

ARTS&ENTERTAINMENT

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 entertainment

2014

The Inquirer's critics pick the most interesting, important, exciting events and productions, now through summer, on the arts and culture scene.

PREVIEW



The Clothesline
 Musée d'Art Moderne
 Center, March 14-15.



3 MOVIES
 "Robocop" is back on duty.

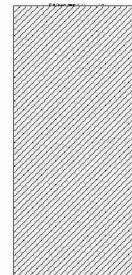


10 VISUAL ARTS
 Abelardo Morell photos.



4 POP MUSIC
 Arcade Fire plays March 17.

TELEVISION A proliferation of fresh shows, **2. GALLERIES** Punk design and Versailles, **9. THEATER** New plays, a pair of rarities, **10. CLASSICAL MUSIC** All about artists, repertoire, **11. DANCE** Local talent shines again, **13. MUSEUMS** Multifaceted festivals, the brain, **14. BOOKS** A season of literary return, **17.**



Abundant riches, and a dozen picks

Philadelphia is uniquely placed on the American dance scene thanks to the quantity and quality of our local dance companies. Over the last century and more, no city, outside of New York, has had as many and such varied professional companies. Part of this richness arises from at least five fine university dance departments, which draw talent from all over the country. And part arises from the friendly funding climate,



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tour nationally and internationally to stay out of the red. Other organizations, like Dance Celebration, Philadelphia Dance Projects, and Thirdbird, present and create exchange programs between cities to bring us the hottest new dance trends. Celebrating its 50th, Pennsylvania Ballet is launching into a new era of innovative contemporary works and plans for touring that will break them out of the regional ballet mold.

With more than 45 dance events scheduled through July, any short list is hard. There are traditional and contemporary ballet, experimental, flamenco, and dance theater events — even one based on philosophy. There are aerialists, too, with Tangle Movement Arts indoors and Alie Vidich repeating her daring dance feats on the Schuylkill under the Strawberry Mansion Bridge. And, for the first time, Philadanco performs with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

I based the choices below on track records or because the work sounded unique or quirky enough to intrigue me, and possibly, you. It's an even dozen, and I'm betting they all come up roses.

— *Merilyn Jackson, who reviews dance for The Inquirer*

“Allege” & “Singer/Songwriter.” Presented by Thirdbird, this is the Philly premiere of French-born, Berlin-based choreographer Clément Layes' solo *Allege*. The physical theater artist mixes philosophy and dance with Chaplinesque virtuosity. Balancing a glass of water on

savvy dance audiences, and affordable cost of living here. Dancers love Philadelphia and it loves them back.

Many companies, such as Philadanco, Koresh Dance Company, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, and BalletX,

his head, he takes us on a contemplative journey involving habit and expectation, the absurdities of life, and overlooked moments of beauty. This charming piece metaphorically mixes circus arts, choreography, and deeper thinking about quotidian objects. Fronting Layes' performance is *Singer/Songwriter*, by the duo Magda San Millan and Chelsea Murphy, two postmodern choreographers masquerading as songwriters who got schooled at Headlong Performance Institute. (At 8 p.m. Wednesday, Christ Church Neighborhood House, 20 N. American St. Tickets: \$15 general, \$12 for students and artists. Information: 267-521-2473, www.birdbirdbird.org.)

2 X 2: Dazzling Dutch Dance Duets. Lebanese American Erik Kaiel now lives and works in the Hague, Netherlands. His company, Arch 8, offers two dance duets: *my true north*, an athletic roller coaster about connectedness; and *No Man Is an Island*, a balancing act that pushes physical limits as one dancer climbs and shifts atop the other without ever touching the ground. This is the first event in a new initiative called PAPAYA (PA Performing Arts for Young Audiences) and is recommended for families with school-age children. (At noon and 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Painted Bride Art Center, 230 Vine St. Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$30 day of show; \$15 for children 12 and under. Information: 215-925-9914, www.paintedbride.org.)

