Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Wasn’t that Box Pandora’s?

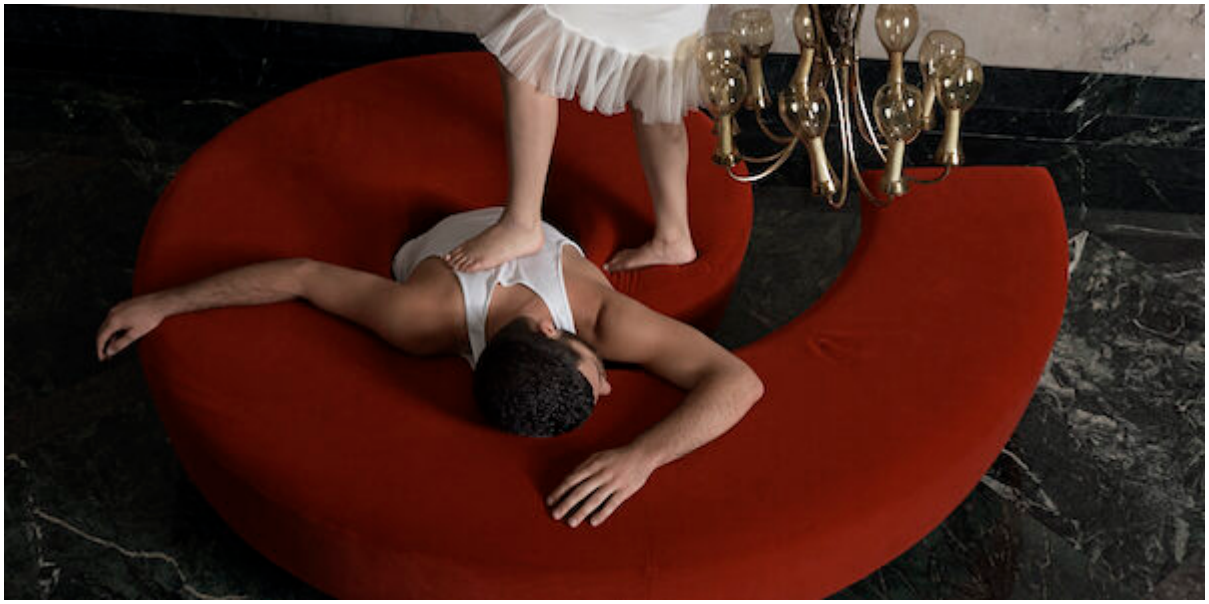
Ann Haskins · Wednesday, August 11th, 2021

Local dance transports Brazilian lit and Motown music to Beverly Hills, hillside operatic dance in Hollywood, street dance meets contemporary in Little Tokyo, Cumbia goes centerstage downtown, flamenco reopens an Alhambra stage, and sneaker sculpture dances continue in Hollywood, all live! Online there’s new summer dance films, addressing historical racism, drawing inspiration from veterans’ letters, and lessons from a prior pandemic, plus more SoCal dance this week.

Live This Week

When the light is a chandelier

An outdoor, pop-up stage hosts the premiere of **Heidi Duckler Dance**’s *The Chandelier*. Originally slated to premiere at this venue in Spring 2020, that live performance first was postponed, then cancelled with the extended pandemic shutdown. Undeterred, choreographer Duckler and her band of dancers, musicians, and actors transformed the work into a zoomed distillation and then a filmed version. These adaptations allowed work to continue, helping to refine and polish ideas Duckler drew from Brazilian author Clarice Lispector’s novel with the same title. Lispector’s tale focused on a family grappling with a world of unalterable impermanence, fitting issues HDD unexpectedly had to confront, and now with this performance, have overcome. At The Wallis, Promenade Terrace, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, Thurs-Sun., Aug. 12–15, 8pm, $50. The Wallis.



