

PRESS RELEASE



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Southbank Centre, The European Commission Representation in the UK and European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) London present

dancEUnion: a festival of European dance

Friday 19 – Sunday 21 September 2008

In a three-day celebration of European dance, Southbank Centre welcomes 23 countries and over 70 artists for a weekend of performances and film screenings from 19 to 21 September. Launched by renowned choreographer and festival patron, **Russell Maliphant**, *dancEUnion* reveals to audiences the diversity of choreography and dance developing across Europe and enables choreographers and dancers the chance to share ideas and forge new unions.

From award-winning Irish choreographer **Liz Roche** and the acclaimed UK duo **Probe** in a **New Art Club** piece to multi-talented pianist and dancer **Gianfranco Celestino** (Luxembourg), *dancEUnion* profiles the shape and wealth of European contemporary dance. **Petter Jacobsson** (formerly a principal dancer with Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet) and **Thomas Caley** (previously a featured member of The Merce Cunningham Dance Company) founded Swedish company **Scentrifug** in 1997. The two have presented and produced work in Sweden and internationally from New York to St Petersburg, and will be performing an excerpt from *Untitled partner* (Saturday 20 September) which integrates hyper-fast video clips and live performance.

As well as 16 companies performing at Southbank Centre's **Purcell Room**, a number of free events will take place in **The Clore Ballroom**, on the **Riverside Terrace** and in **Spirit Level** at the **Royal Festival Hall**. Included in this free programme is *Les Sisyphes X10*, a project conceived by French choreographer **Julie Nioche**, who is working with a group of young people from South London to create a performance which pushes the body to exhaustion. Poland's **Katarzyna Kozyra** re-directs the audiences focus from body to face, in her up close and personal video installation *Faces*, one of three dance films that will be screened over the weekend in Spirit Level.

Marking the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008**, *dancEUnion*, is one of a series of initiatives through which the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) aim to strengthen cooperation and exchange between the national cultural institutes of EU countries.

Jude Kelly, Southbank Centre Artistic Director says:

Southbank Centre is committed to supporting and nurturing talent from across the Globe. It will be thrilling to see 23 EU nations in physical dialogue during this weekend and we are delighted to present *dancEUnion* in collaboration with the European Commissions Office in the UK and EUNIC London.

Reijo Kempainen, Head of the European Commission Representation in the UK says: "London is Europe's biggest, most culturally diverse city and a weekend of dance is a fantastic celebration of that diversity. The European Commission's office in the UK is delighted to have worked together with the Southbank Centre, EUNIC London and 23 EU countries on bringing you danceUnion, a unique festival with Europe at its heart."

Russell Maliphant, Choreographer and festival patron says:

"In our global society, a multitude of cultural influences feed and enrich our communities. The universal language of the body, with its rich vocabulary of shapes, forms and dynamics offers a great opportunity to share and enrich our understanding and enjoyment of this thriving art form. I hope you enjoy the festival."

Maurice Gourdault- Montagne, Ambassador of France to the UK says:

"Europe is about harmony, it is neither unison nor cacophony. This is why France intends to put a major emphasis on culture, in particular music and dance, during its Presidency of the European Union, starting with this major European contemporary dance festival in September."

Rafael Bonachela, Southbank Centre Artist in Residence says:

"Of course, dance is a truly international language. Like footballers, dancers are constantly crossing borders, both physical and geographical. And, like football teams, dance companies across Europe reflect the diversity of the EU and fluidity of movement within it."

For further press information and images please contact:

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Southbank Centre Ticket Office: 0871 663 2500 www.southbankcentre.co.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS:

SOUTHBANK CENTRE is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and The Hayward as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following the major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities.

EUNIC

EUNIC is a partnership of national institutions for culture, engaged beyond their national borders and operating with a degree of autonomy from their governments. The EUNIC membership currently includes organisations from 25 EU countries and aims to create effective partnerships and networks between the participating organisations, to improve and promote cultural diversity and understanding between European societies, and to strengthen international dialogue and co-operation with countries outside Europe.

Participating countries include:

Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.