

UC SAN DIEGO DEPARTMENT OF THEATER AND DANCE CO-SPONSOR A NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY EASTERN EUROPEAN DANCE

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Patricia Quill

The University of California, San Diego's Department of Theatre and Dance, along with Sushi Performance and Visual Art and Allyson Green Dance, will co-sponsor the San Diego tour of **Central Station**, a multi-week, multi-venue and multi-city festival of contemporary Eastern European dance-theater-improvisation. Central Station, which will be presented at many of the country's premier alternative dance venues, will be in San Diego from December 10 until the 14, 2003. Featuring performances, classes, a lecture and a site-specific improvisation at Torrey Pines State Beach, the festival will highlight the work of eleven performers from Croatia, Estonia, and Romania.

The U.S. tour of Central Station is the culmination of a personal goal for Allyson Green, a Professor on the UCSD Dance Faculty and the Interim Artistic Director of Sushi Performance and Visual Art. Green has regularly traveled to Central Europe since 1988 to teach and perform choreographic research. "The theater work is very strong in these countries, and that history informs the philosophical underpinnings of the work," says Green.

Early in her travels, Green could find little contemporary dance. "Only classical ballet and folk dance were supported under communist regimes," continued Green. "In the 1980s, I was among the few contemporary dancers who traveled there to perform and teach. Then came the fall of communism, and artists embraced the freedom of modern dance."

"Remarkable young people were single-handedly running theaters, creating festivals, making companies. That became very inspiring for my work here. In a country where the average paycheck is \$60 a month, students would spend a month's salary to take one workshop, because it meant so much to them."

Green is committed to providing educational opportunities to the next generation of artists through collaborative artistic engagements at the national and international level. "These exchanges are an invaluable resource in providing greater perspective on the extremely complex cultural issues, responsibilities and privileges of being an American artist in an international arena."

Central Station is a unique opportunity to spotlight the work and experiences of contemporary dance/theatre artists who create their work in a region that has experienced a remarkable cultural and political change in the past decade. The US tour of Central Station, which will feature 11 companies from seven countries, will take place over the course of two months in the winter of 2003 at Dance Theater Workshop, Danspace Project and P.S.122 in New York, NY; UCSD and Sushi Performance and Visual Art in San Diego, CA; RedCAT in Los Angeles, CA; On the Boards in Seattle, WA; and The Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, OH. Central Station has received major funding from the Trust for Mutual Understanding.

In addition, a variety of performances at both UCSD and Sushi, an improvisational workshop for the Central Station artists, along with local professional and student dancers, will be held at Sushi. "It is my hope that the workshop and the entire festival will provide an introduction to an exciting group of improvisational artists and open up networks for future artistic exchanges," states Green.

The festival's finale "**Connecting Beaches/Connecting Communities**" will be a sprawling site-specific event at Torrey Pines State Beach on Sunday, December 14 at 4:30 p.m. The finale will feature all of the Central Station dancers in collaboration with local dancers. A light installation, created by New York artist Peter Terezakis, will also be featured.

"Connecting Beaches/Connecting Communities" will be the first of a series of performances directed by Allyson and Green in collaboration with Cosmin Manolescu of Romania. Future projects, scheduled for the summer of 2004, are in development for a number of Eastern European sites including the Black Sea in Bulgaria and Lake Ohrid in Macedonia.

For a full schedule of performances, go to www.sushiart.org. Seating is very limited. Reservations are suggested in order to ensure a seat.

For information about Central Station performances at UCSD, go to <http://theatre.ucsd.edu/onstage>. For more information about the UCSD Department of Theatre and Dance, go to <http://theatre.ucsd.edu>.

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