

LAGUNA DANCE FESTIVAL™

JODIE GATES, FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Laguna Dance Festival Presents Three Nights of Dance
from New Zealand to Los Angeles

BLACK GRACE LOS ANGELES BALLET SYNCOPATED LADIES

February 23-25, 2024 at the Laguna Playhouse
Tickets on sale at lagunadancefestival.org

[LINK TO DOWNLOADABLE IMAGERY HERE](#)

“The distinguishing spirit of this dance troupe, directed by Neil Ieremia, is an exhilarating, seemingly inexhaustible energy.” – The New York Times

“Los Angeles Ballet most certainly can be a force to be reckoned with..” – LA Dance Chronicle

“The Syncopated Ladies represent the next generation of genre bending tappers who are revitalizing historic dance for modern times.” – Los Angeles Times

Laguna Beach, CA – [Laguna Dance Festival](https://lagunadancefestival.org) proudly announces its 2024 Festival, featuring three nights of captivating dance performances from international and local talents. Guided by the vision of Founder and Artistic Director Jodie Gates, this exceptional festival is scheduled to captivate audiences from Friday, February 23, to Sunday, February 25, with a complimentary backstage event on Thursday, February 22 at the renowned Laguna Playhouse. Secure your tickets now at lagunadancefestival.org.

Jodie Gates shared, “the 2024 Festival represents the extraordinary talents here in Southern California and also the Pacific Rim, delivering an eclectic array of dance styles. From contemporary dance and traditional Somoan movement to ballet and tap, each performance promises the highest level of integrity, expertise, and excitement.” As a native Californian and a Laguna Beach resident for nearly two decades, Gates

continues to delve into the profound meaning of artistry in the world. “Through the language of dance, the festival aims to nurture the next generation, explore collaborations, and provide patrons with a blend of tradition and daring dance performances suitable for all ages.”

In addition to the program, February 24 marks a collaborative venture with the Laguna Beach Music Festival, in partnership with Laguna Beach Live! and the Philharmonic Society of Orange County. This unique collaboration promises a one-of-a-kind experience, seamlessly merging the artistry of dance with live music.

Backstage with Black Grace - Thursday, February 22, 6:00 PM

Immerse yourself in the world of dance with an exclusive behind-the-scenes experience on Thursday, February 22, at 6:00 PM, as New Zealand's Black Grace takes center stage for a complimentary event. Witness the magic of on-stage rehearsals and gain rare insight into the artistic process. Artistic Director and Choreographer Neil Ierema will be present, providing an intimate exploration of the dance world. Neil shared, “We are excited to include Laguna Dance Festival on Black Grace’s upcoming tour to the United States. The repertory program will span almost three decades of my choreography, and we are looking forward to sharing these works with Laguna audiences.”

Black Grace - Friday, February 23, 7:30 PM

Direct from New Zealand, Black Grace, an ensemble of extraordinary dancers, will grace the stage on Friday, February 23, at 7:30 PM. Choreographer Neil Ierema's fusion of contemporary dance with traditional Samoan movement promises performances that are eloquent, spiritual, athletic, and lyrical. The evening showcases two acts, including Handgame and Kiona and the Little Bird Suite in the first act, and the thought-provoking Paradise Rumour in the second act. The night begins with a pre-show curtain speech at 6:30 PM, followed by a 15-minute intermission between performances.

Los Angeles Ballet & Black Grace - Saturday, February 24, 7:30 PM

On Saturday, February 24, at 7:30 PM, the leading ballet company in Los Angeles, Los Angeles Ballet, will captivate audiences in a collaborative event with Black Grace for a night of breathtaking performances. Artistic Director of Los Angeles Ballet, Melissa Barak shared, “It's a thrill for us at Los Angeles Ballet to be part of the Laguna Dance Festival this year. We'll be presenting works that are new to the LAB repertoire, providing a glimpse into the innovative choreography that will define our future.”

This performance also begins the collaboration with the Laguna Beach Music Festival, a partnership with Laguna Beach Live! and the Philharmonic Society of Orange County. The collaboration promises a unique experience, combining the artistry of dance with live music. The evening showcases Los Angeles Ballet's versatility, featuring a range of ballet styles, including classical, contemporary and neoclassical pieces.

The performances will include Nicolas Blanc's contemporary ballet "Tableaux Vivants" and Artistic Director Melissa Barak's compelling work "Reclamation," adapted from film to stage. Moreover, the Festival will present a world premiere dance work choreographed by Jodie Gates, accompanied by live music performed with solo cello.

The evening kicks off at 7:30 PM, with a 15-minute intermission between performances. Don't miss this extraordinary fusion of dance and music, promising an unforgettable night of artistic brilliance.

Syncopated Ladies & Los Angeles Ballet - Sunday, February 25, 2:00 PM

The festival culminates on Sunday, February 25, at 2:00 PM, with an afternoon performance highlighting the Syncopated Ladies and Los Angeles Ballet. Recognized by the Los Angeles Times as "the next generation of genre-bending tappers," Syncopated Ladies bring a dynamic and invigorating tap dance showcase to the stage. Los Angeles Ballet's captivating performances persist, featuring special solos by recipients of LDF's 2024 Young Artist Scholarship. The matinee unfolds in two acts with a 15-minute intermission, followed by a post-show meet & greet with the dancers in the theater lobby.

The February 25 matinee also features select talented Young Artist Scholarship recipients from the Festival's 2024 lineup, providing them with the opportunity to showcase their unique skills and perform individual solos.

Don't miss this unparalleled celebration of dance at the Laguna Playhouse. Tickets are available now at lagunadancefestival.org.

Journalists and dance writers are invited to experience and cover this exceptional weekend of artistic expression and innovation.

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Laguna Dance Festival

Since its establishment in 2005, the award-winning Laguna Dance Festival has been a prominent force in presenting world-class dance performances across theaters, film, and public spaces. With an annual reach that spans thousands, the festival continually introduces new audiences to the realm of professional concert dance. As a nonprofit organization deeply devoted to the arts and community, Laguna Dance Festival is driven by a commitment to collaboration, dance presentation, and education. Through an artistic lens, the organization strategically explores innovative ways to commission artists, educate young dancers, and bring people of all ages and cultures together.

Previous festival lineups boast a rich tapestry of national and international companies and artists, including Ballet BC, Malpaso, RUBBERBAND, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Parsons Dance, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Ballet West, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Black Grace, BalletX, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Abraham.In.Motion (A.I.M.), BODYTRAFFIC, Paul Taylor Dance Company, and representatives from San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and New York City Ballet, among numerous others.

Media Contact

Carly Murphy

Publicist

714-401-9871

carlyoyates@gmail.com