Kindra Windish, Alice Lousen, Passion Flamenca Los Angeles, Re:borN Dance Interactive/Reborn Arts, Sahlala Dancers, SINDHOOR & NATYAVEDA – Navarasa, Southern California Dance Academy, The Mcculla Movement, Southern California Dance Theatre, Louise Reichlin & Dancers/Los Angeles Choreographers & Dancers, Rajasthani Caravan, and Yusuf Nasir. Peck Park, upper lawn next to the Community Center, 560 N Western Ave, San Pedro; Sat., Sept 21, 1-4:15 pm, free. Information and schedule at TriArt Festival.

San Pedro ? Festival of the Arts. Photo courtesy of the artists

Dancing with Greeks

This summer’s Getty Villa theater offering is a world premiere considering possibly the least known hero of the Trojan War. **Tiffany Rea-Fisher** provides the choreography for Classical Theater of Harlem’s *Memnon*, written by Will Power and directed by Carl Cofield. And no, Memnon is not a nickname for Agamemnon, a much better known and completely different fellow. These excellent late summer theatrical excursions provide a special experience, live and in an outdoor amphitheater, just as the Greeks intended. Getty Villa outdoor theater, 17985 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu; Thurs.-Sat., thru Sept. 28, 8 pm, $45 (Thurs.), $50 (Fri.), $55 (Sat.), $40 students & seniors (Thurs. only). Getty.=

Classical Theatre of Harlem’s “Memnon.” Photo by Craig Schwartz Photography.

Dances with guitars

The flamboyant Spanish guitarist **Benise** is the main attraction, but his shows always bring a bounty of dancers adept at moves beyond the main calling card of flamenco. This tour dubbed *Fiesta!* stops at two more local venues. Fred Kvli Theatre, Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza, 2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks; Fri., Sept. 20, 7:30 pm, $36-$115. Tickets. Also at Lobero Theatre, 33 E. Canon Perdido St., Santa Barbara; Sat., Sept. 21, 7:30 pm, $48.50-$101.50. Tickets.

Benise and dancer. Photo courtesy of the artists

Feathers will float

The touring ensemble **World Ballet Company**, flies into SoCal, alighting at four venues in the next week with a full-length *Swan Lake*. Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Thurs.-Fri., Sept. 19-20, 7 pm, $64-$110. Irvine Barclay; Also at the Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Ave., Glendale; Sat., Sept. 21, 7 pm, $58-$123. Ticketmaster. Also at Granada Theatre, 1214 State St., Santa Barbara; Sun., Sept. 22, 7 pm, $57-$132. Granada Theatre. Also at Fred Kavli Theatre, Bank of America Performing Arts Center, 2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks; Sun., Sept. 25, 7 pm, $58-$143. Ticketmaster.

World Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists

Artwalk dance

As part of the Frogtown Artwalk, **MashUp Contemporary Dance Company** offers live performance and dance films. Sponsored by the Elysian Valley Arts Collective, the biennial event offers a self-guided tour of studios, workshops, and pop-up galleries, plus dance performance at MashUp Studios at the Pickle Factory, 2828 Gilroy, Frogtown; Sat., Sept. 21, 4-6 pm, free. MashUp Contemporary Dance Company. Artwalk info at 2024 Frogtown Artwalk.

MashUp Contemporary Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists

Everybody dance

Local dance groups from folklorico to ballet to Bollywood perform at this year's *National Dance Day*. **Danza Azteca Xochipilli Aztec** (1:30 pm), **Straight Up Abilities** (2:15 pm), **American Ballet Theatre William J. Gillespie School** (3 pm), **Alianza Translatinx Ballet Folklórico** (3:45 pm), and **Adaa Dance Bollywood** (4 pm) are scheduled to perform. In addition, workshops from bachata to Broadway dance are offered throughout the afternoon, and at 4:15 pm guests can learn and perform the *National Dance Day* routine. **Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Argyros Plaza, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Sat., Sept, 21, 1 pm, free.** SCFTA.

A Peek at Next Week (September 27 to October 3)

Little Women Ballet at Heritage Square Museum, 3800 Homer St., Montecito Heights; Fri., Sept. 27, 6:30 pm, Sat.-Sun., Sept. 28 & 29, 3 & 6:30 pm, $60. Details at Little Women Ballet. Tickets.

John Freeman & Sonya Tayeh — *Is It Thursday Yet?* at The BroadStage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Thurs.- Sat., Oct. 3 -5, 7:30 pm, $50-$90. The BroadStage.

Bobbie Jene Smith & Or Schreiber with Julia Bullock in *Harawi* at the Wallis, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Tues., Oct. 1, 7:30 pm, $39-$69. The Wallis.

Blue13 Dance Company — *100 Seconds to Midnight* at the Ford Theatre, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood; Sat., Sept. 28, 8 pm, $10-$65. The Ford.

Blue13 Dance Company. Photo by Jordan Strauss

Viver Brasil at Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 West Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre; Sat., Sept. 28, 11 am, $12. Sierra Madre Playhouse.

Bodies in Play — *Dance is Pleasure* at LA LGBT Center, Lily Tomlin/Jane Wagner Cultural Arts Center, 1125 N. McFadden St., Hollywood; Fri., Sept. 28, 8 pm, $25-58. Tickets.

Nguyun Nguyen & Joyce Lu — *Every Body Equinox* at El Sereno Community Garden, 5466 Huntington Dr. North, El Sereno; Sun., Sept. 29, 4-6 pm, free w/reservation at PIETER.

High Voltage at Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice; Fri., Oct. 3, 8 pm, $10. Electric Lodge.

National Bunraku Theater at the JACCC Aratani Theatre, 244 S. San Pedro Street, Little Tokyo; Sat., Sept. 28, 7:30 pm, $35-55 (sold out as of press time). JACCC.

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