ChoreoFest at Yerba Buena Gardens


For details, see Dance Highlights on Page 8.

Three Dancemakers Explore Change and Other Themes

Janis Joplin Musical Ushers in Summer of Love’s 50th

Rich and Varied Film Fare at Trio of Fests This Month
Longtime local dancemaker Kim Epifano calls the first part of her new world premiere a “wandering gathering.” Audiences follow a live music-, dance-, storytelling- and visual art-enhanced path through parts of SOMA, arriving at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts’ Forum for a wraparound performance that Epifano envisions as a “live, pulsing thing.”

Choreographer and dance-theater pioneer Joe Goode, whose company is now 30 years old, was thinking about “things that disappear”—for example, places that are destroyed in war—and wondered if he himself is in some sense disappearing as he ages. His new piece explores that theme in his signature text-based style.

Former San Francisco Ballet principal dancer James Sofranko sees himself as a curator as well as an artist—he programmed his company’s second season (which includes both an American and a world premiere) to offer audiences a mix of styles and his dancers the opportunity to be enriched by the variety.

Last Blue Couch in the Sky
For Kim Epifano, whose Epiphany Dance Theatre is celebrating its 20th anniversary, it’s essential to connect with the communities where she lives and works, to explore themes of social justice and to make dance accessible to all. (She has produced SF Trolley Dances, free, on Muni streetcars since 2004.) For “Last Blue Couch in the Sky,” commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, she reached out to several SOMA organizations for input, inspiration and assistance, among them Hospitality House for the homeless and Bessie Carmichael Elementary School.

The title derives from artist Brian Goggin’s recently dismantled, 1997 installation “Defenestration,” which featured a blue couch on the fire escape of the Orlando, an SRO hotel in the Tenderloin. “The city is going through huge changes,” Epifano observes, “and that sculpture felt like a metaphor for that change.” The blue couch reappears in this premiere.

To create the historically based (and admission-free) walking portion of the piece, Epifano solicited local playwright Joan Holden to collaborate on the script. Audiences gather at a mini-plaza to be guided through neighborhoods that these days are largely Filipino and Nepalese, with stops along the way to observe artwork by local residents, listen to a singer on the fire escape of the Orlando and other attractions. Local actor Bob Ernst, with dancers, leads the crowd on a storytelling promenade from the merry-go-round at the Children’s Creativity Museum to YBCA’s Forum, for the ticketed part of the show.

There, the dancers surround the viewers, who are sitting on stools. “I want the audience to have the live action feeling of a street corner,” says Epifano.

June 2 → 4
Tutubi Plaza, Russ St. between Minna and Natoma/Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, 701 Mission St., San Francisco
ybca.org/whats-on/kim-epifano/ (415) 978-2787

Nobody Lives Here Now
When you’re a dancer, explains Joe Goode, and your identity is so deeply connected to your body, and the accumulated injuries of 40 years of dancing catch up with you, you wonder, who am I now? It was that question-to-self that inspired this new piece for his company, Joe Goode Performance Works. CONTINUED ON PAGE 6