

# Giant, rocking Berlin dish will be unity monument



**Citizens in Motion: the winning design to celebrate Berlin's peaceful revolution**

## Abby d'Arcy Hughes Berlin

After more than a decade of disagreement, Berliners have settled on a monument to celebrate German reunification and the 1989 peaceful revolution: a giant, rocking dish.

The 55-metre, 330-tonne glittering steel wing can hold up to 1,400 people at any one time, but it needs at least 20 people to get it moving.

The monument to unity is called Citizens in Motion, and is apparently all about people coming together. If you want to make it move, you have to get a group together and all go in a particular direction.

"That's what a peaceful revolution is about," said Johannes Milla, the Stuttgart architect who collaborated with Berlin's star choreographer, Sasha Waltz, on the unique design.

"The rest of the world's monuments are built to be looked at," said Milla. "With this concept, it's the people who'll make it into something.

"Maybe they'll use it for theatre, or like Speaker's Corner, or skaters will use it. The people will make it their own."

The asphalt bed of the monument will carry the slogans of the 1989 demonstrations: "Wir sind das Volk" (We are the people) and "Wir sind ein Volk" (We are one people).

Engravings on its steel belly will depict

images of the revolution. It took 12 years and two public bids before Germany's culture minister finally approved the €10m (£8.76m) project, expected to take two to three years to build.

The monument's home will be an east Berlin square in front of the soon to be reconstructed Berlin Palace, formerly home to the Prussian rulers, and demolished by the German Democratic Republic's communist regime.

The square was also the site of the former GDR parliament, and 1 million people held a peaceful demonstration there just months before the fall of the wall.

Critics call it a gimmick, more like a playground for grown-ups than a sincere monument to history.

The designers seem unfazed.

After all, controversy dogged Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a 2 hectare (5 acre) maze of pathways and stone columns, which has since attracted millions of visitors.

This is also a very different monument, according to Günter Nooke, a former civil rights activist and now a Christian Democrat MP, who grew up in the GDR.

"We wanted a monument to joy, to express our happiness," said Nooke.

"There were no victims of the peaceful revolution.

"There are other places in Berlin where you can remember the victims of the Berlin Wall. This is about celebrating the revolution and reunification."