

Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at The University of Chicago
and the Chicago Puppet Fest present

Basil Twist:

Dogugaeshi

US/New York

January 26-29, 2023, Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts

PRODUCTION CREDITS

With musical direction and live shamisen music by Yoko Reikano Kimura

Musician	<i>Yumiko Tanaka</i>
Direction	<i>Basil Twist</i>
Musical Direction and Sound Design	<i>Yumiko Tanaka</i>
Sound Design and Engineering	<i>Greg Duffin</i>
Projection design	<i>Peter Flaherty</i>
Lighting Design	<i>Andrew Hill</i>
Associate Lighting Designer	<i>Ayumu "Poe" Saegusa</i>
Technical Director	<i>David Ojala</i>
Production Stage Manager	<i>Neelam Vaswani</i>
Producer	<i>Barbara Busackino</i>

Performed without an intermission.

Basil Twist's Dogugaeshi was commissioned by **Japan Society** where it premiered 2004. It is 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 Asian Cultural Council, The Multi-Arts Production Fund, a program of Creative Capital, supported by The Rockefeller Foundation and The Jim Henson Foundation.

ABOUT DOGUGAESHI

Dogugaeshi 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 Asset by the Japanese government in 1998, holds a large annual performance festival in November, in which the final portion of the performance is dedicated to *dogugaeshi*.

ARTIST'S NOTE FROM BASIL TWIST

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 Japan Society and Creative Capital, who while creating the show, remained passionately committed to my insistence that this work be presented in intimate settings.

The sound of “*dogugaeshi*” has an exoticism for me that reflects the mystery in this art form. But the word is in fact a very utilitarian term for “set change,” and I found that the mystery of the *dogugaeshi* was lost upon some modern Japanese, who saw it as plain and boring: “We see those sliding screens on all the samurai soap operas.” It is, after all, to the Japanese, simply a door. To me, there is something gorgeous in it that is perhaps easier to see as an outsider: this sliding, gliding, horizontal game of suspense, concealment, revelation and transformation. I know I heard that same fascination in the voices of the old women in the mountains of Tokushima, who recalled the candlelit visions of the *dogugaeshi* from the distant past.

ARTIST'S NOTE FROM BASIL TWIST (CONT.)

Three years after the world premiere of my *Dogugaeshi* at Japan Society, the organization produced a four-city Japan tour for this work, as a special project to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Japan Society. The tour included Tokushima's annual Puppet Festival. I was nervous how my "re-invention" of their own traditions would or would not be accepted by the people living in the heart of *dogugaeshi*. The audience members included many people from Kawamata and Awaji whom I met on my research trip. They made a long trip to the city of Tokushima to see my *Dogugaeshi*, and their enthusiastic reception of the show remains one of the most moving and satisfying moments of my artistic life. The layers or intercultural richness of this project seemed to multiply tenfold. Many aspects of this trip to Japan contributed to the transformed and enriched show that you see on stage today.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

BASIL TWIST (Creator & Director/Puppeteer) Originally from San Francisco, Mr. Twist is a third-generation puppeteer. Since coming to New York over 23 years ago, Twist has garnered an international reputation as an inventive designer, director and performer. He creates iconic, visionary puppetry worlds with a remarkable range of style and scope appearing in intimate nightclubs to large orchestra halls. He is a sought-after collaborator for theater, ballet, opera, dance and film. His utterly unique approaches have been recognized with multiple awards and fellowships; critical acclaim and have furthered contemporary artistry and the technical craft of puppetry. Basil is known for revitalizing puppetry as a serious and sophisticated art form through his imaginative experiments with materials, techniques and uses in both narrative and abstract works. Basil's shows range from productions of classic stories to abstract visualizations of orchestral music and are informed by puppetry traditions from around the world. Basil received a degree from the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts de la Marionnette (ESNAM) in Charleville-Mézières, France, where he was trained in set design, costume design, dramaturgy, music and acting. Basil's original work includes "Symphonie Fantastique" (1998) which featured abstract materials in a tank of water to simulate imagery & characters to music. He contributed to the magic of Alfonso Cuarón's "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban," creating the Dementors. Highlights of his original shows include "Petrushka," "Dogugaeshi," "Rite of Spring," "Hansel & Gretel," "Arias with a Twist," "La Bella Dormente nel Bosco." and "Sisters Follies"; "A Streetcar named Desire" (La Comédie Française, also co-director), and the two operas "TITON et l'AURORE" Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville's *Titon et l'Aurore*- Basil Twist (stage director) William Christie (conductor) at The Opera Comique and, soon to be seen again at Versailles, "The Book of Mountains and Seas" by composer Huang Ruo and puppeteer/designer/director Basil Twist, Premieres in Copenhagen and New York City and at Koortiennale Amsterdam. His most recent work can be seen currently in "MY NEIGHBOR TOTORO" at The Barbican in London produced by The Royal Shakespeare Company. His honours include Obie, Henry Hewes and Doris Duke Performing awards, multiple UNIMA and Bessie Awards, a Guggenheim fellowship and a MacArthur Fellowship. Since 1999 he has served as Artistic director of the Dream Music Puppetry Program at HERE in New York City.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS (CONT.)

