

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Putting Upside Down 2020 Behind

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, December 16th, 2020

Traditional holiday celebrations move online, Chagall flies again, dancing around a bay, Madonna sings sad, new dance films, plus online encores, where to submit dance videos, where to take online dance classes, and more SoCal dance this week.

Author's note: With this issue, *Cultural Weekly* goes on hiatus until January 7, 2021. Many of the dance events and classes rounded up below and happening over the next weeks are free with donations encouraged. Please consider donating an equivalent to money saved on transportation, paying for parking, a performance ticket, and the psychic cost of traffic when commuting to a live show. The companies and teachers will welcome this kind of holiday spirit and it will help keep dancers, choreographers, and companies dancing into 2021.

This Week

Never fear, only free parking is missing

For the first time in six decades, the annual free **L.A. County Holiday Celebration** won't welcome audiences at the Music Center. Never fear, the show will go on, online, with three hours of SoCal dance, music, and choral groups. This year's dance participants include Ballet Folklórico de Los Angeles, H?lau Keali'i o N?lani, Infinite Flow, Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy, Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, Pacifico Dance Company, Rangoli Dance Company and Versa-Style Dance Company. For several years, the live Music Center performances also have been streamed on local PBS stations. With the pandemic, this year's online program and the encores will be the exclusive 2020 shows. Websites have the full line-up. The free show airs live on Thurs., Dec. 24, 3 p.m., with encore showings Thurs., Dec. 24, 7 p.m., Fri. Dec. 25, noon at [PBS SoCal](#), [KCET](#) and [Music Center](#).



Rangoli Dance Company. Photo by Gene Lewis.

Giving the Virgin of Guadalupe her due

After 16 years of annual folkloric-themed Christmas shows, **Danza Floricanto/USA** moves its *Navidad En El Barrio* to the internet with dance and music celebrating the mother of all Mexicans, the Virgin of Guadalupe, plus regional dances and Azteca dancing. Sat., Dec. 19, \$15. [Danza Floricanto/USA](#).



Danza Floricanto/USA. Photo by Frank Sandoval.

The Chagalls take flight

Chagall's vibrant paintings combine with Jewish American dance and live music in *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* charting the love and life of Marc and Bella Chagall who flee from a Russia of pogroms and revolution before finding fame in France. Presented as part of the Wallis' season in 2018, the production receives an online encore broadcast from the Bristol Old Vic Theatre and presented by Kneehigh and Wise Children who brought the delightful *Romantics Anonymous* online from that same theater two months ago. Written by Daniel Jamieson, music by Ian Ross, and directed by Emma Rice (who directed *Romantics Anonymous*), the show screens online now thru Dec. 18, tickets \$21.38 at [Wise Children](#).



The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk. Photo by Steve Tanner.

A trio of shows

The dancers of **Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles** are joined by singer Aida Cuevas, Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar, Suzanna Guzmán, Las Cafeteras, plus José "Pepe" Martínez Jr. and Susie García in the holiday celebration *Nochebuena*. The performers offer three online shows, free with reservations. The Musco online on Thurs., Dec.17, 7 p.m., free. Tickets at [Ovation](#). [The Soroya online](#) in Northridge on Fri., Dec. 18, 5 p.m., free. Also at Carpenter Theater online in Long Beach, Sat., Dec. 19, 7 p.m., free, tickets at [Ovation](#).



Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Taking to the Outdoors

Filmed on location at Orange County's Back Bay, choreographer Jennifer Backhaus and her **Backhausdance** traveled the trails and pathways of this scenic Newport Beach area in their latest filmed performance, *g r o u n d e d*. The online premiere includes behind the scenes footage and post-performance conversations with dancers. Sat., Dec. 19, 6 p.m., free with reservations at [Backhausdance](#). Donations accepted.



Backhausdance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

UTSAV means festival

Now in its third year, the **Soorya Foundation** hosts *UTSAV 2020-The Los Angeles Indian Dance and Music Festival* with traditional Indian dancers. Sushma Mohan, Aparna Sindhoor and Anil Natyaveda from L.A. join dancers from Maryland, Georgia, Missouri and India. Two chances to watch online, each with a different program. Sat., Dec. 19, 9 a.m. & 2:30 p.m. [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).



UTSAV 2020 -LA Indian Dance Festival. Photo courtesy of the artists.

If Madonna sang sad

Choreographer **Miguel Gutierrez** is joined by the Slutinos, the Sad Latino Boys Backup

Singers, in *Sadonna: The Brown Ambition Tour*, a cabaret giving sad reinterpretation to the songs of Madonna. REDCAT online, Fri.-Sat., Dec. 18–19, 8:30 p.m. \$15. Info and tickets at [REDCAT](#).



