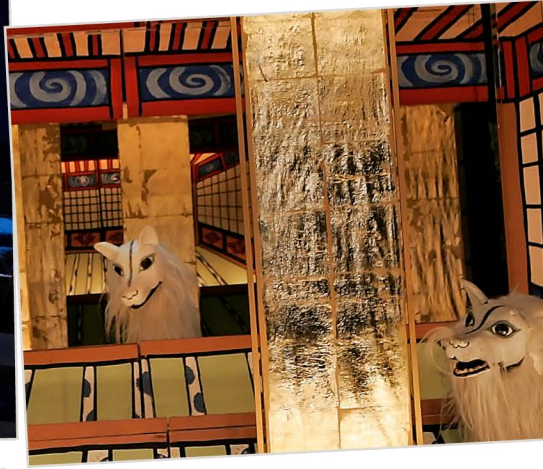


PERFORMING ARTS

2024

25





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Japan Society presents ***Dogugaeshi***

Wednesday, September 11, 7:30 pm

—Followed by a Private Gathering for Artists and Members

Thursday, September 12, 7:30 pm

—Followed by an artist Q&A

September 13, 14, 15 and 18 at 2:30 & 7:30 pm

September 17 and 19, 7:30 pm

Ningyo! A Parade of Puppetry Series – Program #1

The *Ningyo! A Parade of Puppetry* series is supported by The Jim Henson Foundation.



Dogugaeshi is supported by Doug and Teresa Peterson. Support for the international travel of Yumiko Tanaka is provided by The Japan Foundation.



2024—2025 Performing Arts Season Support

The season is made possible by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



Additional, major support is generously provided by Doug and Teresa Peterson, Howard Gilman Foundation, and Jun Makihara and Megumi Oka. Endowment support is provided by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Endowment Fund, John and Miyoko Davey Foundation, and a leadership gift from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.



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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Welcome to Japan Society Performing Arts' 2024-25 season, which kicks off with our *Ningyo! A Parade of Puppetry* series!

I am extremely happy to start this series by celebrating the 20th anniversary of *Dogugaeshi*, one of puppeteer Basil Twist's signature pieces of repertoire. We premiered this innovative piece during my first "clean slate" season in which I was fully responsible for programming. I curated that Fall 2004 season around the 150th anniversary of the very first U.S.-Japan Treaty, which marked the end of Japan's policy of national isolation and the opening of the nation to the Western world. In the decades following the commencement of this treaty, many elements of Japanese arts and culture were eagerly uncovered and "found" by Americans and Westerners, just as Japanese people were broadly taking for granted the unique merits and aesthetics of their cultural traditions, and couldn't see the richness of their own art. Given this historical context, *Dogugaeshi* was the perfect piece for that season's theme, because Basil also "found" the "dogugaeshi" - a stage mechanism used in traditional Japanese puppet theaters that has been in a precarious state of near-extinction in its place of origin.

We produced *Dogugaeshi* again for Japan Society's centennial celebration in 2007, including a four-city Japan tour. 2013 was the 60th anniversary of the Society's Performing Arts program, and I brought back *Dogugaeshi* because I wanted to represent our program with the most successful commissioning work in our history -- "success", in this case, measured in the work's reputable status nationally and internationally, having taken on its own life through performances across many cities around the world.

Basil's *Dogugaeshi* has always been with us for our celebratory benchmark seasons - which is why I am so delighted to present it today, as this is a significant benchmark 20th year for both *Dogugaeshi* and myself at the helm of the Performing Arts program.



Yoko Shioya
Artistic Director

PS: I'd humbly ask you to find the "Yoko Shioya 20th anniversary" fundraising campaign information included in this playbill.

Ningyo! A Parade of Puppetry Series – Program #1

Dogugaeshi

Creation and Direction: Basil Twist

Puppeteers: Basil Twist, Kate Brehm, Ben Elling, David Ojala, Jessica Scott

Musical Director, Sound Designer and Musician (evening): Yumiko Tanaka

Musician (matinee): Yoko Reikano Kimura

Sound Designer and Engineer: Greg Duffin

Projection Designer: Peter Flaherty

Lighting Designer: Andrew Hill

Production Stage Manager: Neelam Vaswani

Producer: Barbara Busackino, Tandem Otter Productions

Commissioned by Japan Society (2003)

Premiered at Japan Society (2004)

Performed without an intermission.

