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**Laguna Dance Festival celebrates 15thseason, announces fall festival September 27–29 hosted by Irvine Barclay Theatre**

***Festival program will include New York’s Parsons Dance, Montreal’s***

***RUBBERBANDance, Ballet West from Salt Lake City. educational opportunities for dancers, free Festival of Arts and ArtWalk performances***

*LAGUNA BEACH, Calif., April 15, 2019* – Laguna Dance Festival has announced its 15th season, presenting a trio of performances Sept. 27–29 by the Parsons Dance Company from New York City, RUBBERBANDance Group from Montreal, and Ballet West from Salt Lake City, hosted by the 750-seat Irvine Barclay Theatre.

“We’re excited to present three acclaimed dance companies, hosted at the Irvine Barclay Theatre,” said founder and artistic director Jodie Gates. As for the change of venue, she said, “We have long enjoyed a warm, mutually beneficial relationship with the Laguna Playhouse. As a result of the Playhouse’s success and expanded programming, fewer dates exist on their booking calendar in the fall months, and we were unable to receive a confirmation in time to announce our festival. The upside is the opportunity to expose more Orange County arts lovers to our performances and mission, and the Irvine Barclay Theatre is an exceptional dance house. We are still all about our hometown, Laguna Beach, and are looking at the 2020 season with new partnerships and exciting collaborations. We have also confirmed performances in unconventional venues such as Neighborhood Congregational Church’s Bridge Hall, where Colombia’s Sankofa Danzafro performed in October to a delighted audience.”

Jerry Mandel, president of the Irvine Barclay Theatre, said, “We are thrilled to be able to host the Laguna Dance Festival for its 15th anniversary performances. Jodie Gates has built something truly special for the community and it is the perfect complement to what we do with our dance series, Dance@theBarclay.”

**Parsons Dance**is a contemporary company, internationally renowned for its energized, athletic ensemble work. The New York Times called artistic director David Parsons “one of the great movers of modern dance” and noted of his company “this is a ‘dance your heart out’ (at all times, no excuses) kind of enterprise.”

Parsons and Tony Award-winning lighting designer Howell Binkley founded the company in 1985. It has toured to more than 30 countries and five continents. Laguna Dance Festival brought Parsons Dance to Laguna Beach in 2008 and 2013 to perform “Caught,” Parsons’ signature work. Leaping more than 100 times in six minutes, a high-powered soloist appears to never touch the ground as a precisely timed strobe light catches the dancer in midair. “Caught” will once again be performed at the Laguna Dance Festival on Sept. 27 and 28at 7:30 p.m.

**RUBBERBANDance Group** is an exciting Montreal-based company exploring the fusion of contemporary ballet and hip-hop. The company was founded in 2002 by choreographer Victor Quijada, a Los Angeles native. To describe the company’s style, *The Guardian* wrote, “Super-stretched jumps morph into crouching rolls; top-rocking footwork muscles in on high stepping [bourrées](http://www.roh.org.uk/news/abc-of-ballet-bourree); and below the movement's surface, silky classical phrasing is worked into the choppy rhythms of street dance. The result is [a unique dynamic](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wosws7nkzEg) that's both tough and elastic…true to their name, the group's performers move together as if connected like a rubber band.”

**Ballet West** was established in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1963, and has since toured the world to present its remarkable repertoire, including works by renowned contemporary choreographers such as Jiří Kylián, Mark Morris, and Twyla Tharp. Under the guidance of artistic director Adam Sklute, Ballet West also preserves its American classical ballet legacy. Barclay audiences will see Africa Guzmán’s “Sweet and Bitter,” which received excellent reviews at New York’s Joyce Theater and as a world premiere at the National Choreographic Festival in Salt Lake City.

In addition to the Irvine Barclay Theatre performances, the 2019-20 Laguna Dance Festival will include its signature educational programs, a summer intensive dancer training June 24–28, a master class series, a free summer show at the Festival of Arts, free First Thursdays ArtWalk performances, and a Nov. 2 Merce Cunningham centennial celebration in collaboration with the Laguna Art Museum. Not to be missed is a lecture demonstration by New Zealand’s outstanding contemporary dance company, Black Grace, on Sunday, Nov. 10.

Laguna Dance Festival’s annual Spring Soirée gala is set for Friday, May 17 at [seven-degrees] in Laguna Beach, a benefit that traditionally includes a dazzling, close-up dance display by professionals as well as students from the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance, where founder Gates is vice dean and professor.

Laguna Dance Festival, celebrating its 15th season, is one of Orange County’s major annual cultural events and continues to be an important showcase for new and established dance companies and artists. Its mission is to present world-class dance performance, increase public appreciation for the art, and provide quality dance education. [*lagunadancefestival.org*](http://www.lagunadancefestival.org)

**2019 Laguna Dance Festival Schedule**

*As of May 7, 2019*

• Friday, May 17 – Annual Spring Soirée at [seven-degrees] with live dance

• June 24–28 – Weeklong Summer Dance Intensive at Laguna Beach High School with choreographers Jodie Gates, Ardyn Flynt, and Saleemah E. Knight

• July 21 – Festival of Arts Summer Sunday Performances – free outdoor public dance performances by Versa-Style Dance Company at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

• Thursday, Sept. 5 – First Thursdays Art Walk at Laguna Art Museum

• Friday, Sept. 27 at 7:30 p.m. – New York-based Parsons Dance Company at the Irvine Barclay Theatre. Pre-show talk at 6:30 p.m.

• Saturday, Sept. 28 – Educational dance workshop by Parsons Dance Company, Laguna Beach High School

• Saturday, Sept. 28 at 7:30 p.m. – Parsons Dance Company, RUBBERBANDance Group, and Ballet West, at the Irvine Barclay Theatre. Combined program of excerpts from respective repertoires.

• Sunday, Sept. 29 at 10 a.m. – Master class with RUBBERBANDance founder Victor Quijada onstage at the Irvine Barclay Theatre

• Sunday, Sept. 29 at 2 p.m. – RUBBERBANDance at the Irvine Barclay Theatre. Pre-show talk at 1 p.m. Master class by the company at 10 a.m.

• October – date TBA – Master class

• Sunday, Nov. 3 – Merce Cunningham Centennial Celebration at Laguna Art Museum

• Sunday, Nov. 10 – Lecture demonstration by Black Grace from New Zealand, drawing on Maori and Pacific Islander dance, modern, and hip-hop. Neighborhood Congregational Church, 340 St. Ann’s Drive, Laguna Beach

*Media Contact: Barbara McMurray*

*McMurray Marketing Communications*

*mcmurray@mac.com*

*949-233-9548*