Miguel Gutierrez. Photo by Ian Douglas.

Reconfigurations

Drawing from an early 1990s work that was revised in 2012, choreographer Louise Reichlin has reconfigured three segments of her six-part *Urban and Tribal Dances* plus a filmed version of her more recent *Alone 2020*. The quartet of dances streams free until the end of the month. The **Louise Reichlin & Dancers** include Jill Elaine Collins, Coree McKee Gonzalez, Corrina Gemignani, Eve Metsaranta, Danny Guerrero, Katelyn Martin and Kohl Lewis. now thru Thurs., Dec. 31, free on [Vimeo](#).



Louise Reichlin & Dancers. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Not the expected anniversary party

The contemporary troupe **MashUP** closes out the year determined to celebrate its 10th season despite pandemic imposed separations and lack of live performance by making the most the new ways to digitally connect with an audience. The company offered the first of three programs last Sunday, with two more to come. Each offers a virtual restaging of a live performance plus interviews with company dancers. Details on the two remaining programs and dancer interviews at the website. Sun., Dec. 20, & 27, 5 p.m. Donations \$5 and up. [MashUP](#).



MashUP Contemporary Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Mask breathing

Since March when the scheduled premiere of her first full length contemporary ballet *Memoryhouse* was cancelled with the statewide coronavirus shutdown, choreographer Melissa Barak and her contemporary **Barak Ballet** shifted 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. Just in time for a new pandemic shutdown, Barak unveils her latest *Reclamation* which she choreographed and directed. Some of the films are free at <https://barakballet.org/> and [Facebook](#). Her latest, *Reclamation*, is available until Sat., Dec. 26. The preview is free, the ticket at \$20, provides week-long access to the film and a behind-the-scenes bonus with cast and crew on location. www.vimeo.com/ondemand/reclamation



Barak Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Whither the Nuts?

Nutcracker performances are rounded up in **Whither the Nuts?** in Cultural Weekly this week.



Inland Pacific Ballet. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Online Encores

A show of force

In what may prove a timely, if unnerving coincidence, military veterans are featured in a streamed film from Diavolo's Veterans Project exploring what it means to be a true warrior on the front lines. In *This is Me – Letters from the Front Lines*, military vets and first responders explore what it means to be on the front line. Since artistic director Jacques Heim and **Diavolo Architecture in Motion** launched their **Veterans Project** in 2016, more than 500 SoCal veterans have participated in the company's gymnastic approach to movement to restore physical, mental and emotional strengths. Along the way, the project developed stunning performance works, one of which was part of Diavolo's day-long 25th anniversary celebration at the Soroya which hosted this event as part of the theater's *Fridays at 4* series with the powerful film now on the Diavolo website along with other filmed performances. <https://www.diavolo.org/thisismefilm>



Diavolo Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian.

Locking it up

Early on, the street dance troupe **Versa-Style Dance Company** seemed to take naturally to online streaming of performances and classes. It's most recent, *Ending The Year With Hope*, is online this weekend. The company and its youth organization Versa-Style Next Generation recently offered two days of virtual performances as part of a fundraiser. The company its performance videos, videos on a range of life-skills subjects, and now their YouTube channel. Info at <https://versastyledance.org/>. Videos at <https://versastyledance.org/media/>.



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Post-grad dancing

Dance created by professional and student choreographers is featured in an online performance by Santa Monica College's **Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater**. Free at [SMC](#).



Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater. Photo courtesy of the artists.

The past comes present

Among the subtle and not so subtle changes of new management by the LA Phil, what used to be the Ford Theater is now The Ford and while the theatre itself remains closed, four digital series were announced through the end of the year. A quartet of festivals includes mostly music, but last week added a festival dubbed *Movement / Matters* focused on Black street and club dance. Co-curator Tyree Boyd-Pates leads the survey of dance from TV's *Soul Train* to the present as a source of connection, care, power and potential. Lula Washington is among the notables participating in this decade by decade exploration. Other Ford efforts showcasing dance include the Saturday morning family classes and videos of past concert performances that reflect how the beloved al fresco venue functioned as an informal summer dance festival. Those past performances reflect the energy and diversity in SoCal dance including 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 initial three ready to be viewed are *Parallel* by Jenn Logan and Marcos Novais, *Connections* by Karina Francis Jones and Ricard Campos Freire, and *Behind the Mirror* by Jen Hunter and Irupé Sarmiento. [Nancy Evans Dance Theatre](#)



Nancy Evans Dance Theatre. Photo by Shana Skelton.