YOKO REIKANO KIMURA is one of the most captivating artistic voices of Japanese koto and shamisen, consistently praised by critics for her musical elegance and versatile repertoire. Based in New York and Japan, Kimura has concertized around the world, including prestigious venues such as the Warsaw Autumn Festival, Israel Festival, The University of Cambridge, John F. Kennedy Center, Kabuki-za and various World Heritage Sites. Kimura has worked with renowned artists such as Heiner Goebbels, Toshi Ichiyanagi, and Basil Twist. Highlights of her soloist performances include Daron Hagen's Koto Concerto: Genji with the Wintergreen Music Festival Orchestra conducted by Mei-Ann Chen, Kaito Nakahori's Japanese Footbridge for koto and chamber ensemble at New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall, Kin'ichi Nakanoshima's Shamisen Concerto at the National Olympic Memorial Center and James Nyoraku Schlefer's Concertante at the Round Top Music Festival. As an enthusiastic supporter of contemporary music, Kimura founded Duo YUMENO with cellist Hikaru Tamaki, and has commissioned numerous works by leading composers in the U.S. and Japan. The duo has received commissioning grants from Chamber Music America and Barlow Foundation, and awarded Kyoto Aoyama Barocksaal Award in 2015. In 2019, the duo held its 10th Anniversary Recital at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. The duo's new album, Heike Quinto will be released by Naxos in 2023. Kimura is the first Yamada-school performer to receive the First prize at the prestigious 10th Kenjun Memorial National Koto Competition in 2003. Following her studies at the Tokyo University of the Arts, she studied at Institute of Traditional Japanese Music, an affiliate of Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, where she was a faculty member until 2010. A recipient of scholarship from the Agency of Cultural Affairs of Japan, Kimura has studied with Kono Kameyama, who is considered the preeminent pupil of Kin'ichi Nakanoshima, Senko Yamabiko (Living National Treasure) and Akiko Nishigata. Website: yokoreikanokimura.com

YUMIKO TANAKA (Musical Direction/originating performer/musician) was born in Japan's Fukuoka Prefecture and received an MA in musicology from Tokyo University of the Arts and Music. In 1979, she began studying with gidayu artist Komanosuke Takemoto, and the following year became a disciple of Kinshi Nozawa, the gidayu shamisen master. Gidayu is one of the musical styles of narrative chanting accompanied by shamisen that can be found in Japanese traditional theater such as bunraku and kabuki. Since her debut in 1981 at the Honmoku-tei in Tokyo, Tanaka has been very active as a shamisen player and vocalist, not only in the world of traditional Japanese music, but also in contemporary music, opera, dance and musical theater. Her credits range from performing with major orchestras to working with pioneers in the world of jazz and experimental improvisation. Her career in avant-garde music includes collaborations with internationally renowned artists such as Otomo Yoshihide, Haino Keiji, Kazumi Watanabe, Elliott Sharp, John Russell, Carl Stone, Ned Rothenberg, John Zorn, Akira Sakata and Butch Morris. Tanaka has founded and participated in several contemporary music groups, including Pro Musica Nipponia, the Kitchen Drinkers, ITO and Ground-Zero.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS (CONT.)

YUMIKO TANAKA (cont.) She has soloed at international festivals and has performed in Heiner Goebbels' critically acclaimed spectacle *Hashirigaki*, which has toured all over the world including New York City's BAM. She has been awarded the Education Minister's Art Encouragement Prize for Young Musicians and a fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council. In 2009, Tanaka became a holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property as a member of the Gidayu-bushi Preservation Society.

KATE BREHM (Puppeteer/Video Associate) is a puppeteer and movement director professionally certified in the Margolis Method. She is currently a guest lecturer in Harvard's concentration in Theater, Dance & Media. Her company, *imnotlost*, produces puppet shows, plays, and interactive events in New York City. She recently directed *The Poacher* at Harvard TDM and *The Eye Which We Do Not Have* as *imnotlost* at Here Arts Center. Credits: Creator - *Things Fall Apart*, *Dark Space*, *The Poofs*; Puppeteer - *Dogugaeshi*, *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Rite of Spring*, *Petrushka*, *Arias With a Twist* (Basil Twist); Puppet movement direction - *Dorothy and the Prince of Oz* (Edwaard Liang), *Paper Hat Game* (Torry Bend).

