

LA TIMES

Class conflicts — this time in a Turkish ghetto

By Lewis Segal, Times Staff Writer

If Jerome Robbins and Leonard Bernstein had followed their original plans for a Broadway musical about class conflicts on the streets of New York, its title would have been "East Side Story." A full-evening dance drama by choreographer Aysun Aslan and composer Fahir Atakoglu that the Istanbul National Ballet offered in the second of two performances Friday at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre.

Based on a novel by Metin Kacan, the two-act work focused on a family living in a crime-ridden Istanbul ghetto and, as such, represented an extraordinary project for a major state-supported cultural institution. The company evolved from a dance academy founded by Ninette de Valois, mother superior of England's Royal Ballet, and, like the Royal, it dances a wide range of classical and contemporary pieces. But it would be hard to imagine the Royal — or the Paris Opera Ballet or the Kirov Ballet or American Ballet Theatre — depicting the lower depths of its home city's slums as the Turks dared to do.

Although ballet technique dominated the passages for the warring gangs and the solos for such superb virtuosos as Baris Adikti (a gang boss), the movement vocabulary also incorporated gypsy folklore, gymnastic modernism, pop dancing — even a belly dance showpiece for Jaklin Carkci. And, again, few dance ensembles anywhere could deliver so many idioms with such authority as the 40 Turks and 20 locally recruited Americans performing in the production.

The fusion of talent and passion that their company offered at its best Friday seemed just as precious as those huge uncut emeralds in the Topkapi Palace

LA TIMES

Turkish Melodrama

By Christine Cotter

Sibel Surel is the center of attention in "East Side Story", which incorporated ballet as well as gypsy folklore, gymnastic modernism and pop dancing.

ISTANBUL NATIONAL OPERA & BALLET: East Side Story

The only city in the world to straddle two continents, Istanbul has been a bridge as well as a battlefield between Europe and Asia for centuries. That historical duality underlies this contemporary Romeo and Juliet story set in 1970s Istanbul.



Photo by Yadar Saracodlu)

LA WEEKLY

GO

ISTANBUL BALLET : EAST SIDE STORY

By Ann Haskins

Just as the musical *West Side Story* captured the crosscultural rip tides of immigrants flooding into New York City, *East Side Story* reflects those currents in Turkey, setting the iconic *Romeo and Juliet* plot in Istanbul during the 1970s. The only city in the world to straddle two continents, Istanbul has been a bridge as well as a battlefield between Europe and Asia for centuries. The American premiere of this acclaimed Istanbul Ballet production includes local talent recruited to augment the 39 original cast members brought here with support from the Turkish government's cultural offices. With metro L.A. now in contention for the mantle of world's most culturally diverse city, a drama set in a centuries-old cultural crossroads holds important lessons for us, as well as the raw materials for riveting dance drama. At the Ford Amphitheater,

DAILY NEWS

DAILY NEWS

LIVELY ARTS – DANCE - NEWS

News July/August 2006

ISTANBUL NATIONAL OPERA & BALLET

LOS ANGELES -- The exotic streets of Istanbul will come alive Aug. 24 & 25 at the Ford Amphitheatre in a performance called EAST SIDE STORY. Presented by the Istanbul National Opera & Ballet company (in its first appearance in the USA), EAST SIDE STORY is adapted, choreographed and directed by Aysun Aslan.

This timeless tragicomedy set in the 1970s uses costume, color and movement to show love and hate, poverty and wealth, and most of all what it takes to stay afloat in a multi-ethnic, urban environment. Helping to bring the Istanbul streets to life is the music of Washington DC resident, Fahir Ataloglu.



The Turkish Ministry of Culture & Tourism and uniCvisions, an LA-based film production company, have teamed up to invite forty of the original Turkish cast to make the trip to Los Angeles. They will be supported by twenty local dancers and actors.

Turkish National Opera & Ballet is a government-funded institution, founded in 1958 by Dame Ninette de Valois, originally as the Istanbul Ballet (under the directorate of the Ministry of Culture & Tourism). Today each of the major cities of Turkey has its own company, with regular tours to outlying regions and rural areas to bring art at affordable prices to the masses.

TURKUAZ

CA: US premier of East Side Story (Agir Roman) at the Ford

Famous cultural delight of Turkey will perform twice in Los Angeles

Eser Turan

For decades Turkish-Americans have looked for ways to talk about the rich diversity of Turkey in the US, trying to communicate how the culture is one of tolerance. They have tried their best to introduce the land of civilizations where cultures have clashed and melded over centuries to their American friends and colleagues.



Now thanks to the visionary decision-making at the [Ford Theater](#) in Los Angeles and the faith the producers at [uniCvisions](#) have put forth, a dramatic Istanbul story will have the opportunity to portray this rich vibrancy and mesmerize Americans for two consecutive nights on August 24 and 25.