House dancing

Pasadena's iconic Gamble House was the site for a collaboration with dancers from **Lineage** for this year's ArtNight. The performance, appropriately called *Lineage x Gable House*, streams for free for a limited period. [Lineage](#).



Lineage Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

More Taylor

Choreographer **Micaela Taylor** pairs with TL Collective dancer **Matt Luck** in *Love Struck*, streaming on FLTPK, the online streaming service from choreographer Trey McIntyre. Subscription is a monthly pledge of \$1 to \$9 to support this and other films. Access to the service's website varies with the level of pledged support starting at \$2 per month. [Patreon](#)



Micaela Taylor. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Unexpected curriculum addition

The challenges of creating dance while observing social distancing and other Covid-19 safety protocols is a new curriculum addition for dance departments as well as dance companies. Under the direction of assistant professor Becca Lemme, Cal State University Long Beach dance students observed strict protocols in creating two different programs of dances for last week's live-streamed *Fall Dance Festival*. The pre-recorded performances draw on scores created in collaboration with different composers. Concert director Kaelie Osorio moderates two post-performance zoom Q&A session with each program's artists. A complete list of choreographers scheduled for each evening at [CSULB](#). The performances continue online on [YouTube](#).



CSULB Fall Dance Concert. Photo by Gregory RR Crosby.

Alone with others watching

The site specific performance ensemble **Heidi Duckler Dance** continues to celebrate HDD's 35th

anniversary with an array of films including two of HDD's signature site specific performances. Just in time for the pandemic sequestering, Duckler based *The Chandelier* on a work by Brazilian author Clarice Lispector about a woman experiencing isolation and trying to connect. Performers include Himerria Wortham, Rafael Quintas, Myles Lavalley, Nicole Flores, Maureen Asic, Magdalena Edwards, Jessica Emmanuel, Jaeme Velez, David Guerra, and Paula Rebelo. Free online at [Vimeo](#). For *What Remains*, a tale of life behind the iron curtain, Duckler took inspiration from the travails of *Orpheus and Eurydice* as well as from East German author Christa Wolf's short story about being under surveillance by the Stasi police. Staged in the garden of a museum dedicated to the cold war, the work was presented in conjunction with the museum's exhibit *The Medea Insurrection: Radical Women Artists Behind the Iron Curtain*. The online screening includes a discussion with the museum's chief curator Joes Segal. [Wende Museum](#). Info and more films at <https://heididuckler.org/reelsfilms/>.



Heidi Duckler Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Dancing 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. Among the recent additions look for movement artist **Brianna Mims** performing her original choreography set in Leimert Park as part of *The Music Center's For The Love Of L.A.* Mims' contribution joins six performances by other SoCal companies set around L.A. **Versa-Style Dance Company** sent its street dancers to the beach, folkloric troupe **Pacifico Dance Company** had nine dancers at different locations representing different areas of Mexico, the tap group **Syncopated Ladies** took an existing routine to a rooftop, five members of Malathi Iyengar's **Rangoli Dance Company** premiered a work celebrating a South Asian goddess, Albertossy Espinoza's **LA Fusion Dance Theater** offered a Flamenco fusion duet, and Pat Taylor's **Jazz Antiqua Dance & Music Ensemble** sent its dancers in parks, alleys, an empty business street, and other sites spread for their solos. After their premiere on [Instagram](#), all the films now are available for viewing at [Music Center](#).



Versa-Style Dance. Photo courtesy of the artists.

The Moms have it

The same week that memorialized the late civil rights leader congressman John Lewis was the week Emmett Till would have been 79 years old had he not been lynched at age 14 because of his skin. In 2010, Kevin Spicer curated *The Emmett Till Project* at Highways Performance Space. Choreographer Pat Taylor's contribution *A Kindred Woe* receives a timely encore. The work focuses on how mothers whose children have been murdered "take on the mantle" in the fight against racism and justice. The **JazzAntiqua Dance and Music Ensemble** performers include Terrice Banks Tillmon, Keisha Clark-Booth, Rayne Duronslet, Kacy Keys and Shari Washington Rhone. <https://vimeo.com/441671503>.