Pennsylvania Ballet. The ballet's 50th-anniversary year looks backward and forward, with many fabulous works in the offing. February's smartly programmed opener includes the George Balanchine classic *Serenade*, Jerome Robbins' *Afternoon of a Faun*, Margo Sappington's Alexander Calder-inspired *Under the Sun*, and the company premiere of Jirí Kylián's thriller *Petite Mort*. In March we get to choose between a pairing of *Carmina Burana* and the Stravinsky *Violin Concerto* or Delibes' *Coppélia*, but why not see both? May brings a program called "Director's Choice," with a world premiere by Trey McIntyre. The 50th-anniversary finale in June features William Forsythe and a new work by resident choreographer Matthew Neenan. ("Serenade and Other Dances," Feb. 7 to 9, Merriam Theater; *Carmina Burana*/Stravinsky, March 6, 9, 13 to 15, and *Coppélia*, March 8, 9, 15, Academy of Music; "Director's Choice," May 9 to 11, Academy of Music; "A 50th Finale," June 12 to 15, Merriam Theater. Information: 215-551-7000, tickets.pa-ballet.org.)

BalletX. Get your Valentine on at the world pre-

miere of James Gregg's *L-O-V-E*. Gregg is resident choreographer for L'École supérieure de ballet du Québec and dances with RUBBERBANDance Group. In the Philadelphia premiere of *Slump*, Joshua L. Peugh turns formal dance numbers from *The Lawrence Welk Show* into primitive mating dances. He is also working with BalletX to create a world premiere pas de deux inspired by Japanese animation. Also on the program is *Delicate Balance*, an audience favorite by Jodie Gates. (At 8 p.m. Feb. 12-14; 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Feb. 15; and 2 p.m. Feb. 16, Wilma Theater, 265 S. Broad St. Tickets: \$22-\$35. Information: 215-546-7824, www.balletx.org.)

Miller Rothlein, "From the Spot Where We/You/I Stand (Stood)."

This Philadelphia duo perennially bring cerebral work that plays. Conceived and directed by videographer Tobin Rothlein, *From the Spot* promises that "alien topographies and precarious balances emerge as Rothlein explores the durational limits of a group of performers and materials wrestling with gravity — never touching the ground, never settling." (Feb. 20-23, the White Space at Crane Arts Old School, 1417 N. Second Street. Tickets: \$10 and \$20. Information: 267-888-6476, millerrothlein.tix.com.)

Liz Gerring Dance Company.

The New York-based company, a New York Times 2013 Dance Favorite, brings its *glacier* to Bryn Mawr College's Goodhart Hall for one night only. It's an evening-length choreographic work for eight dancers based on composer

Michael J. Schumacher's 2007-12 work *Glacier*, described by Alastair Macaulay as an "enthralling and important new dance work." (At 8 p.m. Feb. 28. Goodhart Hall, Bryn Mawr College, 150 N. Merion Ave., Bryn Mawr. Tickets: \$20 general, \$18 for seniors, \$10 for students, \$5 for children. Information: 610-526-5210, www.bryn-mawr.edu/arts/series.html.)

Philadelphia Dance Projects. This presenter, headed by curator Terry Fox, always pairs some of the best dance from around the world with local greats: John Scott of Dublin, Ireland, with Nora Gibson (Feb. 27 to March 1); members of the SCUBA National Touring Network for Dance with Nichole Canuso (March 14 and 15); and Subcircle, with a new work for locals Christy Lee, Beau Hancock, Scott McPheeters, and Christina Zani (April 3 to 5). (All shows 7:30 p.m. at Performance Garage, 1515 Brandywine St., Tickets: \$20 general, \$15 for students or DancePass. Information: 215-546-2552, www.DanceBoxOffice.com.)

Philadanco. This world-renowned company performs with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Francis Poulenc's *Aubade*, a choreographic concerto for 18 instruments, solo piano, and dancers. Conductor Stéphane Denève, a regular conductor, collaborator, and French repertoire specialist, proposed the modern dance project. Philadanco dancer/choreographer Tommie-Waheed Evans choreographed the animated and expressive work, based on the myth of Diana. Philadanco brings its unique fusion of

contemporary and classical styles to this stunning presentation. (At 2 p.m. on Feb. 28 and 8 p.m. on March 1. Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center, 301 S. Broad St. Tickets: \$62-\$147. Information: 215-893-1999, www.kimmelcenter.org.) Philadanco's regular season at the Perelman opens with April 17-20 Philadelphia premieres of Ulysses Dove's *Bad Blood* and *Bamm* by Donald Byrd, along with two repertoire favorites.