Adapted to modern dance from Metin Kacan's famous novel 'Agir Roman' and directed by no one other than Turkey's top choreographer [Aysun Aslan](#), this colorful story tells the diverging coming of age stories of the sons of a Turkish family during a politically intense time in Turkey. Subplots relay endearing stories of pride, honor, passion and survival.

With hopes that the 'daring' production of East Side Story is welcome in the US by all, I invite all those who would like to support democracy and peace in the Middle East to attend this wonderful event.

A favorite at Istanbul National Ballet's annual repertoire, the production is entitled East Side Story specifically for the American audience, due to the thematic similarities to the famous West Side Story. Amongst gang fights this Istanbul story also offers slivers of basic human experience in the colorful yet melancholic lives of a community where Turks, Armenians, Jews and many others are trying to make ends meet under similar circumstances.

The original score of this dance theater is by Fahir Atakoglu, a renowned Turkish jazz composer and pianist who had crossed cultural boundaries himself and moved to DC about 10 years ago. His genius comes through in reflections that capture the spirit of the mix between modern, folk and oriental.

For a sneak preview you can check out the video clips of this upcoming performance at <http://www.east-side-story.com/video.html>.

Ethnically diverse dance troupe

Sponsored in part by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and supported by the Turkish Consul General Honorable Engin Ansay, this dance fest will have 50 talented dancers of the Istanbul National Ballet performing.

The troupe includes the award winning Jaklin Carkci, who became the first female recipient of the Umberto Giordano International Opera Competition in Foggia, Italy in December 2005. An unequaled mezzo soprano and the pride of the Istanbul National Opera, Carkci's performance is expected to attract considerable support from the Turkish-Armenian-American community in Los Angeles.

Some other members of the cast are also a wonderful example of the rich ethnic heritage in Turkey, as the principle dancer Can Tunali is a Sephardic Jewish Turk and one of the leading ladies Sibel Surel is of Egyptian heritage. The Istanbul National Ballet believes that the ethnic diversity in their troupe guarantees the vibrant portrayal of the Turkish melting pot on the American stage.

Lovers of dance looking to get a flavor of the Turkish diversity at this world class performance can get their tickets (available at \$30 and \$40, as well as specific group discounts) through the Ford website at www.FordAmphitheatre.org.



Feature story:

[Why is the production of East Side Story and act of faith?](#)

Directions:

Ford Amphitheatre is located at 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood, CA 90068, just off the 101 Hollywood Freeway across from the Hollywood Bowl and south of Universal Studios.

East Side Story is part of the Ford Amphitheatre 2006 Season, a multi-disciplinary arts series produced by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission in cooperation with Los Angeles County based arts organizations. For a complete season schedule, directions to the theater and parking information, you can log on to www.FordAmphitheatre.org.

USA TURKISH TIMES

Istanbul Opera and Ballet in Hollywood



The Exotic Istanbul National Ballet makes United States debut under the stars at the Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood. On two evenings in August, relive the passion and agony of the Cholera District of Istanbul, a place where the Ottoman Empire brought together people from all over Europe and Asia, and left them to try to survive as one people, with nothing to bind them but their humanity. The only city in the world to sit on two continents, will be recreated at the Ford Amphitheatre August 24 and 25, 2006, in a presentation of the dance-theatre production of "East Side Story," adapted, choreographed and directed by Aysun Aslan and performed by the Istanbul National Opera & Ballet.

TURKISH OPERA TO HAIL HOLLYWOOD

The Istanbul Opera and Ballet will perform "Ağır Roman" in Hollywood -- considered to be the American entertainment industry's capital.

Choreographed and directed by Aysun Aslan, the opera will be staged at Los Angeles' Ford Amphitheatre Aug. 24-25 under the name of "East Side Story," in cooperation with the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry and Hollywood-based Turkish film company uniCvisions.