Basil Twist's *Dogugaeshi* was commissioned by Japan Society in 2003 and premiered at Japan Society in November 2004. It was co-produced with Tandem Otter Productions and made possible with funding from the Doris Duke Foundation and Creative Capital. Additional funding for the development and production of this project was provided by The Multi-Arts Production Fund, a program of Creative Capital, supported by The Rockefeller Foundation; Ford Foundation Good Neighbor Committee; The Jim Henson Foundation; the Asian Cultural Council; and Creative Capital. A research residency in Kyoto, Japan for Basil Twist in 2004 was supported by The Kyoto Arts Center. A developmental residency for *Dogugaeshi* at The Presidio National Park, San Francisco was supported by Creative Capital.

ARTIST'S NOTE

I first encountered the *dogugaeshi* in 1997. I was in France, wandering through an exhibition of puppets from Awaji at a festival, when something caught my eye. On a small black-and-white monitor flashed a sequence of sliding screen doors. It was brief and mysterious, and then it was gone as the film changed to footage of traditional Japanese puppets. The puppets I was familiar with, but those sliding screens—I'd never seen anything like them, except, actually, in my own work. Similar gestures had appeared in my *The Araneidae Show*, and at that very moment I was preparing *Symphonie Fantastique*, filling out my vision of what a non-narrative, non-representational—and therefore, in my mind, non-traditional—puppet show might be. But here in this clip of a film loop was evidence of these very ideas—except for the non-traditional part. There was clearly a tradition of puppeteers in this part of Japan doing exactly what I was “inventing” in my own work.

I stayed hunched by the monitor to catch the film clip a few more times. Those screens remained a compelling memory through the time Japan Society commissioned me to create a piece. Jane Marie Law, a scholar of Awaji puppetry, confirmed for me that I hadn't been dreaming. This tradition was called *dogugaeshi*, and with this first piece of the puzzle in place, my journey was under way. With the assistance of many individuals and organizations, I was able to visit Japan twice, specifically the region where the *dogugaeshi* once thrived—Awaji and Tokushima, two bits of land straddling the swirling whirlpools of the Naruto Straits.

I had wanted to keep the show small and perform it myself. But in the mountains of Tokushima, at a site called Kawamata, the piece I had been creating took on new dimensions. Inspired by the memories of elderly Japanese people who had reveled in the magic of this art form in their youth, I felt the ghost of a tradition demanding to be revealed, regardless of my original plans. And so I've needed a lot more help in the process—and I've received it in great part due to the wonderful people at the Japan Society who, while creating the show, remained passionately committed to my insistence that this work be presented in an intimate setting.

In the twenty years since the show has toured more than any other show of mine. It crossed North America and then significantly went to Japan where it surprised audiences with something that felt so familiar but that they had never seen. Ten years ago in California it departed for Europe (making its second trip thru the Panama Canal) where it stayed for years, played major capitals such as London and Paris and notably highlighted the very puppet festival where I had discovered the technique so many years ago. Finally, *Doguageshi* has come home to NYC where it was created.

The sound of the word *dogugaeshi* has an allure for me that reflects the mystery in this art form. But the word is in fact a very utilitarian term for “set change.” It is, after all simply a door. To me, it is something pure and potent: a sliding, gliding, horizontal game of suspense, concealment, revelation and transformation. I embrace the word as the title of my show, which is based on my own journey of discovery around this unique expression of Japanese culture, and it is with great joy, pride, and gratitude that we bring it back to this originating stage at the Japan Society.

— Basil Twist, September 2024

ABOUT DOGUGAESHI

Dogugaeshi, literally meaning “flipping mechanics,” is the name of the stage mechanism that serves as a backdrop to traditional Japanese folk puppet theater. Featuring a series of intricately painted scenes that slide open to reveal image after image in rapid succession, *dogugaeshi* developed in Awaji Island and Tokushima Prefecture over the centuries. Its history is inextricably linked to that of Japanese puppetry.

It is said that Japanese traditional puppet theater, or *ningyo joruri*, took root in the mid-17th century when puppet manipulation, the tradition of oral narrative and the music of the three-stringed shamisen were combined in dramatic form. It became one of the most popular entertainments in Japan in the 18th and 19th centuries, a time when Japan's flourishing merchant class greatly

valued entertainment. During that period, puppet troupes were formed and professional theater developed at a rapid pace in major cities such as Kyoto, Osaka and Edo (present-day Tokyo). In rural areas, popular folk puppet theater traditions also continued to flourish.