DAVID OJALA (Puppeteer/Technical Director) is a theatrical artist living and working in Berlin with his Wife, Son and Dog. He is a performer, lighting designer, scenic designer and carpenter as well as the co technical director of the Freiszene theater TD Berlin over in Germany. Ojala has worked with Basil Twist on *Arias with a Twist*, *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Dogugaeshi*, and *The Rite of Spring* among other projects. Enjoy the show!

JESSICA SCOTT (puppeteer) is a visual artist, director, performer living in NYC. She has performed for most of Basil Twist's productions since 2003. Other credits include Mabou Mines *Peter and Wendy*, *Porco Morto*, and *La Divina Caricatura* for which she was the lead puppeteer and Puppetry Director, Julian Crouch's *The Devil and Mister Punch*, and Moises Kaufman's *El Gato Con Botas*. She made her Broadway debut puppeteering in Pee Wee's Playhouse, returning again to Broadway in 2012 as the Puppetry Associate for *Big Fish the Musical*. In 2014, Ms. Scott designed her first live-action puppetry film, *The Never Bell*, which premiered at BAM's Puppet's on Film Festival and also had the pleasure of directing the puppetry for Zvi Sahar's *Salt of the Earth* at BAM's NextWave Festival. Jessica is currently a HARP and Dream Music Puppetry resident artist at HERE Theater where she developed original her full-length piece *Ship of Fools* with support from The Jim Henson Foundation. www.jessicaantoniascott.net

ABOUT THE DESIGNERS

GREG DUFFIN (Sound Designer/Sound Engineer) is a sound designer, record producer, recording, concert, broadcast and corporate audio engineer. In addition to creating the original design with Yumiko Tanaka for *Dogugaeshi* in 2004, Duffin has designed the following shows for Basil Twist: *Symphonie Fantastique* (Off-Broadway), *Seafoam Sleepwalk* and *Arias with a Twist*. Duffin designed *Work and Screenplay* for the Flea Theater NYC, *The Wild Pear* for Theatre Arts Japan and *Flyers and Other Tales for Heels Hit First*, and was the sound advisor for *Vivien*. When he's not making audio magic, Greg likes to prepare gourmet meals for his family and protects his household with the help of his dog, cat and robot vacuum army.

PETER FLAHERTY (Projection Designer) is a director and video artist whose work has been shown in theaters, galleries and museums internationally. Recent directing: *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 Respighi's *La Bella Dormente Nel Bosco* at the Spoleto Festival USA and Lincoln Center Festival, *Petrushka* at Lincoln Center and *Dogugaeshi* at Japan Society. Other designs include 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*, the Alexander Archipenko exhibit at The Ukrainian Museum, the Henry Darger exhibit at the American Folk Art Museum and the Fiber Optic Gallery at the Glass Innovation Center.

AYUMU POE SAEGUSA (Associate Lighting Designer) began his career in 1996 in Tokyo. He moved to New York City in 2005 and became the resident lighting designer of HERE. His works include *The Book of Mountains and Seas* (2021 Copenhagen, 2022 NYC and Amsterdam), *Rite of Spring* (2013), *Arias with a Twist* (2008, 2011: Europe and U.S. tour) by Basil Twist, *Body Concert* (2020 Quebec, 2021 NYC, 2022, Montreal and US tour) by Kevin Augustine, and *The Eye Which We Do Not Have* (2013 and 2022 NYC) by Kate Brehm. He also works as a technical coordinator between the U.S. and Japan. www.Creativemachine.lighting

ABOUT THE DESIGNERS (CONT.)

NEELAM VASWANI (Production Stage Manager) is originally from Atlanta, GA. She has lived in NYC for the past 23 years working as a Director of Production, Production Manager and Production Stage Manager. In her many years in New York, she has worked on a wide range of shows, including Mabou Mine's Peter and Wendy, which was also featured in The International Edinburgh Festival; as well as Mabou Mines, Song for New York, by the late Ruth Maleczech; She has stage managed the majority of Basil Twist's repertoire including, Arias With A Twist, Master Peter's Puppet Show, Petrushka, Dogugaeshi and La Bella Dormente nel Bosco. Neelam's work in the theater has brought her all over the US as well as internationally to places such as France, Stockholm, Edinburgh and Singapore. Neelam was the Director of Production at Sarah Lawrence College and taught Stage Manager during her 7 years period with SLC. Most recently, Neelam served as the Event Manager for Lightscape at Brooklyn Botanic Garden for their holiday light show. And when not working in a dark theater, Neelam is the Project Manager for Emdee International, a textile company where she designs, builds and does all the visual merchandising for trade shows.