

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Working Out a New Normal

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, March 24th, 2021

German breakdance goes L.A., museum “meshing” with contemporary dance, a 60th birthday solo redeux, tango celebrating Piazzolla, opera with dance, traveling chamber ballet, plus online encores, where to take online dance classes, and more SoCal dance this week.

### ***This Week***

#### **If this is Monday, where are we this week?**

With support from three theaters, The Wallis and The Soraya in SoCal and The Harris in Chicago, **Jacob Jonas The Company** worked with more than 150 artists all over the globe to produce short dance films for the series, ***Films.Dance***. Pandemic restrictions still preclude travel but for 15 weeks that started January 25, a new film takes viewers to a different world destination each Monday until May 3. The films screen for free. Week 10 heads to Montreal for *Sit Still* with seven-year-old Adeline Kerry Cruz displaying Krump moves choreographed by Russell “Gutta” Ferguson. The new addition joins *Same Sky* danced by Jacob Jonas The Company with choreography by German break-dancer Rauf “RubberLegz” Yasit, *ANOTHER SERIOUS DANCE FILM* with New York City Ballet’s Sara Mearns in NYC, *Dadu* set in the Dutch hamlet of Spaarnwoude, ?? – *NOW* with BeijingDance/LDTX company dancer Li Kehua (Lico), *Edging Normal* with dancer Desmond Richardson in New York, *Match* bringing five choreographers and 46 dancers drawn from 20 countries in a scene-shifting world tour, *Pássaro Distante* from Brasil, *Toke* spotlighting Danish-born dancer Toke Broni Strandby in London locales, and *Kaduna* filmed in Nigeria. Mon., 9 a.m., free. New additions each Monday to May 3. Info on the full line-up of 15 films and free subscriptions at [Films.Dance](#), [The Wallis](#), [The Soraya](#).



Films.Dance's "ANOTHER SERIOUS DANCE FILM." Photo by Jose Tutes.

## Meshing with a museum

Choreographer Jennifer Backhaus has displayed a special affinity for the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA) as a performance venue. Backhaus and her contemporary troupe **Backhausdance** return to the museum with *Mesh*, the latest in the series *Backhausdance With(in) OCMA*. Inspired by the exhibition *Alexandra Grant: Telepathy is One Step Further than Empathy*, the filmed performance is a series of duets set in the museum galleries. Premiere Sun., March 28, 5:30 p.m. PDT, then online. Free with reservation. [Backhausdance](#).



Backhausdance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## One more time

Originally choreographed for her 60th birthday event, Carol McDowell's solo *Be Cool*, was recreated a year ago by McDowell and a team that included dancer/choreographer Alexx Shilling, Taso Papadakis on camera, and composer Julio Montero, but the scheduled screening was another victim of the pandemic shutdown, until now. The film is online this week as part of **freeskewl's** *On The House* along with works from Dorchel Haqq, Babatunji Johnson, Shannon Murphy/Dark Moon, Amy Gernux and Delaney McDonough. Fri., March 26, 4 p.m., \$4.50. Info and tickets at [freeskewl](#).



freeskewl's *On The House*. Photo by Taso Papadakis.

## Not just talking

After a refreshing live performance, albeit in a parking lot, **Benita Bike's DanceArt** latest offering is an online, interactive edition of its *Let's Talk Dance* with a focus on performance, costume, identity and presentation. Thurs., March 25, 7 p.m. free with registration at [DanceArt](#).





Benita Bike's DanceArt. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## For now until then

Originally from Orange County, Skylar Campbell's ballet career took him to the National Ballet of Canada. Last year, his nascent chamber company **Skylar Campbell Dance Collective** was booked for a June debut at The Barclay Theater. Drawing dancers on hiatus from New York City Ballet, Boston Ballet and National Ballet of Canada, when the pandemic shutdown live performance here, the debut instead was online from Canada. The Barclay still plans to present the ensemble when live performance resumes, but for now, the venue announced SCDC's three-part dance film *Traveler* with original music by OC's Josiah Johnson. Free. [Part one](#) with Campbell and Jackie Oakley, [Part two](#) with Ben Rudisin and Calley Skalnik, [Part three](#) with Hannah Fischer, Rudisin, Oakley, Skalnik, and Campbell.