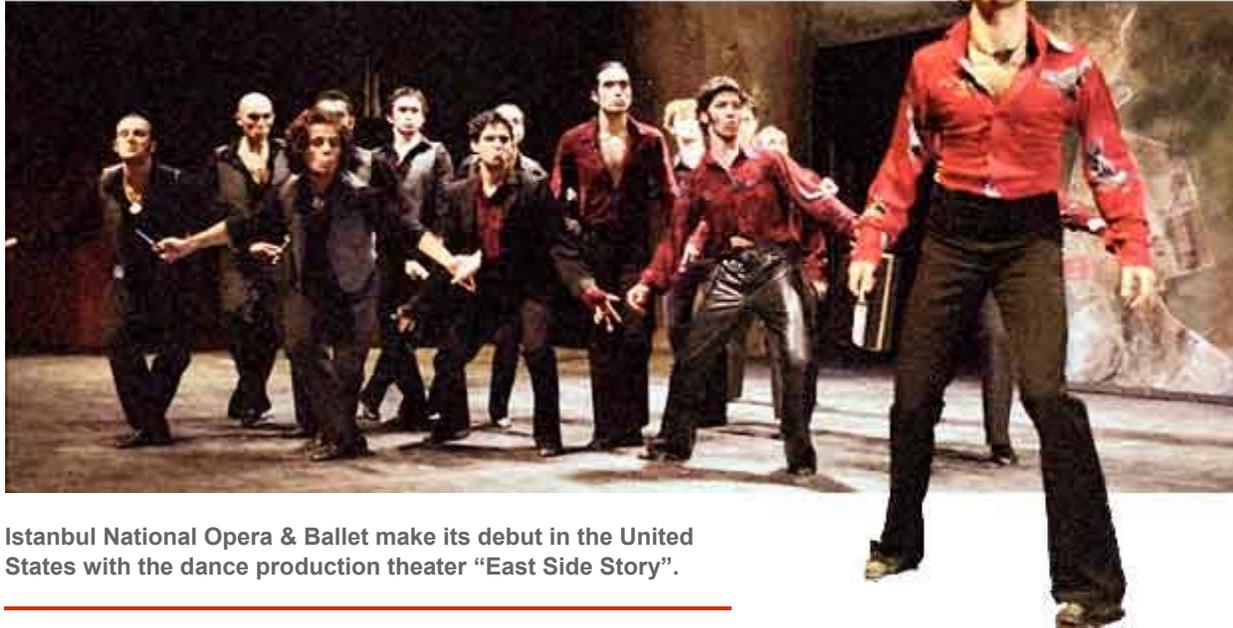
The piece, with a score by Fahir Atakoğlu, will be performed abroad for the first time. It features the story of a family focusing on family member relations, love and intrigue as well as tragic-comic conflicts and interactions within a family living in 1970s Istanbul.

THE LOS ANGELES TURKISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

We also learned that the Istanbul National Ballet will be performing East Side Story (Ağır Roman) at the Ford Amphitheatre August 24 and 25, thanks to support from LATAA, the Ministry of Culture & Tourism and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. The show has the largest presentation in the Ford's Summer Season brochure. We are so proud! You can get more information on that at www.east-side-story.com

USA

CALIFORNIA



Istanbul National Opera & Ballet make its debut in the United States with the dance production theater "East Side Story".

- **"East Side Story"**
The Istanbul National Opera & Ballet make its debut in the United States with this production of dance theater of Aysun Aslan that revive the passion and agony of the district of Cholera in Istanbul, a place to which the Ottoman empire brought people coming from all Europe and Asia, and left them so that they tried to survive like an only town. Ford Amphitheatre (The Angels).

LA.COM

East Side Story

Who: [The Ford Amphitheatre](#)

Date: Friday August 25th, 2006

Time: 8:30 PM

Location: The Ford Amphitheatre
[2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East](#)
Hollywood, CA
Hollywood

Cost: \$30 & \$40
[Link To Tickets](#)

More Info 323.461.3673
[Event Link](#)

Description: The US premiere of the Istanbul National Ballet's production of "East Side Story" brings the streets of Istanbul to the stage, as 63 dancers, 42 from Turkey and 21 locals, tell a

story of life, love and -- murder. This spectacular production set in the multi-cultural Cholera District is the US premiere and will play only two nights!

About: The Ford Amphitheatre

"East Side Story" is part of the Ford Amphitheatre 2006 Season, a multi-disciplinary arts series produced by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission in cooperation with Los Angeles County based arts organizations.

DANZAHOY

Shows

USA

CALIFORNIA



Istanbul National Opera & Ballet realiza su debut en Estados Unidos con la producción de danza teatro "East Side Story".

"East Side Story"

El Istanbul National Opera & Ballet realiza su debut en Estados Unidos con esta producción de danza teatro de Aysun Aslan que revive la pasión y agonía del distrito de Cholera en Estambul, un lugar al que el imperio otomano trajo gente procedente de toda Europa y Asia, y los dejó para que intentaran sobrevivir como un único pueblo. Ford Amphitheatre (Los Ángeles). El 24 y 25 de agosto. Tickets: 323 461-3673. <http://www.FordAmphitheatre.org>
Informes: [http:// www.east-side-story.com /](http://www.east-side-story.com/)
[http://www.unicvisions.com.](http://www.unicvisions.com)

East Side Story EXPERIENCE LA

Full Profile

Address:

2580 Cahuenga Blvd., East
Hollywood, 90068

Major Cross Streets:

Cahuenga and Hwy 101

Official Website:

www.east-side-story.com



Region:

Hollywood

Theme(s):

Dance

Entertainment

Getting There:

[Use the Metro Trip Planner!](#)  Metro

[Get Driving Directions](#)

Links:

[buy tickets online](#)

Description:

