Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

What Becomes a Legend Most?

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, November 6th, 2024

A post-modern icon returns with friends in Santa Monica; new choreography in Frogtown, Laguna Beach, Temecula, and downtown; *Day of the Dead* dancers in East LA; a double threat in flamenco and ballet in Costa Mesa; hip hop/street dance in Cerritos and downtown; the big cirque returns to Santa Monica; more SoCal dance this busy week, and a peek at next week (ending November 21).

Live This Week

(through November 14, 2024)

A haunted holiday

Once again, it is time for **Danza Floricanto/USA** to transform its studios and performance space into an *ofrenda* and cemetery to commemorate *Fiesta del Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead Fiesta).* This highly respected folkloric company established by founder Gema Sandoval, is now directed by her daughter Christine Rios, who continues its popular rendition of the holiday tradition. The family friendly event provides entertainment and humor along with commentary on contemporary community issues. Floricanto Center for the Performing Arts, 2900 Calle Pedro Infante, East LA; Sat., Nov. 9, 8 pm, Sun., Nov. 10, 6 pm, $15-$30 presale only, $20 at door, $10 children 5-10 years at door only. Danza Floricanto/USA.

Danza Danza Floricanto/USA. Photo by Frank Sandoval

Something spontaneous

As part of this venue's ongoing 35th anniversary celebration, *A Day of Simone Forti* celebrates the legendary post-modern choreographer/dancer Forti. She is joined by long-time collaborators Carmela Hermann Dietrich, Terrence Luke Johnson, and Sarah Swenson for what promises to be a compelling afternoon. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Sun., Nov. 10, 3 pm, $25, $20 seniors/students. Highways Performance.

Simone Forti and dancers. Photo by Carol Petersen

For Now

This year's three week **New Original Works (NOW) Fest** opens with three performances over three nights. Choreographer **Bernard Brown** turns his attention to the Black Gay bar as a haven, taking his title from the disco-era ballad *Sissies: Something Perfect Between Ourselves.* The cast of seven are backed by live DJ Defacto X. In the second performance, **Meena Murugesan**'s *Dravidian Futurities: Chapter II*, draws on movement, visual art, and music to ponder a sunken land mass underneath the convergence of the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean, and Arabian Sea that once linked South India with Africa. The third part of the triptych gathers Eliza Bagg, Rohan Chandler and George Miller to essay Alban Berg's *7 Early Songs.* Next week's trio includes **Tijuana Dance Company** exploring the border city's nightlife in Salón México. Also, in **Ajani Brannum**'s *CONGRESS*, five performers move, speak, and sing as themselves and their patriarchal predecessors, and **Sophia Cleary**'s *Read the Room* employs rehearsal interactions between an actor and director as a metaphor for contemporary blurring of fact and fiction. Week 3 brings Bret Easterling and Kensaku Shinohara. Full festival info for each week at the website. REDCAT, Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thurs.-Sat., Nov. 7-9, 14-16, & 21-23, 8:30 pm, $25, $20 students. REDCAT.

Bernard Brown. Photo by Steve Rosa

Flamenco is just the start

Led by dancer/choreographer Sergio Bernal and co-artistic director Ricardo Cue, the dancers and musicians of the **Sergio Bernal Dance Company** bring all the energy and flamboyance of flamenco, plus the company's distinctive blend of Spain's other traditional and contemporary dance, seasoned with classical ballet and modern dance moves. Bernal has achieved the status of principal dancer in both the flamenco and ballet world. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Sat., Nov. 9, 7:30 pm, $44.07-$134.47. SCFTA.

Sergio Bernal in “The Swan.” Photo courtesy of the artist

Open mic

Nine choreographers offer new work, each piece no longer than ten minutes in this *Choreography Open Mic Night* presented by **MashUp Contemporary Dance Company.** In this edition, participating choreographers are Stephanie Gevone Heckert, Sasha Serdyukov, Samuel Macias, Eva Watson, Nola Gibson, Elaina Grenawalt, Mia Seleno, Santiago Rivera, and Amitra Batra. A post performance reception and refreshments encourage conversation among the artists and audience. The Pickle Factory, 2828 Gilroy St., Frogtown; Sat., Nov. 9, 7 p.m., $15. MashUp.

MashUp Contemporary Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists

Sculpture/sculptors

Utilizing new sculptures by artist Christian Sampson and sunset on the museum’s

beach, **Volta Collective** and its ten dancers perform the site-specific *Ocean Ions.* Choreography is by Mamie Green; Kat Shuman provides vocals; and Marta Tiesenga composed the score, performed live. The intergenerational cast includes Cacia LaCount, Joey Vice, Anne Kim, Jolyn Lambey, Mamie Green, Keilan Stafford, Ryley Polak, Chelen Middlebrook, Emma Nguyen, Lana Nguyen. Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach; Sat., Nov. 9, 4 p.m., free w/reservation at info@voltacollective.com.

Volta Collective. Photo courtesy of the artists

Season opener

Opening their season as resident company at this venue, Jennifer Backhaus and her **Backhausdance** bring world premieres from choreographers Jessie Lee Thorne and Bret Easterling. Earlier in the day, the company offers a ticketed master class. Old Town Temecula Community Theater, 42051 Main St., Temecula; Sat., Nov. 9, 8 pm, $25. Tickets.