Skylar Campbell. Photo courtesy of the artist.

## Dancers going solo

This year's **LA Women's Theatre Festival** includes a dance component in many of its six night's of solo performances. The Thursday opening includes award presentations and performances including Korean dancer **Julie Kim** in *Abandon*. On Friday, tapper **Lynn Jassem** joins the line-up with a segment from her one-woman show *Tapping My Way to the Nuthouse*. Saturday includes **Cynthia Ling Lee**'s dance theater piece *Lost Chinatowns*. On Sunday, Pamela Najera employs dance in *Too Old, Too Asian, Too Short*. Thurs., March 25, 7 p.m., \$25, Fri.March 26-Tues., March 30, 7 p.m., \$20 single ticket, \$90 for festival pass. More info and tickets at [LA Women's](#)

Theatre Festival.



LA Women's Theatre Festival. Photo courtesy of the artist.

### **Not quite a dozen**

Eleven champion tango couples get support from an orchestra populated by ten grammy-award winning tango musicians in *Tango The Musical by Sergei Tumas*. The show celebrates the centenary of tango icon Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992). Argentinian choreographers Iván Leonardo Romero and Silvana Nuñez supplied the moves. Center Theatre Group's Digital Stage, Thurs., March 25, 5 p.m., Fri.-Sat., March 26–27, 5 & 8 p.m., Sun., March 28, 1 & 5 p.m., PDT, \$10 at [CTG](#).



Tango The Musical by Sergei Tumas. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Song and dance

Dancer Lateef Williams joins mezzo-soprano Raehann Bryce-Davis in the premiere of *Brown Sounds*, a digital short by Jérémy Adonis. Filmed on location in a lush Belgian garden, the project is the opening collaborative effort from LA Opera, the African American Art Song Alliance, Aural Compass Projects, Black Opera Alliance, National Association of Negro Musicians and the Philadelphia Dance Company. Ongoing beginning Fri., March 26, 11 a.m., free. Viewing details at [LA Opera](#).



Lateef Williams in "Brown Sounds." Photo courtesy of LA Opera.

### ***Online Encores***

#### **Three to present one**

Three theaters joined forces in early March to present a free performance by flamenco artist Israel Galván in *Maestro de Barra*. Reviewers have described Galvan as a master at capturing the fiery spirit and quicksilver footwork of this percussive art form without dancing into movement clichés. Moving outside traditional confines of flamenco, Galván has collaborated with jazz musician Pat Metheny and contemporary choreographer Akram Khan. Kudos to the three presenters, especially UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance (CAP UCLA) which continues to offer the performance thru May 31. Info and free access at [CAP UCLA](#).





Israel Galván. Photo by Nicolas Serve.

## Dancin' around LA

In the absence of touring companies inside its theaters, the Music Center is giving a little love and attention to LA's dance companies as part of the series *For The Love Of L.A.* filmed in different parts of the city. A recent addition offers **Kyoko Takenaka's** martial arts-infused movement. She joins **Brianna Mims** performing in Leimert Park, **Versa-Style Dance Company's** street dancers at the beach, folkloric troupe **Pacifico Dance Company** at nine different locations representing different areas of Mexico, the tap group **Syncopated Ladies** on a downtown rooftop, **Rangoli Dance Company** celebrating a South Asian goddess, Albertossy Espinoza's **LA Fusion Dance Theater** with Flamenco fusion duet, and Pat Taylor's **Jazz Antiqua Dance & Music Ensemble** in

parks, alleys, and an empty business street. Free online at [Music Center](#).



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Son rearing

Drawing its title and subject matter from Clint Smith's poem *How to Raise a Son*, the poet gives voice to his words as the camera follows dancer Dennzyl Green. A current member of the **Nannette Brodie Dance Theatre**, Green performs and shares choreography credit with Brodie. The film is the latest contribution from NBDT and the South Coast Dance Alliance. Free online on [Vimeo](#)



Nannette Brodie Dance Theatre's Dennzyl Green. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Is there a sequel?