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Motown meets hip hop

An al fresco stage and music from the Motor City fuel *Box of Hope*, the high-energy hip-hop dance theater production from **Versa-Style Dance Company.** The aplomb and enthusiasm of these accomplished dancers bring new life to familiar Motown hits and at the same time deftly underscore issues of economic and racial oppression that Motown artists often included as subtext, and sadly remain topical. Kudos to the Wallis as it continues to present important LA dance troupes in this major venue. Outdoor Stage at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Thurs.-Sat., Aug. 19-21, 8 p.m., $35. Details on Covid-19 safety protocols and tickets at The Wallis.

Versa Style Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Moon dancing

For this opera double bill, the Long Beach Opera and the LA Phil turned over director as well as choreographer duties to Danielle Agami for *Pierrot Lunaire (Pierrot in the Moonlight).* Best known as artistic director of **Ate9 dANCE cOMPANY**, Agami has a track record providing dance moves for opera, but this marks her debut also taking on direction as well as choreography. In 1912 Arnold Schoenberg drew on 21 selected poems by Albert Giraud, setting the composition *Pierrot Lunaire* on a soprano and a small ensemble of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. Jenny Wong conducts the musicians from Wild UP, joined by soprano Kiera Duffy plus dancers from Agami's company. The figure of Pierrot is an iconic, often pathetic comic figure in European culture and while dances exist focused on the character, this possibly is the first time dancers have been incorporated in a production of this Schoenberg work. The moon-drenched theme that extends through all of the short poems also infuses the filigreed music, making it one of Schoenberg's most performed pieces. The other half of this double bill, is *Voices from the Killing Jar* by composer Kate Soper and directed by Zoe Aja Moore. At The Ford, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East,

Hollywood; Sat.-Sun., 8 p.m., $49-$90. The Ford

ate9 dANCE cOMPANY in “Pierrot Lunaire.” Photo courtesy of the artists.

Plenty of entity

Led by choreographers Will Johnston and Marissa Osato, **Entity Dance** specializes in connecting Southern California hip hop with contemporary dance. Movement created by Johnston and Osato captured on film are part of a live screening and al fresco performance in an exquisite Japanese garden. Under the stars and under the banner of *EntityFeatures* the evening also includes works by Nina McNeeley, Karen Chuang, Emily Crouch, Shiori Kamijo, Grayson McGuire, and Diana Schoenfield. Catch a preview on YouTube. Outdoors at the James Irvine Japanese Garden, JACCC, 244 S. San Pedro St., Little Tokyo; Fri., Aug. 13, 8 p.m., $15-$25, Tickets at OvationTix.

Entity Dance. Photo by Mike Esperanza.

Reopening with flamenco

Live dance and music from **Flamenco Alhambra** features dancer Inesita and her troupe including dancers Miquel Bernal, Clarita, and Ahmae with guitarists Stamen Wetzel and Benjamin. Sage Granada Park United Methodist Church, 1850 W. Hellman Ave., Alhambra; Sat., Aug. 14, 7 p.m., $15 at door or free with reservation through Bill Yee at their email or 626-230-5435.

Flamenco Alhambra. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Like sneakers on a wire

A series of “activation performances” with dancer/choreographer **Jessica Emmanuel** are inspired by and incorporate parts of the *Tumblehood*, the 2015 spherical sculpture crafted by Nari Wood out of sneakers and shoelaces. Emmanuel began these performances in June, took a break in July, and now has resumed. At Jeffrey Deitch, 925 N. Orange Dr., Hollywood; Saturdays thru Aug. 21, hourly from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., free. Jeffrey Deitch.

Jessica Emmanuel. Photo by Yoko Morimoto.