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

Silver screen shifting

After discovering their admiration for the others work was mutual, **LA Contemporary Dance**

Company and Vitamin String Quartet's planned collaboration for a live performance was put on hold by the pandemic shutdown. The effort took a different turn to film, two films so far with the first now streaming. That initial release, *The Box*, managed to adhere to CDC guidelines while putting two dancers (Jamila Glass and Angel Tyson) and four musicians (Elizabeth Baba, Amanda Lo, Filip Pogády, Caleigh Drane) in the historic Heritage Square Museum. The roughly three-minute film streams on YouTube. Now a second collaboration has been added with *Blinding Light* with dancers Christian Beasley, Hyosun Choi, Jamila Glass, Nicole Hagen, Tess Hewlett, Malachi Middleton, JM Rodriguez, Ryan Ruiz, and Angel Tyson. An earlier LACDC collaboration, this time with filmmaker Nathan Kim continues to stream. The seven-minute film *BLINK*, was choreographed by artistic director Genevieve Carson in collaboration with the LACDC dancers. An official selection in the Hollyshorts Film Festival 2019, Cucalorus Festival 2019, and the San Francisco Dance Film Festival 2019, *BLINK* features dancer Hyosun Choi with Christian Beasley, Kate Coleman, Tess Hewlett, Ryan Ruiz, Drea Sobke, and Tiffany Sweat. The two films and information on other LACDC virtual programming on [their website](#).



LA Contemporary Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Feel like screaming?

Originally developed as a stage piece by choreographer Sophia and the dancers of **Iris Company**, the creators in 2018 presciently reworked *Screaming Shapes!* into a film. After a year on the festival circuit including SoCal's Dance Camera West, the company has released the work online. The performers include Bryanna Brock, Hyosun Choi, Cat Cogliandro, Casey Gonzalez, Kristen Holleyman, Amanda MacLeod, Joan H. Padeo, Shane Raiford, and Jamal Wade. [Iris Company](#).



Iris Company. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Multi-screens

Adding to its trove of streaming options, **Viver Brasil** adds a weekly spotlight on past performances. The Afro-Brazilian dance and live music ensemble offer journeys to Salvador, Bahia to explore royal orixá dances, high-flying capoeira, and samba from a Bahian Carnaval. Current and past spotlight events [now available](#). Viver Brasil also was among the SoCal artists selected for KCET's *Southland Sessions*, reworking its popular family show *Celebrating Samba* for the small screen with company members performing from their homes. But through the power of Afro-Brazilian dance and live music they promise a cultural journey to Salvador, Bahia to explore royal orixá dances, high-flying capoeira, and samba from a Bahian Carnaval. Streaming at [KCET](#).



Viver Brasil. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Is it a question?

Filmed during the initial Covid-19 shutdown, Emily Mast and Yehuda Duenyas' project *HOW ARE WE*, collected 15 solos, each 90-seconds including from LA choreographers. The possibilities of a plant, the bed sheets, or the corner of a room are among the starting points. Armed with a tennis racket, Carlon contributed *Anesthetized*, admitting that he wanted a socially acceptable reason to scream or grunt like Serena Williams or John McEnroe without looking like nut. Other

contributors include Shannon Hafez, Jessica Emmanuel, Stacy Dawson Stearns, Jenny Marytai Liu, Constance Hockaday & Faye Driscoll, Barnett Cohen, Hana Van Der Kolk, Darrian O'Reilly, David Arian Freeland Jr., Heyward Brace, Mireya Lucio, Dorothy Dubrule, Terrence Luke Johnson, and Mast & Duenyas. Info at [How Are We](#). Stream on [Vimeo](#).



Carlton. Photo courtesy of the artists.

More in the lunchbox

In June, **Dohee Lee**'s scheduled REDCAT performance was cancelled. The venue hopes one day to reschedule a live performance. In the meanwhile, the Korean artist whose skills span dance, drumming, singing and musical composition joins the line-up of prior dance performances from artists including **Austyn Rich**, **Genna Moroni**, **Tzong-Han Wu**, and **Rosanna Gamson/World Wide**. Info at <https://www.redcat.org/>. [Instagram Channel](#).



Dohee Lee. Photo by Pak Han.

Moving Offstage

The *Music Center Offstage* continues to stream new and encore video clips and performances from Swing 2020, Cuba's Malpaso Dance Company, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, Jung Im Lee Korean Dance Academy, Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, Infinite Flow, and Spotlight classical and non-classical dance finalists Jacob Giovanni Alvarado, Ashley Lew, Maya Alvarez-Coyne and Bergundi Loyd. <https://www.musiccenter.org/tmc-offstage/>.



Ballet Hispanico. Photo by Paula Lobo.

When one was not enough

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 subjects and five pieces from earlier festivals that focused on Black Lives Matter were last minute additions. More info at <https://www.blaktinafestival.com/>. View all four programs on [YouTube](#).



BlakTinx. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Knock twice & tell them Jacob sent you

Reminiscent of what one did to enter a speakeasy in the 1920s or a Cold War spy meet-up, 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. With the five minute final cut 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 from the audience. Hopefully, the performance itself will have a separate streaming life. Info at <http://jacobjonas.com/>. Film on [Vimeo](#).



Jacob Jonas The 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 *Pandemania*, 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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