Originally staged in 2016 to sold out audiences, **Invertigo Dance Theatre's** *After It Happened* joins the Ford Theaters video line up of encore performances. Set in the aftermath of a natural disaster, the work considers how a community rebuilds and scavenges for signs of hope and resilience. With the current tragic pandemic possibly headed toward containment, *After It Happened* offers a thoughtful consideration through dance that suggests ways to create and build a new normal. Free with reservation at [The Ford](#) or [Invertigo Dance Theatre](#).



Invertigo Dance Theatre. Photo by Joe Lambie.

## Taking to the air(waves)

The SoCal contemporary ballet and aerial company **Luminario Ballet** has posted links to recent performances and also announced it has a new dance film coming soon. The films are free at <https://luminarioballet.org/>,



Luminario Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Mask breathing

Over the past year, choreographer Melissa Barak and her contemporary **Barak Ballet** shifted online several fine filmed performances, a virtual gala, and its own instagram channel. Some of the films are free at their [website](#) and [Instagram](#).



Barak Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## A show of force

One of the most powerful filmed efforts from last year remains *This is Me – Letters from the Front Lines* from **Diavolo Architecture in Motion** and its **Veterans Project**. The film's insights remain painfully true as military veterans who now are first responders confront what it means to be a warrior on the front lines of a pandemic as they gymnastically inhabit a world of pipes and moving structures while articulating the personal and professional realities of being on the front line of Covid-19. [Diavolo](#).



Diavolo Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian.

## Locking it up

Early in the pandemic, the street dance troupe **Versa-Style Dance Company** displayed a natural affinity to online streaming of performances and classes. The most recent film, *Ending The Year With Hope*, continues online and the company has a video filmed at the beach as part of the Music Center's *For the Love of LA* series. The company's YouTube channel hosts performance videos and videos on a range of life-skills subjects geared to young adults, but with pointers for all ages. Info and videos on [YouTube](#) and [Versa-Style website](#).



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Post-grad dancing

Performances by Santa Monica College's two resident companies, **Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater** and **Global Motion World Dance Company**, stream for free at [SMC](#).



Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## The past comes present

While the theatre itself remains closed, the Ford continues several online series showcasing past dance and music performances. The array of local dance companies in the line up reflects how the beloved al fresco venue functioned as an informal summer dance festival showcasing the energy and diversity in SoCal dance. Look for contemporary from Lula Washington Dance Theatre, street dance from Versa-Style Dance, Brazilian from Viver Brasil, plus traditional and contemporary folkloric dance from Grandeza Mexicano Folk Ballet Company, Pacifico Dance Company, the LA Phil's exploration of Tovaangar Today with dancer Ba'ac Garcia, and contemporary South Asian, Bollywood and Bhangra dance from Achinta S. McDaniel and her Blue13. All free. Complete calendar and information at [The Ford](#).



Lula Washington Dance Theatre. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## An international dozen

A dozen dancers working remotely from three continents developed a series of short videos



presented by **Nancy Evans Dance Theatre** under the banner *The Channels*. The company also added a new installment of *Figures of Speech*, new dance works inspired by literature. Free at [Nancy Evans Dance Theatre](#)



Nancy Evans Dance Theatre. Photo by Shana Skelton.

## House dancing

The pandemic caught Pasadena's **Lineage Dance Company** in the midst of construction of its new Lineage Performing Arts Center as well as figuring out how to offer classes and performance in a pandemic. The construction is finished and the dance company has scored with several videos including its most recent staged in Pasadena's iconic Gamble House. Videos free online at [Lineage](#).



Lineage Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Unexpected curriculum addition

The dance department at **Cal State University Long Beach** is among those shifting online videos to new dance channels on You Tube while also streaming two performances with dancers observing strict Covid-19 protocols. Those performances and more are free on [YouTube](#).



CSULB Fall Dance Concert. Photo by Gregory RR Crosby.

## Alone with others watching

Not content to simply be online with filmed dance, the site specific performance ensemble **Heidi Duckler Dance** launched its 35th anniversary with live walk-up or drive performances at sites throughout L.A. An array of projects and films can be found at [Heidi Duckler Dance](#).



