

Italy's Balletto di Toscana to perform *Mediterranea* in its San Diego debut April 5 at UCSD

March 12, 1998

Media Contact: Ruth Baily at University Events, (619) 534-0497, rbaily@ucsd.edu or

Jan Jennings, (619) 822-1684, jnjennings@ucsd.edu

ITALY'S BALLETO DI TOSCANA TO PERFORM MEDITERRANEA IN ITS SAN DIEGO DEPUT APRIL 5 AT UCSD

The Mediterranean is revealed as the mystical persona of a force in nature, the lands which encompass it and the people it touches when Italy's Balletto di Toscana brings it to life in *Mediterranea* at 8 p.m. April 5 in Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego.

Mauro Bigonzetti is *Mediterranea* choreographer. The ballet has been described as "passionate" and "explosive."

Italy's *Il Sole* writes: "Bigonzetti with *Mediterranea* is showing us 'his' or better 'our' sea, because it is easy to recognize in the numerous emotions they offer us, 'our' women and 'our' men who are intense in the approaches, strong in the encounters, lively in the gaiety. The twelve dancers, young and very good with a flattering past, lead us through our roots, born by the comparison and encounter of all people who face this water-mirror, hot and intense like the passions of its people."

The full length ballet was commissioned by the Torino International Festival in 1993 and premiered with Balletto di Toscana. Bigonzetti was recognized by *Danza & Danza* magazine as that year's Best Young Italian Dance Maker. He trained at the Rome Opera Ballet, has worked with contemporary choreographers such as Alvin Ailey, Glen Tedley and William Forsythe, and has created original works for numerous ballet companies.

Balletto di Toscana makes its San Diego debut with *Mediterranea* during its 1997-1998 and first tour in the United States and Canada. The April 5 performance is sponsored by the UCSD University Events Office.

The professional dance company was founded in 1986 in Florence, Italy, by 12 classically trained dancers. Cristina Bozzolini, a former principal dancer of the Florence Opera Ballet, is artistic director.

Balletto di Toscana's repertoire is based on two artistic goals: creating contemporary ballets to express all styles of dance and promoting the creative work of young, original Italian choreographers such as Bigonzetti. The company's awards include the Leonide Massine Prize from the city of Positano, a Best Dancers Award and a Best Company Award from *Danza & Danza* magazine, and the Golden Palm at the International Festival of Audio Visual Media in Cannes.

Dance Magazine calls Balletto di Toscana "perhaps the best of Italy's private companies," and *L'Unita* writes: "When such a fascinating company is coupled with the right ballet (*Mediterranea*), the success is unrestrainable."

The company has toured Spain, France, Switzerland, Poland, Luxembourg, Argentina, Egypt, Tunisia, Uruguay, Mexico and the Ukraine. In addition to its 1997-1998 United States/Canada tour, Balletto di Toscana is working on Bigonzetti's new ballet, Miraculous Mandarin, commissioned by the Florence Opera House.

Formerly a principal ballerina who has partnered with Nureyev, Barishnikov and Godunov, director Bozzolini devotes herself to teaching and choreography. Italy's La Stampa writes: "The Florentine company directed by Cristina Bozzolini is proving itself to be one of the best Italian 'corps de ballet' and it is worth going and watching when it comes nearby."

Tickets for Balletto di Toscana's April 5 performance of *Mediterranea* are \$20 general admission, \$18 for faculty, staff and senior citizens, and \$16 for students. Tickets are available at the UCSD Box Office, 534-8497, and at Ticketmaster outlets. For further information, call the UCSD University Events Office at 534-4090.

(March 12, 1998_