

Stephen Petronio Company to perform Not Garden on April 18 at UCSD

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STEPHEN PETRONIO COMPANY TO PERFORM NOT GARDEN APRIL 18 AT UCSD

The Stephen Petronio Company of New York, one of the most innovative and provocative ensembles of contemporary dance, will perform at 8 p.m. April 18 in Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego.

The company will perform Not Garden, the first full-length dance/theatre work choreographed by Stephen Petronio for the eight-dancer group.

The San Diego performance of Not Garden is sponsored by the UCSD University Events Office, one of the groups who have commissioned the work.

Not Garden takes place in a cave with the sights, sounds, textures and smells inspired by Dante's Inferno. The performance explores thinking about what is real and what is not. It is geared to provoke thought on the status of contemporary life as the millennium nears.

Project background on Not Garden elaborates: "As long as humankind has grappled with the difference between illusion and reality, there has been a garden. It is only by taming paradise and making a garden...only by first ensuring the survival of a garden and of himself was (man) able to release the time and energy necessary for the development of a culture. It is the creation of the garden that has given man the freedom to live the kind of life we lead in the 20th century."

Yet the premise behind the performance suggests that this free time is coming back to haunt man, that it doesn't just encourage the desire for progress and to think freely, but unlimited freedom also threatens the very essence the garden was first created to preserve.

Petronio's choreography for Not Garden is complemented by the musical score of Stuart Jones, a music collagist with an extensive knowledge of contemporary music. Not Garden premiered in Berlin last fall and the company is now presenting it on its 1998 American tour.

"Stephen Petronio's table boasts everything the millennial appetite appears to crave: risk, physical prowess, sensuality, excess, and kinky chic," writes the Village Voice.

The San Francisco Examiner describes Petronio, who has collaborated with musicians such as Yoko Ono and the British post-punk band, Wire, as "the most fearlessly inventive, most audaciously virtuosic dancer-choreographer of his generation."

The Stephen Petronio Company was founded in 1984. The company has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. In addition to Not Garden, numerous new works by the company have been commissioned including those by the Cannes Festival, the Festival International Montpellier-Dance and the Holland Festival. The company performed in the documentary film, Retracing Steps; in the PBS Alive from Off Center program, The Kitchen Presents II; and in collaboration with videographer Simon Biggs and composer Stuart Jones in the film, As Falling Falls, which premiered at the Newcastle International Festival of Dance and Movement in the United Kingdom.

In describing the inventiveness and physicality of the company, the New York Times writes: "The dancers race and spin across the stage...twisting, tilting and dancing often on the sides of their feet...all are impressive movers."

Petronio and his dancers simply don't "let the eye rest or the mind wander," writes the San Francisco Chronicle.

Tickets for Stephen Petronio Company's April 18 performance of Not Garden 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.

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