Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Zooming Up the Stream

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, July 1st, 2020

Ironic that an art form predicated on three-dimensional presentation for a live audience now is ascending a steep learning curve to transpose live dance into the two-dimensional worlds of streaming, video and film. Some efforts are fully realized, others still are finding their footing with the new media, but dance is an art form built on practice, repetition and experience to develop technique and artistry. Those skills also serve well outside the theatre and studio. While lacking the energy of the interaction of dancer with a live audience, the streaming of dance performance, discussions, and dance classes has extended the reach of LA dance far beyond the geography of this metropolis, attracting attention from throughout the U.S. and the world. So far, most streaming is free, with companies hat-in-hand asking for donations, but these ventures into this brave new world for dance suggests that when live performance returns with live audiences limited by social distancing, these times may hold the seeds of a new financial model, perhaps some hybrid of live and streamed performance, either simultaneous or available after the live performance. Perhaps audiences far from LA would pay a nominal fee for access to the streamed or video version. Even SoCal residences might opt for a streamed show in lieu of a two hour commute in traffic. In the meantime, here's what's happening (mostly online) in SoCal dance this week.

Two for the men

For anyone who missed last Tuesday's debut streams from the all-male contemporary troupe **Pony Box Dance Theatre**, good news. Artistic director Jamie Carbetta confirmed this week that the two events will continue online. The Muticultural Festival's *Best Foot Forward* page has an intro from Raymond Ejiofor and the two dance excerpts are introduced by choreographer/performer Elijah Laurant. Another example of how the City of LA Department of Cultural Affairs is funding and supporting LA dance. Info at https://www.ponyboxdance.org/. Stream on Facebook.

BlakTinx Dance Festival's Sadie Yarrington. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Four from one

Instead of its usual annual live performances from Black and Latinx choreographers at the Bootleg Theater, the **BlakTinx Dance Festival** returned with a viral format in late June. For those who missed that live stream of *Dancing on the Edge*, the show now continues on-line in four parts with works from Nancy Rivera Gomez, Shantel Ureña, Anthony Aceves, Bernard Brown, Joshua Estrada-Romero, Keilah Lomotey, Michelle Funderburk, Primera Generación, Vannia Ibargüen, Marina Magalhães, Regina Ferguson, Rubi Morales, Amber Morales, Alan Perez, Dorcas Román,

Yarrow Perea, Andrea Ordaz, Eluza Santos, Briseyda Zárate, and Sadie Yarrington. With many of the works recently created, the pandemic and the streets were reflected onstage. In another reflection of the times, five pieces from earlier festivals that focused on Black Lives Matter were last minute additions. More info at https://www.blaktinafestival.com/. On YouTube: Program One, Program Two, Program Three, Program Four.

Jacob Jonas The Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Drive-in dance

Reminiscent of what one did to enter a speakeasy in the 1920s or a Cold War spy meet-up, six weeks ago a select, paying audience was given the address of a Santa Monica airport parking lot with strict instructions on arriving in their cars, remaining in the cars wearing face masks, and turning on their headlights when cued. In perhaps the first "drive in" dance event, Jacob Jonas and his eponymous **Jacob Jonas The Company** performed *Parked* with those vehicles encircling the "stage," their headlights illuminating the socially spaced dancers performing to live music by Anibal Sandoval. The one-night only event was filmed by Ivan Cash and Daniel Addelson. The five minute final cut debuted this week. With the film covering interviews with the choreographer and dancers, the actual performance footage is brief, but if the cars flashing their headlights at bows was a kind of applause, the experiment garnered a vehicular standing ovation. Hopefully, the performance itself will have a separate streaming life. Info at http://jacobjonas.com/. Film on Vimeo.

Sean Green. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Looking back to move forward

Despite an extensive career in dance here and abroad, **Sean Greene** locally will always be identified with his decade with the Bella Lewitzky Dance Company. With her career based mostly in New York, notably with Laura Dean, **Liz Maxwell** is less well known in SoCal, but both Greene and Maxwell now are on the Chapman College dance faculty and the focus of *Always a Dancer*. The live interview included several clips of Maxwell dancing and then commenting on the roll, the choreography, and the choreographer. Sadly, only still photos were available for Greene's work for Lewitzky. The conversation and visuals are facilitated gently by Napoleon W. Gladney, quietly demonstrating own background as a performer and arts administrator (he's now audience development administrator for the Musco Center for the Arts which hosted the program). The live-streamed interview is now up, available and worth a viewing. Info on Musco Online. Stream on YouTube.