Rural puppetry theaters on Awaji Island and regions in Tokushima Prefecture developed intricate backdrops for their productions called *fusuma-e* (painted sliding screens). The screens are set up on several tracks along the top and bottom edges and layered, so that opening one set of screens reveals another set behind, and so on. As the show progresses, the *fusuma-e* are opened one by one from downstage to upstage, each revealing the gorgeous *fusuma-e* behind. There are variations on this system of transforming images as well. For example, in a play set inside a palace, the *fusuma-e* are drawn in perspective, revealing room after room with thousands of tatami mats. This elaborate technique with *fusuma-e* is known as *fusuma karakuri*, or more commonly, *dogugaeshi*. This complex and advanced stage mechanism developed with such intricacy that it became an independent attraction in its own right.

Though the Awaji Puppet Theater is the only existing professional puppet theater troupe that continues to give public performances regularly using some of the traditional *dogugaeshi* techniques, the *dogugaeshi* tradition can be found in several rural folk theaters, mainly in Tokushima Prefecture.

The best known of such theaters stands in Inukai Village. This thatch-roofed theater still maintains 132 *fusuma-e*, allegedly dating back over 100 years, that portray 42 different kinds of colorful landscapes and nature, including sparrows on bamboo, tigers, elephants, wild eagles, carp, chrysanthemums, Japanese maples and cherry blossoms. The theater also houses several sophisticated mechanisms to manipulate the screens so that they can be moved in many different variations: opening from the center of the stage to the wings; crossing the stage in front of one another; pivoting to reveal new images on the back side; and lifted offstage toward the grid. The Inukai Theater, designated as an Important Tangible Folk Cultural Asset by the Japanese government in 1998, holds a large annual performance festival in early November, in which the final portion of the performance is dedicated to *dogugaeshi*.

Basil Twist's *Dogugaeshi* was conceived and developed in 2003 through a

Japan Society commission and world-premiered at the Society in November 2004 in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of the U.S.-Japan Treaty, and has toured nationally and internationally ever since. This commission has earned critical acclaim, and upon its premiere, *Dogugaeshi* was honored with The New York Innovative Theater Award, Bessie Award and UNIMA Award. Through that auspicious debut as well as subsequent productions, this work has become an important part of Basil Twist's celebrated repertory.

Notable performances of *Dogugaeshi* include Japan Society's centennial celebrations in 2007 and four-city tour in Japan, and the 60th anniversary of Japan Society's Performing Arts Program in 2013, at Cal Performances (CA), EMPAC (NY), the Spoleto Festival USA (SC), the Barbican in London, the Theatre Vidy Lausanne in Switzerland, as part of a retrospective on Basil Twist's career at the Le Festival Mondial Des Théâtres De Marionnettes in France and, most recently, as a featured event at the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival in 2023. The work has been performed throughout the US, Japan, Rome, France and the UK. This "homecoming" for one of Basil Twist's seminal works is a momentous opportunity to witness this unique, internationally beloved piece in the intimate setting for which it was originally designed.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Basil Twist (Creator, Director and Puppeteer), from San Francisco, is a third-generation puppeteer. He is the sole American to have graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts de la Marionnette (ESNAM) in Charleville-Mézières, France. Shows include *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Petrushka*, *Rite of Spring*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *Arias with a Twist*, *La Bella Dormente nel Bosco*, *Sisters Follies*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (La Comédie Française, also co-director), *TITON et l'AURORE* (with Les Arts Florissant at The Opera Comique and Theatre Royal de Versailles) and *The Book of Mountains and Seas* by composer Huang Ruo and Twist as designer/director. He is currently serving as the puppetry designer and director of *My Neighbour Totoro* which returns to the West End in 2025. In film he contributed to the magic of Alfonso Cuarón's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, creating the Dementors. His past honors

have included an Obie, Henry Hewes, Doris Duke Performing Artist, Creative Capital Award, Asian Arts Council, multiple UNIMA and Bessie Awards, a Guggenheim fellowship, a MacArthur Fellowship and a Rome Prize. He is currently in residence at Dartmouth as the Roth Family Visiting Scholar. Since 1999 he has served as Artistic Director of Dream Music Puppetry at HERE in New York City.