How to *cumbia*

Rooted in Columbian culture on the Caribbean coast, the dance known as *cumbia* drew on and blended elements of African, European, and indigenous cultures attracting fans to the easy to learn syncopated basics and widely forgiving potential for variations. The popular dance opens the **Music Center's Dance DTLA** with the first of five Friday nights of dance lessons and the chance to dance under summer stars. The ensemble Cumbiaton provides the music. Leslie Ferreira leads the free *Cumbia* class at 7 p.m. The free dance follows. Join in or sit back and enjoy the free dance show. In weeks to come, the line-up includes disco, Motown, salsa and Bollywood. Details at the website. Music Center, Jerry Moss Plaza, 135 No. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri., Aug. 13, 7pm to 11pm, free. Music Center LA

Cumbia instructor Leslie Ferreira at Dance DTLA. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Online This Week

What they did this summer

Four new dance films feature members of **Backhausdance** and participants in the company's three-week summer dance intensive under the banner "2021 BDSI Watch Party." The screening includes behind the scene features including interviews and class footage for the intensive that managed in person and online options. Info at Backhausdance. See the trailer for free and rent online on Vimeo.

Backhaus Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

In 2017, **Viver Brasil** premiered *Cor da Pele* as part of the company's 20th anniversary concert. Critics praised choreographer Marina Magalhães' fierce tackling of tough issues of racism while exalting Brazilian ancestry. That performance joins the company's weekly online rebroadcast of past shows. The troupe's rich repertoire reflects efforts to preserve Brasil's African culture in dance and music. Free at Viver Brasil. The ensemble also is part of KCET's *Southland Sessions* streaming at KCET.

Viver Brasil. Photo by Gia Trovela.

A Peek at Live Dance Coming Next Week:

Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles at the Music Center Jerry Moss Plaza, downtown; Sat., Aug. 21, Music Center LA

Mi Tierra Ballet Folklorico at the Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood; Sun., Aug. 22, Hollywood Bowl

Pacifico Dance Company at the Ford Theater, Hollywood; Sun., Aug. 22, 10 a.m. The Ford

Online Encores

Addressing the jab

Among the innovative Covid-19 vaccination efforts, Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Hospital Campus (MLK) teamed with site specific dance company **Heidi Duckler Dance** to create a short, public service announcement film *Ages Take Action: Give the Vaccine a Shot.* The film includes a score produced by the Young Producers Group comprised of LAUSD students enrolled in music production classes. The video continues HDD's ongoing partnership with MLK and its Watts/Willowbrook neighborhood. The video will be part of community outreach efforts by hospital personnel and other health professionals to disseminate information about the vaccination effort and address the disproportionate pandemic toll on BIPOC communities. The film receives its debut public screening along with a panel discussion with medical professionals. At the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, 10950 S Central Ave, Watts-Willowbrook; Thurs., July 29, 7 p.m. free with reservation at Heidi Duckler and continues online on Vimeo.

Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

L.A. dance gets a little love

The third season of the Music Center's digital series *For the Love of L.A.* keeps adding new videos filled with curated dance, music, and visual arts. The season includes South Asian-American dance with **Shalini Bathina** and 17-year old **Shreya Patel**, Japanese influenced dance in a film directed

and performed by **Kyoko Takenaka**, contemporary dance set in Leimert Park from **Brianna Mims**, an excursion between beach and backyard from **Maya Alvarez-Coyne,** Albertossy Espinoza's **LA Fusion Dance Theater**, and more. Online free, at Music Center LA.

Brianna Mims. Photo courtesy of the artist.

She does like a good book

Choreographer **Rosanna Gamson** has drawn some of her most compelling work from literature

ranging from *Scheherazade* in *Tales of the Arabian Nights* to the Brothers Grimm's *Hansel and Gretel*, and lectures by theoretical physicist Richard Feynman. Other than Albert Camus' *The Plague*, what could be more appropriate pandemic source material than Boccaccio's *Decameron* with tales from ten strangers sheltering from the bubonic plague? Just as the tales of the ten travelers unfold one at a time, Gamson's *The Decameron Project* rolled out ten films, each made by a different artist. Viewable for free on RGWW and on Instagram.

Rosanna Gamson/WorldWide. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Online Dance Classes

Pandemic exhaustion? Post-pandemic fitness promises to keep? Get thee to a dance class!

On-line dance classes continue on zoom, instagram, other on-line platforms, and increasingly in person. 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. LA Dance Chronicle.

Dance classes.

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