

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

When Life Was Upended, They Went Another Way

Ann Haskins · Saturday, September 4th, 2021

When the pandemic shuttered theaters in March 2020, dance and its audience went online, and began exploring the possibilities of streamed performances, online encores of past performances, and unexplored potential of film as a stage for dance. Even before the pandemic, choreographer Jacob Jonas and his **Jacob Jonas The Company** had a history working with dance photography and filmed dance in LA and in New York. With live performance on hold, Jonas and his collaborators turned to film, taking on a new role as producers of a global film series.

With backing from several important U.S. theaters, **Films.Dance** proved a highly successful and innovative effort to gather dancers, choreographers, and film directors from the U.S. and around the world to create 15 original short dance films. In January 2021 the films started to roll out, one each Monday over four months, available for free. After its debut, each film joined an online roster that continues to be viewable for free.



“Films.Dance Round 2.” Photo courtesy of the artists.

The initial project earned additional boasting rights as many of those films went on to win awards at film festivals and critical praise from major media including the Washington Post which anointed the first series “The best dance on your laptop.”

This week, a new edition, **Films.Dance Round 2**, opens, again with a new short film unveiled on successive Mondays starting September 13 through December 20. Continuing with the stated goal of expanding the global arts community, the film roster is an eclectic mix of introductions to riveting dancers and choreographers not well known outside of their home countries and more high profile names in the U.S. and abroad.



“Films.Dance Round 2.” Photo courtesy of the artists.

Merce Cunningham alum Jonah Bokaer choreographed and dances, joined by former Paul Taylor Dance Company dancer Michael Trusnovec in *Neptune’s Dream* from Peruvian filmmaker Alex Fishman Cárdenas. Known for her work as a principal dancer with Britain’s Royal Ballet long before her stint as the White Cat in the movie *CATS*, Francesca Hayward dances again on film, this time at London’s Royal Albert Hall in *Siren* with choreography by Michael Montgomery from Alonzo King Lines Ballet and an original score by Beach House.

From Canada, b-boy Luca Patuelli, the founder of ILL Abilities Company, essays choreography from Stuttgart Ballet’s Alessandro Giaquinto with original music by Hologramme in *Do Butterflies Remember Being Caterpillars?* Capturing the acrobatic movement style of six self-described “trickers” Tokyo-based Jo Motoya filmed the moves choreographed by Moscow-based Alex Doronin in *Pool Without Water*.



“Films.Dance Round 2.” Photo courtesy of the artists.

Jonas and his crew don’t ignore the home turf. SoCal gets its turn in *Untitled Basketball* with dancer/choreographers Jermaine Spivey and Micaela Taylor directed by Joy Isabella Brown with music by Ian Chang and Topu Lyo. LA is also the setting for *Gathering* as dancers Hvrmony Adams, Jill Wilson, and Patricia Zhou go before the camera in Zoi Efstathiou’s choreography with Talia Shea Levin directing.

Other countries and states among the 25 providing the setting for the 15 films include Russia, South Africa, Belgium, Mexico, Germany, Nigeria, Hawaii and Pennsylvania.

The new series was financed by returning sponsors L.A.’s The Soroya, Chicago’s Harris Theater, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), plus new sponsor Stanford University’s Stanford Live.



“Films.Dance Round 2.” Photo courtesy of the artists.

A preview of the upcoming **Films.Dance Round 2**, the new original films as they debut, links to the first season of films, and an e-mail sign up for free weekly film delivery starting Mon., Sept. 13, 9 a.m. PST thru Mon., Dec. 20, at [Films.Dance](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

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