Yumiko Tanaka (Musical Director, Sound Designer and Musician) received an MA in Musicology from Tokyo University of the Arts. In 1979, she began studying with *gidayu* recitation artist and Living National Treasure Takemoto Komanosuke, and the following year, she became a disciple of the late Nozawa Kinshi IV, a *gidayu* shamisen master and Living National Treasure in bunraku. Equally at home as a performer of new music, her credits range from performing with orchestras such as the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic to collaborating with pioneers in the world of jazz and experimental improvisation, including Kazumi Watanabe, Kazuhisa Uchihashi, Otomo Yoshihide, Akira Sakata, Kazutoku Umezu, Ned Rothenberg, Kiyohiko Semba, Asuka Kaneko, Samm Bennet, David Moss, Carl Stone, John Zorn, Elliot Sharp and Butch Morris. She has performed in numerous notable venues, including Avery Fisher and Halls and actively collaborated on several other acclaimed stage works such as Heiner Goebbels' *Hashirigaki* and the Taiwanese/Japanese multimedia work *Nami no shitanimo miyako no saburafuzo*. She also extensively tours nationally and internationally for collaborative and solo performances. She is the editor of *Marugoto Shamisen no Hon (Book of Shamisen)* and co-author of *schola vol. 14: Traditional Music of Japan*, supervised by Ryuichi Sakamoto. She received a fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council for her residency in New York City in 2006-07, and served as the 2008 Agency for Cultural Affairs Overseas Training Special Dispatch for Performing Arts in New York. She is a former associate professor at Hyogo University of Education, and is currently a joint researcher at the Research Centre for Traditional Japanese Music at the Kyoto City University of Arts.

Yoko Reikano Kimura (Musician) is a New York-based shamisen and koto musician. Her playing and singing has been hailed as "superb" by *The New York Times*. Kimura has held recitals annually and concertized in over 20 countries

at prestigious venues such as the Warsaw Autumn Festival, Israel Festival, The University of Cambridge, John F. Kennedy Center, Kabuki-za in Tokyo and various World Heritage Sites. Kimura started learning koto at an early age, and since 1992, she has studied with Kono Kameyama, the preeminent disciple of the legendary Yamada-school koto performer, and Kin'ichi Nakanoshima, a Living National Treasure. She also studied shamisen with Senko Yamabiko, a Living National Treasure, and Akiko Nishigata. Kimura graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts and received a scholarship from the Agency of Cultural Affairs of Japan. Her awards include the First prize at the 10th Kenjun Memorial National Koto Competition. She also served as a Japanese music consultant for Carnegie Hall's educational program in 2022. Kimura is an ardent champion of *Koto Concerto: Genji*, composed by Daron Hagen, and is scheduled to perform it at Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art in 2025. Kimura is a founder of Duo YUMENO with cellist, Hikaru Tamaki. The duo received the 24th Aoyama Music Award and held its 10th anniversary recital at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 2019. Their new album *Heike Quinto* was released by Naxos Records in 2024. < www.yokoreikanokimura.com >

Kate Brehm (Puppeteer) joined the cast of *Dogugaeshi* in 2007 when they toured Japan. She teaches puppetry and physical theater at Harvard University; is the recipient of three Henson Foundation awards; and professionally certified in the Margolis Method. Performing credits include: *Symphonie Fantastique*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Petrushka*, *Arias With A Twist* (Basil Twist), *La Divina Caricatura* (Mabou Mines), *Things Fall Apart* (imnotlost); Directing: *The Poacher* (Harvard), *The Eye Which We Do Not Have* (imnotlost); *Puppet Movement Direction: Hansel and Gretel* (Detroit Opera), *Dorothy and the Prince of Oz* (Ballet Met) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Broadway). *Design: The Odyssey* (ART). < www.katebrehm.com >

Ben Elling (Puppeteer) is a puppeteer and theatrical technician. In addition to his work on *Dogugaeshi*, Ben has collaborated with Tandem Otter on several productions including *Symphonie Fantastique*, *The Rite of Spring* and *Sister's Follies*.

David Ojala (Puppeteer and Technical Director) is a theatrical artist formerly living and working in New York City. He is a performer, lighting designer, scenic

designer and carpenter. Ojala has worked with Basil Twist on *Arias with a Twist*, *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Dogugaeshi* as well as the world premiere of *The Rite of Spring* and again at the Lincoln Center's White Light Festival in 2014. He currently lives in Berlin with his wife and son, where he works as the technical director for TD Berlin, a studio theater focusing on independent new works of theater in Germany.

Jessica Scott (Puppeteer) has performed in *Dogugaeshi* as part of the original puppeteer cast since its world premiere at Japan Society in 2004. Over the past 25 years she has worked with Basil Twist, Mabou Mines, Improbable Theater, Julian Crouch, Pee-wee Herman, Bjork, Moises Kaufman and many others in theater, film and mediums in between. She is also a puppet designer, director, sculptor, art thinker and a PhD student in History at University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she received her MFA in Studio Arts in 2022. <www.jessicaantoniascott.net>

ABOUT THE DESIGNERS

Greg Duffin (Sound Designer) is the original sound designer for *Dogugaeshi* and has worked with Basil Twist on his other shows: *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Arias with A Twist* and *Seafoam Sleepwalk*. Greg has toured the world with artists and currently works mainly with musical acts and large-scale corporate events.

