

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

White Choreographers Tackle Racism in Dance

Ann Haskins · Thursday, August 16th, 2018

An award-winning music video choreographer in North Hollywood, a story-teller from India in Sherman Oaks, love letters to dance in West L.A., ballet stars tip toe into Costa Mesa and other So Cal dance this week.

5. Gala on pointe

For three decades, Salwa Rizkalla has directed **Festival Ballet** with the students of this respected training company fronted by professional ballet stars in a Christmas season *Nutcracker* and another classical ballet in the spring. Each fall, the training company performs, but takes a back seat to a line up of ballet luminaries for a gala performance. This year's line-up includes dancers from Ballet West, Britain's Royal Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre and the Royal Ballet of Flanders. A complete listing of the dancers performing is at <http://www.festivalballet.org/gala-of-the-stars>. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa; Fri., Aug. 17, 6 p.m., \$55-\$95. <http://www.scfta.org>.



Festival Ballet guest artists Maria Kochetkova and Sebastian Kloborg. Photo courtesy of the artists.

4. A Grammy award redux

Stepping away from music videos, award winning choreographer Anthony Thomas steps onto the stage for *Rise of the Nation "0817"*. Set in the fictional city of New Holland, the show includes new choreography as well as moves from Grammy award winning *Rhythm Nation 1814*. El Portal Theatre, 5269 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood; Wed., Aug. 22, 8 p.m. & Thurs., Aug. 23, 3 p.m., \$35. <http://www.elportaltheatre.com/riseofthenation.html>.

3. Tale telling dance from India

Known for her extraordinary story telling abilities, **Bragha Bessell** arrives from India for a performance that concludes a three-day workshop. Info on the workshop and performance at malathisiyengar@gmail.com. Rangoli Space, Huston St., Sherman Oaks; Sun., Aug. 19, noon, \$25. <https://rangoli.org>.



Bragha Bessell. Photo courtesy of the artist.

2. Dance is love

The West Coast opening of **Letters to Dance** is part of a world-wide free, interactive project where workshop participants can share their love and memories of dance in their everyday lives and help turn their participation into a performance. Launched in workshops led by German choreographers deufert&plischke this iteration offers three opportunities to join in plus a communal final performance with a live musician for participants and invited friends and family. More info and workshop reservations (required) at <http://OdysseyTheatre.com>. Odyssey Theatre, 2955 S. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., Sun., Aug. 19, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., final event Sat., Aug 25, 5 p.m., free with reservation. 310-477-2055 ext. 2, <http://www.OdysseyTheatre.com>.

1. Taken to “Task”

In *Task*, Sarah Ashkin and Brittany Delany, two white, female dancers and the co-directors of **GROUND SERIES** tackle the legacy of racism and white supremacy in western concert dance. Ashkin conducted a performance workshop last month at Pieter, something of a prelude to these performances. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., Aug. 17-18, 8:30 p.m., \$20. <http://www.highwaysperformance.org>.

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