

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: William Ristow

Coming Together—Figuratively, Not Literally—for Dance

by Kristi Yeung

COVID-19 was officially [characterized as a pandemic](#) on March 11, 2020. In the following days, the emails and news stories announcing performance cancellations and dance studio closures multiplied. Soon, my calendar was as clear as a grocery store's toilet paper shelf.

For the first time in my adult life, I faced a completely free weekend. I could have read a book, started learning a foreign language, done my taxes, or even gotten a head start writing this article. But instead, I went on my phone.

A text from a friend informed me that New York City-based choreographer and teacher, [Teddy Tedholm](#), was live-streaming dance classes designed for small spaces on Instagram. The next day, I tuned into the virtual class and was surprised by how intimate it felt. Tedholm taught from his living room, and at the end of class volunteers projected their own live footage from their bedrooms. Technical difficulties were inevitable, and these somehow augmented the sense of community. Video lags eliminated the stress of delivering a perfect performance, and audio delays made space for lighthearted banter. When the class ended, I felt giddy, eager to discover more dance on the internet.

In the following days, I virtually dropped by a class in Los Angeles, discovered the [Gaga](#) movement language, and committed to video-chat-mediated dance sessions with old friends. In this time of isolation, when I expected dance communities to stagnate, I instead found them strengthened and expanded. Now, my calendar is fuller than it was before, and I am honestly more excited for these new, digital plans than I was for the original, in-person ones.

Here is a list of the classes, sessions, videos, and ideas I've come across in my search for digital dance. Many of these have helped me stay connected to dance. More importantly, they have kept me from leaving my home. I hope they serve you in similar ways or prompt you to discover your own sources of dance-inspired joy during this time of crisis.

Instagram Live classes: Dance teachers across the nation are streaming free classes through Instagram Live. Accounts regularly

holding class include: [@balletx.official](#) (ballet, contemporary, vogue); [@mercetrust](#) (Cunningham warmups); [@movement_for_hope](#) (contemporary, ballet, yoga, Pilates); [@officialdadance](#) (dance for young people from Debbie Allen Dance Academy); and [@teddytedholm](#) (contemporary). This list is far from comprehensive. Luckily, there are other accounts, such as [@dancing.alone.together](#) and [@freedancetraining](#), keeping track of all that is available.

Online classes: [CLI studios](#) is offering free, live-stream contemporary and commercial hip-hop classes through their #KeepDancing initiative. [Dance Church](#) is an online dance party that happens every Sunday at 1pm. [Gaga teachers](#) in Tel Aviv and New York City are hosting live donation-based classes 6 times a day, 7 days a week through the video-conferencing platform, Zoom. [Monsters Dance and KreativMndz](#) are partnering to provide free hip-hop training sessions on YouTube. [Steezy](#), an online urban dance studio, is releasing one free pre-recorded tutorial per day from March 20 through March 26.

Improvisation sessions: [Daily Small Dance Practice](#) is connecting people worldwide by prompting them to dance for five minutes every day at noon.

Live performance: [Isol-art](#) is a donation-based live-stream event featuring artists dancing in their bedrooms. Donations will help dancers whose livelihoods have been disrupted by the pandemic.

Videos: [BalletX](#) is offering a screening link for their production of *The Little Prince* to everyone on their mailing list. [CHANGES: The Movement](#) is a series of YouTube dance videos created to Justin Bieber's latest album. The pop star himself doesn't make any appearances. Instead, dancers with infectious energy perform eye-catching choreography on imaginative sets. [OnTheBoards.TV](#) hosts full-length contemporary dance films that you can watch on your computer. In response to COVID-19, free streaming is available through April.

We know there are other resources out there. Please share in the comments below.

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