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists

## The movement and the music

Choreographer Pat Taylor's work for her **JazzAntiqua Dance and Music Ensemble** ranges from pure celebration of the music to thoughtful considerations of the fight against racism and injustice. Videos stream for free at [the JazzAntiqua website](#) and [YouTube](#).



JazzAntiqua Dance & Music Ensemble. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Silver screen shifting

The year of the pandemic has brought several filmed dance ventures and a recent change of leadership for **LA Contemporary Dance Company**. The films plus info on the new artistic director, classes, and other activities at [their website](#).



LA Contemporary Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Feel like screaming?

Its award-winning film *Screaming Shapes!* is just one of several videos from choreographer Sophia and the dancers of **Iris Company** continuing for free online at [Iris Company](#).



Iris Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Multi-screens

With a new weekly online broadcast of a past performance, classes, workshops, and conversations, **Viver Brasil** was among the earliest LA dance companies to shift online and continues as one of the most active with videos, classes, workshops and more. [Viver Brasil](#) The troupe also is part of KCET's *Southland Sessions* streaming at [KCET](#).



Viver Brasil. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Is it a question?

During the initial Covid-19 shutdown, 15 dancemakers created 90-second solos reflecting the range of reactions to the shelter-in-place order last spring. All 15 are collected in Emily Mast and Yehuda Duenyas' project *HOW ARE WE*. Stream for free on [Vimeo](#).



Carlton. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## More in the lunchbox

Live streamed performances continue intermittently but REDCAT's instagram channel offers a collection of prior dance performances including **Genna Moroni**, **Tzong-Han Wu**, and **Rosanna Gamson/World Wide**. Free at [Instagram Channel](#).



Genna Moroni. Photo by Silvia Grav.

## Moving Offstage

The *Music Center Offstage* continues to stream new and encore video clips and performances. Visitors include Cuba's Malpas Dance Company and Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, local troupes include Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy, Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, and Infinite Flow. [Music Center](#).



Ballet Hispanico. Photo by Paula Lobo.

## When one was not enough

Last June's four-part **BlakTinx Dance Festival** presented choreography from 20 Black and Latino dancemakers. All four programs continue for free online on [YouTube](#).



BlakTinx. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Knock twice & tell them Jacob sent you

One of the first SoCal companies to offer a live performance in a parking lot, Jacob Jonas and his eponymous **Jacob Jonas The Company** performed *Parked* with vehicles encircling the “stage,” their headlights illuminating the socially spaced dancers performing to live music by Anibal Sandoval. A short film documenting the one-night only event continues to stream. Info at [Jacob Jonas](#). Film on [Vimeo](#).



Jacob Jonas The Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Live music, virtual dance

Dance continues to be part of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra’s 20-21 online season, including dancer/choreographer **Shauna Davis** in the premiere of composer/musician Derrick Spiva Jr.’s two part work *Mind The Rhythm*. LACO’s music director Jaime Martin conducts. Link to free performance at [LACO](#).



Shauna Davis. Photo by Chris Emile.

## Dance just can’t quit them

Part panel discussion, part video clips and photos, part cross pollination of ideas—the Musco Center’s *Ever a Dancer* surveys different dance worlds in a livestreamed format. This installment assembles a quartet of familiar faces who contribute Asian and South Asian viewpoints to the discussion including **Tomas Tamayo, Hiroko Hojo, Dulce Capadocia**, and **Malathi Iyengar**. Free with registration and more info at the [Musco Center](#).



Rangoli Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

## Platforms to Submit Video Dance

### Dare Dancing

With cautions about staying safe while filming, organizers Sarah Elgart and Cultural Weekly announced round 4 of *Dare to Dance in Public* with the theme of *Pandemia*, meaning a hyper energized state. Info on the judges, prior winners, plus rules and regulations for submission at [Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival](#). The group’s other film endeavor Six Foot Dances is still accepting one-minute films. Current submissions on [Dare to Dance in Public](#).



Dare to Dance. Photo courtesy of the artist.

## Online Dance Classes

### Pandemic exhaustion? Get thee to a dance class!

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-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 listed on LA Dance Chronicle.

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