arts rewind dance

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This year, San Diego's dance community introduced new trends, collaborated with renowned choreographers and linked different movement vocabularies to stage intriguing performances. Ballet companies blended classical and contemporary dance, and for the first time, "Trolley Dances" brought choreographed works to Balboa Park. Somebodies Dance Theater introduced Gaga dancing, a Middle Eastern modality that, like jazz music, explores improvisation within a cohesive structure. And **Mark** **Haim**'s "This Land Is Your Land," named by Dance Magazine as one of the most influential works of the past 15 years, was a sold-out show at the White Box Theater. Here are five memorable moments in dance this year.

"Mozart's Requiem"

Backed by a live orchestra and chorus, "Mozart's Requiem" trumpeted the talents of City Ballet founders Elizabeth and Steven Wistrich, their daughter, principal dancer Ariana Gonzalez, and her husband, choreographer Geoff Gonzalez. The concert included the premiere of "fourPair," a series of duets danced to Debussy's "Suite Bergamasque," and "Hart to Hart," accompanied by three songs from blues rocker Beth Hart.

"The Great Gatsby"

Ballerinas became bejeweled flappers in the West Coast premiere of "The Great Gatsby," Septime Webre's interpretation of the literary masterpiece by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The California Ballet production included principal dancer Jared Nelson, who starred as Gatsby in the Washington Ballet's 2010 premiere at Kennedy Center.

"Trolley Dances"

The annual, site-specific performances that tell stories through dance along the San Diego Trolley line were staged for the first time in Balboa Park to celebrate the centennial of the Panama-California Exposition. Founded in 1999 by Jean Isaacs, artistic director of San Diego Dance Theater, "Trolley Dances" has grown exponentially, with presentations in three other California cities.

"This Land Is Your Land"

Blythe Barton, John Diaz and Dina Apple were among a dozen local dancers who skipped, strutted and sauntered in **Mark** **Haim**'s "This Land Is Your Land," presented by youTurn producers Erica Buechner and Anne Gehman. Inspired by Woody Guthrie's iconic folk song, the dance explored themes of consumerism, body image and the environment.

"Eyes East"

After spending nine months in Israel studying the somatic practice of Gaga (a movement language developed by Ohad Naharin of the Batsheva Dance Company), married choreographers Kyle Sorensen and Gina Bolles Sorensen incorporated big, sweeping movements and the sporadic gestures one might observe in everyday life to create mesmerizing dance. Their company, Somebodies Dance Theater, performed "Eyes East" at San Diego Dances, the festival hosted by Peter Kalivas of PGK Dance Project.

Manna is a San Diego arts writer.