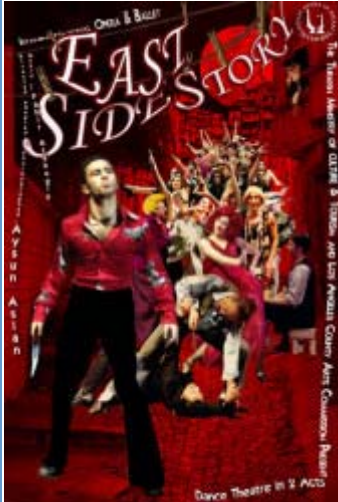


Los Angeles

Goldstar Events™

The Exotic Istanbul National Ballet Performs *East Side Story* under the Stars



Venue: [Ford Amphitheatre](#) (Hollywood, CA)

The exotic Istanbul National Ballet makes their U.S. debut under the stars at the Ford Amphitheatre. Relive the passion and agony of Istanbul, the only city in the world to sit on two continents. The Istanbul National Ballet performs the lively dance-theatre production, *East Side Story*, a moving tale of life, love, and violence in the Cholera District of Istanbul.

All dates for this event have expired. ([find current Performing Arts events](#))

The last event was Friday, Aug. 25 2006 @ 8:30pm. ([view all dates](#))

More Details About This Event:

"East Side Story" is not just modern dance being performed by just any old group of dancers. It is a reflection of the real lives and heritage of the dancers and artists of the Istanbul National Ballet – and also of the local Los Angeles dancers who have joined the cast for the production at the Ford Amphitheatre. The dance theatre to be performed for the first time in the United States August 24 & 25 is a living reflection of the rich cultural diversity found in Istanbul, a melting pot metropolis.

This daring production is adapted from the novel, "Agir Roman," (variously translated as "Heavy Novel" or "Dangerous Gypsy") by Metin Kacan. The story surrounds the Cholera District of Istanbul in the 1970's, where the electric colors of the western media blended and danced with the vibrant colors of the various peoples of the district. Those cultures included – and still do include – Romanians, Turks, Armenians, Jews and many others trying to make a life in Istanbul, the only city

straddling two continents, Europe and Asia.

The life and vibrancy of these cultures is brought together by a group of artists of equal variety and brilliance.

The novel was adapted to dance theatre by the director and choreographer, Aysun Aslan. Classically trained in ballet from childhood, Aysun dared to move into the more interpretive world of modern dance with an additional flare for the theatrical. This brought her a new outlet for expression in choreography, and she moved even more against the accepted modern dance "norm," putting her visions of a modern dance production mixed with oriental and folk themes on the stage. The realization of this vision came to fruition with Metin Kacan's novel of life, love and death in the city that is a mix of modern, oriental and folk dance itself, Istanbul.

Of course, new and unique music was necessary for such a daring production. And who could be more perfect for such a project than Fahir Atakoglu, a renowned jazz composer and pianist who had crossed cultural boundaries himself and moved to the United States. This move brought with it even more blending of international themes as he now performs and records in the jazz trio of himself on piano, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez on drums, and Anthony Jackson on bass.

Ballet, jazz and . . . opera! The principle dancers are all accomplished in their own disciplines, but it is rare to find a person able to cross over to another and perfect it as well. Jaklin Carkci, a Turkish woman of Armenian descent, uses every muscle and joint in her body to bring Istanbul's oriental shore to the stage in a vibrating belly dance. But Jaklin is not just a belly dancer: she was the first female recipient of the Umberto Giordano International Opera Competition in Foggia, Italy in December 2005. She is an unequalled mezzo soprano and the pride of the Istanbul National Opera.

Istanbul became home to many different peoples escaping oppressive regimes in other countries, including Sephardic Jews during the Spanish Inquisition and again during World War II. Dancing the principle role of Gili, Can (John) Tunali is a descendent of this group of refugees welcomed with open arms as world citizens with a great deal to offer to the city and its culture.

Other groups came to Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire to see the artistic and architectural wonders, to ask favors of the Sultan, or for trade with Europe. Sibel Surel, of Egyptian heritage, is most probably a part of this slice of history. Her character, Imine, is an oppressed housewife, tormented by her husband's infidelities and her sons' indifference to her motherly worrying, a theme that women around the world can identify with.

Other cast and crew represent the heritage of almost every country in the area, including Greece,

Yugoslavia, and the Czech Republic. Canan Phyllis Sadalak is half English, a little bit further away.

In order to complete the 63-dancer cast, 21 local Los Angeles dancers and actors have been found and they are just as culturally varied as the original cast. Not only are there Hispanic cast members such as Jessica Martinez (Mexican-American) and Patricia Prata (Brazilian), there are dancers and actors from Iran (Michela Ghorban and Emma Mesrobian), Italy (Giada Benedetti), Israel (Nia Kaminer). And then there are the native-born Americans – who all have mixed backgrounds, just like the natives of Istanbul. The artists are as varied and colorful as the production itself – a true United Nations of art. “Peace through Art” is the producer, uniCvisions’ motto, and if this production is any indication, it may just be possible.

About Ford Amphitheatre:

The 1241-seat outdoor Ford Amphitheatre is set against a backdrop of cypresses and chaparral in the Hollywood Hills. It is relatively intimate: no patron is more than 96 feet away from the stage. Music, dance, film, theatre and family events are presented during the summer months. The Ford Amphitheatre Season is a program of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.