

---

**DANCE REVIEW**

# Show must go on, even if the accompanying music doesn't

A technical snafu notwithstanding, L.A. Dance Invitational impresses with a strong roster of talent.

By VICTORIA LOOSELEAF  
*Special to The Times*

There's something eerie – and maddening – when a ringing cell phone stops a CD in mid-play. A rare event (something about crossed signals), but that's what happened Friday at the El Portal Theatre, when dancer-choreographer Marie de la Palme was forced to improvise her rapturous “Le Cour Illumine,” an aerial ballet with hanging

fabric set to the Adagio from Ravel's G-major piano concerto.

The show had to go on – and on – as the finale of the three hour, 15-work evening, organized by the Los Angeles Dance Invitational, began again with Ravel's elegiac music.

But the beauty of the dance – and of most of the night's dancers – brought salvation. Indeed, Los Angeles boasts an awesome array of talent, including two choreographers making local debuts. Jennifer Backhaus McEvoy's “Connections,” performed by Backhaus Dance, proved a study in strength and agility as six dancers captivated the audience with grace and gumption.

Kudos also go to Kelly Kemp, whose solo “squint,” energetically danced by Heidi Jones Eggert, offered contortions and one-armed handstands.

Another solo, Erica Rebolar's new “Hunter/Hunted,” saw the choreographer-dancer in thrilling variations on yoga postures.

Stellar trios included “Baby Blues,” Maggie Danielsen's hilarious premiere with tappers dressed as babies, sucking on pacifiers while jauntily shuffling; and Terry Beeman's “Bound,” his beautiful, angst-ridden homage to “The Hours.”

---