Performing Arts

FALL/WINTER SEASON

2020-2021
During this time of separation and isolation, the Fall 2020/Winter 2021 line-up focuses on defying geographical distance, collapsing the border between the physical and illusions, and bridging the past and present. Barcelona-based Japanese composer and high-tech sound artist Reiko Yamada redefines “pastime” through her avant-garde music accompanying Japanese silent films. Theater director Tara Ahmadinejad virtually invites the audience to participate in a play written by Satoko Ichihara. Star kyogen actor Mansai Nomura proves that this 650-year-old tradition is fertile soil for his creation of a new kyogen piece. Kuro Tanino’s experimental theater piece, The Dark Master—an innovative production utilizing VR headsets and live elements—is the perfect approach to enjoying theater in this social-distancing-ruled society.

Yoko Shioya
Artistic Director, Japan Society
Composer and high-tech sound artist Reiko Yamada (2015-16 Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and a 2016-17 artist-in-residence at IEM in Austria) uses the latest technologies in electronic and acoustic music “installation” to bridge the gap between time and space. For this commission, Yamada will perform on old, broken accordions, transforming their sounds with her novel ways of audio processing to accompany Japanese silent films from the early 20th century. She will redefine the concept of “pastimes” in her avant-garde scores set to antiquated images of sumo matches, train travel and animations.

This program will be available to purchase and watch through Nov. 4, following the premiere on Oct. 21.

NEW COMMISSION: ONLINE SILENT FILM WITH LIVE MUSIC

Reiko Yamada: Sound Installation on Silent Movies

Premiere: Wed., Oct. 21 at 8 pm EDT — Followed by a Live Q&A with Artist

Tickets: $15/$12 members

purchase now
This program is an adaptation of Japan Society’s annual Play Reading Series, now in its 15th installment.

Written by award-winning playwright/director Satoko Ichihara, Underground Fairy addresses themes of isolation, inclusiveness and the meaning of “community” as the play follows Yurieria, a half-fairy-half-human living in a fairy community. While Yurieria is accepted by the fairies, is their inclusiveness genuine if Yurieria is viewed as an outsider? Using a series of absurd vignettes, Ichihara questions societal norms and feelings of isolation and segregation.

Known for her experimental use of VR, NY-based director Tara Ahmadinejad will lead American actors in creating an innovative online presentation. Satoko Ichihara will take part in a live post-performance Q&A from Tokyo with Tara Ahmadinejad.

This program will be available to purchase and watch through Dec. 2, following the premiere on Nov. 18.

NEW COMMISSION: ONLINE CONTEMPORARY THEATER

Underground Fairy

By Satoko Ichihara
Translated by Aya Ogawa
Directed by Tara Ahmadinejad

Premiere: Wed., Nov. 18 at 8 pm EST — Followed by a Live Q&A with Artists

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This program will be available to purchase and watch through Dec. 2, following the premiere on Nov. 18.

TICKETS $15/$12 members

PURCHASE NOW
Mansai Nomura, the beloved traditional kyogen actor, will appear online to show his new kyogen creation—Kagami-kaja—accompanied by an additional piece from the traditional kyogen repertoire. Kagami-kaja begins as a lighthearted exchange between a servant and his reflection, but quickly takes a turn for the absurd when the servant finds himself trapped in the mirror. The program will be preceded by Mansai’s introduction of each piece. Streamed with English subtitles.

Tickets are free but registration is required. This program will be available to watch through Dec. 31, following the launch on Dec. 9.

登録方法についてはこちらをご覧ください。
Inspired by an indie manga, psychiatrist-turned-director/playwright Kuro Tanino creates an immersive and humorously dark experimental theater piece using a new style of “live performance.” The play addresses authoritarianism, detailing how a young backpacker’s identity is completely absorbed by the owner-chef of a local eatery called the Master. Tanino devises an unconventional presentation by utilizing VR headsets and the actual smells of cooking for a limited audience of 10-12 people per performance. Like the young backpacker in the Master’s virtual eatery, you will lose yourself as the border between reality and illusion collapses.

"The Dark Master"

Niwagekidan Penino
Written and Directed by Kuro Tanino

Jan. 13—17, 2021 (tbd)*

*Tickets and more information to be announced in late Nov. 2020. This onsite event will take place at Japan Society in accordance with the updated health recommendations pertaining to COVID-19.
From Here to There is Japan Society’s first online, visual arts commissioned project initiated as a testing ground for artistic practice, dialogue and production. As an urgent reflection upon radical shifts in society, this dynamic exhibition serves as a platform to reflect upon the current moment and respond to our collective resilience through artistic expression. Given the current flux of culture and life, From Here to There introduces new online commissions by Nobutaka Aozaki (New York), Hanako Murakami (Paris) and Aki Sasamoto (New York), three contemporary artists whose projects reckon with time, place and context.

Unfolding over the exhibition’s run of four months, each project takes its own direction and attempts to collapse the distinctions particularly resonant today: isolation/community; physical/digital; illusions of control/agency. An exhibition website consisting of videos, photographs, texts, ephemera and more provides living documentation for each in-progress project, with regular website updates accumulating new materials planned throughout the duration of the show. A series of programs includes performances, talks and demonstrations.

Virtual Opening: Artists’ Presentations + Discussion
Thurs., Sept. 24 at 5 pm
Tickets are free but registration is required

Bi-weekly Events with Artists

Individual tickets:
$10 per event
$8 members

Series bundle:
$40 for all events
$32 members

Visit Exhibition Website
Purchase Now
Become a Member

Receive benefits such as:

- Discounts on all ticketed events
- Discounts on Language & Education courses and workshops
- Waived service fees on member price tickets
- Discounts at Japan Society Partner organizations
- Invitations to members-only events and more!

JOIN NOW

Sustaining Members and above ($250+)
receive free access to ticketed events online

Performing Arts Season Support

Lead Sponsor:

Corporate Partner:

ORIX Stewardship Foundation

Major Support:
Doug and Teresa Peterson, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc., the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

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Performing Arts Program Support & Partners

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Underground Fairy is supported by The Saison Foundation and Doug and Teresa Peterson.

THE SAISON FOUNDATION

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Gallery Support

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Transportation assistance is provided by Japan Airlines, the exclusive Japanese airline sponsor of Gallery.
How to Purchase Tickets / Register

1. Use PURCHASE or REGISTER buttons found on each program page of this e-publication to reach our online box office.

2. If you are a Japan Society member, click the MEMBER LOGIN button in the upper right-hand corner of the online box office to receive:
   • 20% off general ticket price for Individual, Dual and Family levels.
   • Free access to online ticketed events for Sustaining ($250) level and above.

3. Select the number of tickets you would like to purchase.

4. Input your name, billing address, email address and payment details.

5. Click COMPLETE ORDER. A receipt will be sent to your email address with instructions on how to watch the program.

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