

## 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](http://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](http://www.FordAmphitheatre.org).