Dance Celebration at Annenberg. Presenter Randy Swartz curates this decades-old series, starting the 2014 season with last week's spectacular show by Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal, and following with Rasta Thomas' *Bad Boys of Dance* (Feb. 20 to 22). Doug Elkins, last here with his frolic *Fräulein Maria*, brings new Philadelphia premieres (March 6 to 8). Los Angeles-based BodyTraffic makes its Philly debut with a new piece by the young but acclaimed choreographer Kyle Abraham (April 3 to 5), and the wildly popular Momix returns with the irrepressible Moses Pendleton's newest work, *Alchemia* (May 8 to 11). (Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 3680 Walnut St. Tickets: \$20-\$55. Information: 215-898-3900, www.annenbergcenter.org/tickets.)

Gala Flamenca. A segment of the World Music Institute's highly successful Flamenco Festival in New York comes to Philadelphia for the first time. It features a large number of flamenco superstars, including Antonio Canales, Carlos Rodríguez, and Karime Amaya. (At 7 p.m. March 2, Merriam Theater. 301 S.

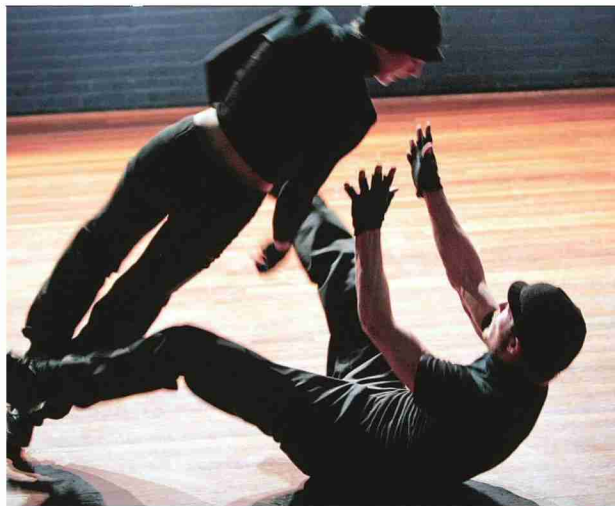
Broad St. Tickets: \$35-\$62. Information: 215-893-1999, kimmelcenter.org.)

Flamenco Festival. Pasión y Arte's 2014 Philadelphia Flamenco Festival begins a March 1-16 run at various locales in Philadelphia and at Longwood Gardens. It features Rosario Toledo, Pastora Galván, Israel Galván, and Pasión y Arte, plus lectures, symposia, and films. (Tickets: \$25-\$35; other prices available. Information: 267-235-5685, www.philafiamencofest.org.)

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers. The world premiere of *Be/Longing I: Light/Shadow* looks to be another full evening of Kun-Yang Lin's quietly powerful works. It takes its cue in part from visual artists Lygia Pape and Anish Kapoor and the Persian poet Rumi. The metaphors of the labyrinth and mandala, and Lin's latest movement research along the Bedog River in Indonesia, have resulted in this new collaboration with mandala artist Tatiana Arias, master puppet artist Hua Hua Zhang, and composer/bassist Cory Neale. (At 8 p.m. March 21, 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. March 22, Drexel University, Mandell Theater, 33d and Chestnut Sts. Tickets: \$21-\$75. Information: 267-687-3739, www.kunyanglin.org/be.)

Camille Brown Dancers, "Mr. TOL E. RANcE." Choreographer/dancer Brown is a highly polished dance theatermaker who's not afraid to pick dancers as good as she is. Spike Lee's *Bamboozled* inspired this work, which addresses minstrelsy in the performing arts. It speaks humorously on how much black performers had to tolerate — to

engage, provoke, and move the conversation of race forward. Music by Jonathan Melville Pratt, Brandon McCune, Kurt "KC" Clayton, and Scott Patterson. (At 8 p.m., April 11 and 12, Painted Bride Art Center, 230 Vine St. Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$30 day of show; \$18.75/\$22.50 for members. Information: 215-925-9914, www.paintedbride.org.)



Erik Kaiel's Arch 8 presents the athletic "my tru north," about connectedness. ROBERT BENSCHOP



Rachael Hart, Liu Mo: "Be/Longing I: Light/Shadow."

MATTHEW J. WRIGHT