Backhausdance. Photo courtesy of the artists

A master judge

Street dance master Rennie Harris is the moderator for the street dance battle starting at 2 pm. The battle prelims follow a performance excerpt from *Casa VERdad* with Billy Jones at 1:35 pm. Both are part of *Juchéti Uarhán (Our Dance) Dance Festival* presented by **MoFundamentals**, an organization supporting adoptees or from foster care through dance. See the website for the full line up the afternoon's events. 1611 S. Hope St., downtown; Sat., Nov. 9, noon to 4 pm, $17.85 to $23.18. Eventbrite.

Hip Hop Nutcracker. Photo courtesy of the artists

First nut of the season

The turkey isn't even in the oven as this take on the holiday classic stops off on tour. Choregraphed by Jennie Webber, **The Hip Hop Nutcracker** hits the stage for one performance only. Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 18000 Park Plaza Dr., Cerritos; Fri., Nov. 8, 7:30 p.m. $40-$90. CCPA.

LA Opera's "Romeo and Juliet." Photo by Robert Millard

Opera dances

Known for her contemporary troupe *Hysterica,* Kitty McNamee has been a frequent choreographer for **LA Opera**, including the 2005 and 2011 productions of Gounod's *Romeo & Juliet.* This time McNamee is directing the opera that has the chorus and leads dancing as well as singing. Music Center Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Sun., Nov. 10 & 17, 2 pm, Thurs. Nov. 14 & Wed., Nov. 20, 7:30 pm, Sat., Nov. 23, 7:30 pm, $33.50-$400. LA Opera.

East West Players' "Pacific Overtures." Photo by Teolindo

Back to the overture

When **East West Players** chose Stephen Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures* for the 50th anniversary of the show's Broadway premiere, it also lured back former artistic director Tim Dang who directed the show when EWP moved to its current mid-sized theater in Little Tokyo. Dang not only brings a background in dance, he brought in three additional choreographers Broadway dancer/choreographer Yuka Takara, Kabuki consultant Kirk Kanesaka (aka Ganky? Nakamura), and fight director Amanda Noriko Newman.The show continues EWP long history presenting Sondheim in a theater sized to allow audiences to see the full show and still hear every precious lyric. David Henry Hwang Theater in the Union Center for the Arts, 120 Judge John Aiso St., Little Tokyo; opens Thurs., Nov. 7, 8 pm, then Thurs., Fri. & Mon, 8 pm, Sat. 2 & 8 pm, Sun. 5 pm, thru Dec. 1. $15-$74. East West Players.

Back on the Beach

The grand daddy of all the cirques, **Cirque du Soleil**, returns with its signature tent and the

show *Kooza*, brimming with acrobats and clowns. The two month run offers lots of time to catch the show, maybe more than once? Under the Big Top at Santa Monica Pier, 1550 Pacific Coast Hwy., Santa Monica; thru Sun., Jan. 5, $58-$344. Details on the many dates and times at the website. Cirque du Soleil.

Cirque du Soleil. Photo courtesy of the artists

Teasing

The title says it all: *The Empire Strips Back: A Burlesque Parody*. The show returns after its 2022 run at this venue. The Montalbán Theatre, 1615 Vine St., Hollywood; Thurs., 7:30 pm, Fri., 7 pm, Sat., 7 & 9:30 pm, Sun., 4 pm, thru Dec. 1. $44-$109. The Empire Strips Back.

A Peek at Next Week (November 15-21)

New Original Works (NOW) Fest Week 3 — Bret Easterling and Kensaku Shinohara. At REDCAT, Disney Hall, 631 W. 2nd St., downtown; Thurs., Nov. 21-23, 8:30 pm, $25, $20 students. REDCAT.

Heidi Duckler Dance — *Truth or Consequences: Life Cycle of a Fever Dream* at Bendix Building, 1206 Maple Ave., Suite 1100B, downtown; Sat., Nov. 16, 4-6 pm, $35. Heidi Duckler.

JazzAntiqua Dance & Music. Photo by Malcom Ali

JazzAntiqua Dance & Music Ensemble — *30th Anniversary Celebration: Ritual of Rhythm* at Nate Holden Performing Arts Center, 4718 W. Washington Blvd., Mid-City; Sat., Nov. 16, 8 pm, $30. Ebony Rep. Tickets.

Nancy Evans Dance Theatre — *The Inner Voices Project* at ARC Pasadena (A Room to Create),1158 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Sat., Nov. 16, 8 pm, Sat., Nov. 17, 4 pm, $25, $20 students/seniors. Nancy Evans Dance Theatre.

Donna Sternberg & Dancers — *Awe & Wonder 2024* at Turning Point School, 8780 National Blvd., Culver City; Sat., Nov. 16, 8 pm, Sun., Nov. 17, 3 pm, $30, $25 students/seniors pre-sale, $35, $30 students/seniors at door. Donna Sternberg & Dancers.

Donna Sternberg & Dancers. Photo by Denise Leitner

Corina del Sol — *Frida & Flamenco* at Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice, Sun., Nov. 17, 6 pm, $30. Eventbrite.

Cape Town's Baxter Theatre & Handspring Puppet Company — *Life & Times of Michael K* at Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Bram Goldsmith Theater, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills; Thurs.-Sat., Nov. 21-23, 7:30 pm, Sat.-Sun., Nov. 22-23, 2 pm, $39-99. The Wallis.

Debbie Allen Middle School Fundraiser — *Tis the Season Soiree* at Leona's Restaurant, 11814 Ventura Blvd., Studio City; Sat., Nov. 16, 4 pm, $50. Debbie Allen Dance Academy.

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