

15 Years of Ethio-Jazz: Ethio Cali Takes Over Grand Performances

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



The sounds of Ethiopia, jazz and funk filled Downtown Los Angeles on August 15 as **Ethio Cali** celebrated its 15th anniversary at Grand Performances. Led by trumpeter, arranger and composer **Todd Simon**, the Los Angeles-based ensemble brought its distinctive Ethio-Jazz sound to California Plaza for a celebration of music, culture and community.

Ethio Cali draws inspiration from the golden age of Ethiopian music of the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, when traditional Ethiopian melodies and rhythms blended with jazz, soul and funk to create a distinctive sound. The ensemble carries that legacy forward with contemporary jazz, funk and global influences, introducing new audiences to a rich period in Ethiopian musical history while giving the music a distinctly Los Angeles character.

The evening also featured **DJ Nu-Mark**, producer, turntablist and longtime member of Jurassic 5. His set

moved through world music, R&B, funk, soul and hip-hop, complementing Ethio Cali's cross-cultural sound and keeping the crowd moving throughout the night.

Celebrating 15 years together, Ethio Cali and DJ Nu-Mark delivered an evening that reflected the spirit of Grand Performances—bringing cultures and communities together through music from around the world.



Photos by Mic Diaz

CHAT WITH MIC

Tony Dennis: Stitched for Success

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER

For fashion designer **Tony Dennis**, also known as “**The Stitch Doctor**,” an accomplished creative career began with homemade T-shirts. Growing up in Buffalo, New York, Dennis showed an early talent for art, but it was while working at an escalator handrail company in 1990 that he began experimenting with rubber compounds to create designs on shirts.

That experimentation eventually became No Names Designs, a brand reflecting the Black experience, identity and social issues of the early 1990s. After moving to Iowa, he took his shirts on the road, selling at college campuses and expos. Later in Atlanta, Dennis taught himself sewing and fashion design.

His growing reputation earned him the nickname “The

Stitch Doctor” and opened doors to opportunities with Tyler Perry Studios, GQ magazine and JCPenney on a project involving Shaquille O’Neal, along with work in music videos and entertainment.

Now based in Los Angeles, Dennis is entering a new chapter with the Tony Dennis brand, developing clothing, hats, bags and accessories. His message remains simple: believe in yourself, trust your abilities and stay committed to your own path.

DON'T MISS OUT!

Check out the full interview in *Chat With Mic* on the Mic Diaz Presents Youtube channel.



New conversations every week on *Chat With Mic* Talk Show at Mic Diaz Presents Youtube Channel



CHAT WITH MIC Episode 73: Tony Dennis

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Photo by Zylar Ricaforte

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ART & CULTURE

The Art of Rey Zipagan

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



The closing night of **Rey Zipagan's** art exhibition on August 13 offered visitors a deeper look into the history and meaning behind his work at R.O.K. Art Gallery in Los Angeles. The exhibition was brought together through the collaboration of art dealer and curator Nelson Anderson and gallery owner Edward Gibson, with Anderson serving as docent for the evening and guiding guests through several of Zipagan's works.

Among the pieces discussed was *Welga*, a powerful commentary on the Filipino role in the historic Delano Grape Strike. The painting addresses how a movement initiated by Filipino farmworkers in 1965 eventually became more widely associated with César Chávez and Dolores Huerta and the Mexican American labor movement, while the Filipinos who first walked off the grape fields received far less recognition.



The title *Welga*—the Tagalog word for “strike”—reinforces Zipagan's message about something that began with Filipinos gradually being remembered through another community's story. Through the work, Zipagan reclaims that Filipino narrative and places its often-overlooked origin back into the historical conversation.



With Anderson and Gibson's collaboration providing a space for Zipagan's work to be seen and discussed, the closing night became more than a final viewing. It was an opportunity for art to preserve memory, challenge familiar versions of history and bring overlooked Filipino stories back into view.

ART & CULTURE

Bollywood Brings Dance DTLA to a Colorful Finale

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER

The Music Center's Dance DTLA wrapped up its 22nd summer season on August 14 with a lively celebration of **Bollywood** dance at Jerry Moss Plaza. The free outdoor dance party brought Angelenos together for one final Friday night of music, movement and dancing under the stars.

The evening featured Achinta S. McDaniel of Blue13 Dance Company, who led dancers through energetic, beginner-friendly Bollywood choreography. DJ Sandeep Kumar and Dholnation provided the music and rhythms as the plaza transformed into an open-air dance floor filled with dancers of all experience levels.

Bollywood marked the final installment of a season that took audiences through Global Mix, Salsa, Reggaeton, Disco, Cumbia and Afrobeats before its colorful finale. Throughout the summer, each Friday introduced participants to a different dance tradition while creating a welcoming space where anyone could join in.

The Bollywood finale brought that spirit together through dance, music and South Asian culture, closing another memorable season in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles. Dance DTLA once again demonstrated how dancing together can connect people across cultures and communities.



Photos by Mic Diaz



UPCOMING EVENTS

Every 1st Thursday of the Month

ArtNight DTLA, Spring St., Broadway and Grand Ave.

Every Friday this Summer!

- Barnsdall Friday Wine Nights, Barnsdall Art Park
- Chinatown Summer Nights, Central Plaza, Chinatown
- KCRW Summer Friday Nights, various locations

Every Sunday

Smorgasburg, Row DTLA