SoCal Encore Streaming

The site specific performance ensemble **Heidi Duckler Dance** has been actively exploring the possibilities in combining live and virtual performance. Last week's *Ebb & Flow: Chinatown 2020* allowed audiences to stroll about installations with dance projected into some of the constructs. Other ongoing streamed projects include a five-minute video drawn from the live performance of *The Chandelier* based on a work by Brazilian author Clarice Lispector about a woman experiencing isolation and trying to connect. Choreographed by Duckler, the performers include Himerria Wortham, Rafael Quintas, Myles Lavallee, Nicole Flores, Maureen Asic, Magdalena Edwards, Jessica Emmanuel, Jaeme Velez, David Guerra, and Paula

Rebelo. Vimeo. Video of the full zoomed performance.

Barak Ballet. Photo by Djeneba Aduayom.

Barak Ballet scheduled premiere of choreographer Melissa Barak's first full length contemporary ballet *Memoryhouse* was cancelled when the statewide coronavirus shutdown closed Santa Monica's Broad Stage. On what would have been the closing night, Barak Ballet instead went online with the premiere of *Breathe In*, a short ballet filmed at the grounds at the Holocaust Museum in what formerly was known as Pan Pacific Park in the Fairfax district. The film features Peter Chursin with Andrew Brader, Lucia Connolly, Jessica Gadzinski, Chasen Greenwood, Stephanie Kim, and with choreography by Barak. Also, there's an opportunity to sign up for the company's new YouTube channel. Info at https://barakballet.org/. Streaming on Facebook.

Versa Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Paying tribute to Don Campbellock, the creator of the Locking dance style, the street dance troupe **Versa Style** and its youth organization **Versa-Style Next Generation** unveil *Finding Creativity and Fun in Our Personal Space*. The streamed performance gets help from musician Cody "CoFlo" Ferreira's *Playground Samba*. YouTube, Facebook. Info at http://versastyledance.org/events/.

Orange County Dance Festival's Akomi Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

After Covid–19 shelter at home caused cancellation, the **Orange County Dance Festival** was among the first to shift to streaming. Throughout April and May, a recorded version of the work each company or artist was scheduled to perform was streamed for three days in show order. Bonuses included company photos, artistic statements, and links to websites and social media platforms. Now the OCDF website has collected the individual events from AkomiDance, Contempo Ballet, 7th Street Dance Company, ISSA Dance Company, Animus Dance Co., Jazz Spectrum Dance Company, Emergent Dance Company, Pacific Ballet Dance Theatre, Louise Reichlin & Dancers, The Hubbard Collective, Kairos Dance Co., and Fuse Dance Company. AkomiDance.

A concentrated taste of choreographer Rosanna Gamson's consideration of a legendary storyteller is performed on-line in *Layla Means Night*. Drawn from her company Rosanna Gamson/World Wide's performance, the work is inspired by *The Persian tale of Shahrzad* or *Scheherazade* who entranced her husband and kept herself alive telling stories for 1001 nights. Vimeo.

Dance is well represented in the ongoing **Music Center Offstage** series, including the *Spotlight* final performance with this year's high school-age ballet dancers Jacob Jovanni Alvarado from San Diego and Ashley Lew from San Juan Capistrano plus Maya Alvarez-Coyne from Santa Ana and Bergundi Loyd from Riverside in non-classical dance. The event is free, but donations to support this scholarship program are invited by texting TMCSPOTLIGHT to 44–321 or at the website.

Other Platforms to Find Video Dance and Dance Classes

Companies are streaming past performances to compensate for cancelled spring seasons, and dance videos have gained more prominence whether a thread of solo dancers tag teaming a movement sequence, dancing on the roof, the backyard or their kitchen. The popular long-running video competition *Dare to Dance in Public* curated by Sarah Elgart has been joined by her new challenge, *Six Foot Distance Dances* (details on how to submit).

Over the next few months, the **Palm Springs International Dance Festival** is accepting submissions for an October performance under the title *MERDE! A Dance Makers Moment*. Six submissions will be selected for presentation on October 23 with by the voting audience and an expert panel. The winner of the voting will be presented as part of the Festival's gala in March 2021. No fee to apply. More details on submission at https://www.nickersonrossidance.com/.

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.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, July 1st, 2020 at 2:32 pm and is filed under Dance
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.