Peter Flaherty (Projection Designer) is a director and video artist whose work has been shown in theaters, galleries and museums internationally. Recent directing credits include: *Signal From Shore* (Best Short: Zero Film Festival), *Soul Leaves Her Body* (HERE Arts Center), *Pass Back a Revolver* (Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia). Video Design: *Parsifal* (Metropolitan Opera, February 2013). Broadway: *Sondheim on Sondheim* at Roundabout Theatre. Theater collaborators: The Builders Association, Complicite, Francois Girard, James Lapine, Chen Shi-Zheng, Basil Twist, Bang on a Can. Video art: MIT Media Lab, Fleisher-Ollman Gallery, the home of Agnes Gund (President Emerita of MoMA).

Andrew Hill (Lighting Designer) has worked with Basil Twist on *Symphonie Fantastique* at HERE and around the world, Ottorino Respighi's *La bella*

dormente nel bosco at the Spoleto Festival USA and Lincoln Center Festival and *Petrushka* at Lincoln Center. Other designs include GAle GAtes et al's *So Long Ago I Can't Remember*, Len Jenkin's *Margo Veil* and *Like I Say* at the Flea Theater, Big Dance Theater's *Shunkin* at Jacob's Pillow and The Kitchen and the Alexander Archipenko exhibit at The Ukrainian Museum.

Neelam Vaswani (Production Stage Manager) originally from Atlanta, GA, has lived in NYC for the past 24 years working as a Director of Production, Production Manager and Production Stage Manager in live events, theatre, film festivals and academia. She spent 7 years at Sarah Lawrence College as the Director of Production and faculty in Stage Management and has also taught production at MMC. She is currently the Director of Production for Tribeca Film Festival and Event Manager for Brooklyn Botanic Garden's *Lightscape*. Neelam's work in the theater has taken her all over the US and the globe to places like France, Stockholm, Edinburgh and Singapore. She has worked on the majority of Basil Twist's repertoire, including *Arias With A Twist*, *Master Peter's Puppet Show*, *Petrushka*, *Seafoam Sleepwalk*, *La bella dormente nel bosco* and *Dogugaeshi* – which happens to be her favorite of all Basil's repertoire, so working on this 20th anniversary production is very special and close to her heart.

Basil Twist extends his deep thanks to the following individuals and organizations who assisted him greatly in his research and development for the piece: Jane Marie Law, Michiko Ueno Herr, Ralph Samuelson, Georg Kochi, The Kyoto Arts Center, Mariko Kojima, The National Bunraku Theatre, Sakashu Village Theater, Kawamata Village Theater, Mr. Naozumi Yokoyama (Kawamata City Board of Education), Bando Sentaro, Mitsuyo Matsuyama and Mr. Umazume (Awaji Puppet Theater), Kimi Yamada, Prof. Nobuko Shinohara (University of Shikoku), Mr. Shibahara (Inukai Village Theater Preservant Society), Awaji Puppet Museum, Naori Ishikawa, Toru Koyumada, Sean Ellwood, Ruby Lerner, Bill and Lynne Twist, Chie Otsuka, Amanda Frou, Oliver Dalzell, Laetitia Hussain, Kevin Taylor, Jessica Gengsley and Philippe Rodriguez Jorda.

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— Followed by a Gallery Exhibition opening reception

Friday, Oct. 4 at 7:30 pm

— Followed by an artist Q&A

Saturday, Oct. 5 at 3 pm and 7:30 pm

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Thursday, Nov. 7 at 7:30 pm

Friday, Nov. 8 at 7:30 pm

— Followed by an artist Q&A

Saturday, Nov. 9 at 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm

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— Followed by an artist Q&A

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Yuihiro Tamura, *Invisible Hands*, 2022.
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Bunraku Backstage

Alongside the live bunraku performances held at Japan Society this fall, *Bunraku Backstage* offers a rare glimpse behind the scenes of the theater. Showcasing actual working puppets, props, instruments, and costumes on loan from the National Bunraku Theatre, Osaka, this exhibition unveils the collaboration that goes into staging a bunraku production. Unexpected bunraku-inspired multimedia works by contemporary artists explore bunraku's ongoing inspiration and influence.

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