Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

When the Light in the Tunnel is a Chandelier

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, August 4th, 2021

A pandemic delayed premiere arrives in Beverly Hills, West African dance in Cahuenga Pass, ballet goes improvisational in Van Nuys, and sneaker sculpture dances continue in Hollywood, all live! Online dance celebrates feminine energy, considers the incarcerated, draws inspiration from veterans' letters, and reviews lessons from a prior pandemic, plus more SoCal dance this week.

Live This Week

Reflection/Refraction

An outdoor, pop-up stage hosts the premiere of **Heidi Duckler Dance**'s *The Chandelier*. Originally slated for 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, 8 p.m., $50. The Wallis.



Heidi Duckler Dance, *The Chandelier*. 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.

Improvising on Improvisation

The audience has a chance to get into the action in a live concert and filming as **LA Dance Moves** collaborates with filmmaker/composer Frederick Keeve in in *Back to the Heart.* The plan, as announced by LADM director Nancy Paradis, involves Keeve on piano providing live, improvised music as the dancers perform and embellish the choreography. Also scheduled is a duet with Elise Filo and Chasen Greenwood that pays tribute to Keeve's music and is scheduled for submission to upcoming dance festivals. Dancers also include Michelle Lebowski, Hannah Fontaine Barr, Damara Titmus, and Akem Harrison. At the Performing Arts Center Black Box Filming Studio, 7735 Sepulveda Blvd., Van Nuys; Sat., Aug. 7, 2:30 p.m., $75. Info and preview at LA Dance Moves. Tickets (presale only) & Covid safety protocols info at Brown Paper Tickets.



LA Dance Moves. Photo courtesy of the artists.

For the family

In the Soussou language of Guinea, "dembaya" means family and **Le Ballet Dembaya** translates as the dance of the family. The dancers and drummers of this group draw their percussive programs from West Africa and African-American culture for this free event, part of LA Soundscapes. At The Ford, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood; Sun., Aug. 8, 10 a.m., free. The Ford



Le Ballet Dembaya. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Online This Week

Doing time

Choreographer and prison reform activist **Suchi Branfman** brings an encore showing of her powerful film *Undanced Dances Through Prison Walls During a Pandemic.* As part of a five year residency at a medium security prison, Branfman involved inmates in weekly sessions of dance and choreography. With the Covid–19 shutdown, plans shifted from live sessions to inmates submitting choreographic ideas in writing. Branfman turned the ideas over to five choreographers who had all worked with Branfman in the pre-pandemic prison sessions to translate those written choreographic ideas into movement that was filmed with narration provided by several former inmates. This online event includes a 40-minute screening accompanied by a choreographic exploration with Branfman and Tom Tsai, a filmmaker and one of the choreographers involved in the project. Sun., Aug. 1, 11:59 a.m., $5 -$35 (but no one turned away.) Info and registration at Pieter Performance Space.



Suchi Branfman’s “Undanced Dances Through Prison Walls During a Pandemic.” Photo courtesy of

the artist.

Magnified energy

Organizer James MahKween sees the livestreamed variety arts showcase *F.E.M. (Feminine Energy Magnified)* as a celebration of feminine energy and pushback to toxic masculinity. Dancers have been recruited as well as with singers, poets, actors, and musicians. The event is a prequel and fundraiser for a larger production addressing these themes, prospectively titled *CAT CALL I'm Not Yours to Call*. *F.E.M.* livestreamed, Sat., Aug. 7, 4:30 p.m. PDT, $5-$10. Tickets at MahKweenMethod@gmail.com. Livestream opens 30 min. before show on Instagram and Facebook.



F.E.M. (Femine Energy Magnified). Photo courtesy of the artists.

A Peek at Live Dance Coming Next Week

Ate9 dANCE cOMPANY in *Pierrot Lunaire/Voices from the Killing Jar*. The Ford, Hollywood;

Sat.-Sun., 8 p.m. The Ford

Versa-Style Dance Company at the Outdoor Stage, Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Beverly Hills; Thurs.-Sat., Aug. 19-21, The Wallis.

Flamenco Alhambra, Sage Granada Park United Methodist Church, Aug. 14, Flamenco Inesita

Entity Contemporary Dance live screening of new dance films. JACCC, James Irvine Japanese Garden, Little Tokyo; Fri., Aug. 13, 8 p.m. Ovation Tix

Dance DTLA opens with Cumbia dance. Music Center Plaza, downtown; Fri., Aug. 13, 7 p.m. Music Center

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 Dance and continues online at Vimeo.



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Vets' letters from the front

One of the most powerful dance videos to emerge during the initial months of the pandemic came from **Diavolo Architecture in Motion**'s **Veterans Project** with the stories and insights of military veterans who had become front line medical workers during the pandemic. The veterans went toe to toe in bravura movement with some of Diavolo's astonishing athletes and signature structures. The Veterans Project most recent video is an equally mesmerizing endeavor, the product of an eight day workshop with writings by the veterans interpreted by dancers from around the world. The final product of *S.O.S. Veterans Project 2021* premiered appropriately on July 4 and streams until August 4 on Diavolo's YouTube page at YouTube.



Diavolo Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian.

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.



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* rolls out ten films, each made by a different artist. All ten episodes are now live and viewable for free on RGWW and on Instagram.



Rosanna Gamson/WorldWide. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Dances with cars

Inspired by often overlooked histories of Black, Native and LatinX people in Santa Monica, **Suárez Dance Theater** produced three short films under the banner *Mapping Our Stories* with each film set in a public space with cultural significance. Choreographer/performer **Bernard Brown** of bbmoves moved from the landmark 1909 church that was first to serve the African American Community to the site of "Inkwell Beach" where Blacks and Browns were restricted in segregated California beaches. Acknowledging her Chumash and Tongva Nations heritage, poet/songwriter **Jessa Calderon**'s film starts overlooking the ocean from Tongva Park. The history of the Westside Classics Car Club is commemorated by **Primera Generación Dance Collective (PGDC)** and its members Alfonso Cervera, Rosa Rodriguez-Frazier, Irvin Manuel Gonzalez, and Patricia "Patty" Huerta. Each film has resources for further exploration and continue to screen for free at Bernard Brown/bbmoves's "…at leisure…," Jessa Calderon's "Before the Noise," Primera Generación Dance Colletive's "low riting"



Primera Generación Dance Collective's "low riting." 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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