



Performing Arts

Spring Season 2022





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Japan Society presents

Contemporary Dance Festival: Japan + East Asia

Fri, Jan 14 at 7:30 pm

Sat, Jan 15 at 7:30 pm

Contemporary Dance Festival: Japan + East Asia is supported, in part, by Arts Council Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture), the Taipei Cultural Center in New York and The Harkness Foundation for Dance. *Complement* is supported, in part, by Arts Council Korea and made in collaboration with Korea Dance Abroad.



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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Happy New Year! We are delighted and proud that we have been able to present in-person, in-theater performances since last June.

Tonight's program was originally scheduled to take place in January 2021. However, when we decided in spring 2020 to postpone by a year because of the pandemic, nobody thought that a new COVID-19 variant would massively disrupt New York City's performing arts industry again in 2022. So our struggles are still ongoing—but we will prevail!

During the Christmas break and throughout New Year's, we have had many discussions about tonight's program with the featured artists, managers and producers from Japan, Korea and Taiwan—through emails, texts, phone calls and Zoom meetings—despite a 13-to-14-hour time difference. All the artists for tonight's program expressed their eagerness to come here to perform at Japan Society, notwithstanding the various risks and difficulties, as well as the long quarantine time required when they return to their home countries. We were extremely moved by their commitment and determined to implement stringent safety measures throughout their rehearsal period and performances.

However, there was one bullet that we had to bite. We had to give up on inviting the Japanese team because one of the artists' medical conditions prevented him from getting vaccinated. Since Omicron is highly contagious, we had no choice but to persuade them to stay home for their own safety, which is our utmost priority. Although this painful decision was made after Christmas, the Japanese team quickly focused on creating a high-quality video to present their work. I hope their video appearance will sufficiently convey their lively artistry on our large cinema screen.

Last but not least, I want to express our deep appreciation for everyone in tonight's audience. We thank you for coming to our theater to share in moments, space and the excitement of live performance with these dancers even in these uncertain times. It is the greatest reward for the international artists who courageously flew to New York City to meet you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yoko Shioya', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Yoko Shioya, *Artistic Director*

PROGRAM

A HUM SAN SUI (JAPAN) NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

CHOREOGRAPHERS/PERFORMERS: Kentaro Kujirai, Barabbas Okuyama
MUSIC: FUJIIIIIIIIIIITA
SET DESIGNER: T O J U
COSTUME DESIGNER: Mika Tominaga

Initially conceived as a solo piece, *A HUM SAN SUI* premiered in November 2018 at theatre Tokyo-Babylon. The artists staged *A HUM SAN SUI* as a duet in August 2019 at the prestigious 25th ChangMu Performing Arts Festival in Seoul.

Complement (KOREA) NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

CHOREOGRAPHERS/PERFORMERS: Minsun Choi and Jinan Kang (Choi x Kang Project), Taegyeong Kim, Heeji Seo
STAGE MANAGER: Eujin Jo
PRODUCER: Sin Ae Park

Choi x Kang Project's piece won the Jury Prize at the Yokohama Dance Collection Competition in 2018 and was invited to be performed at The Place in London, UK, and Flora Theater Festival in Olomouc, Czech Republic. In 2019, *Complement* was selected to be performed at STEP UP—a repertoire development project by Korea National Contemporary Dance Company—and premiered as a developed piece, titled *A Complement Set - Disappearing with an Impact*.

Touchdown (TAIWAN) NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

CHOREOGRAPHERS/PERFORMERS: Hao Cheng
DRAMATURGE: Yu-Chun Chen
LIGHTING DESIGNER: Ke-Chu Lai
SOUND DESIGNER: Chao-En Cheng
LIGHTING SUPERVISOR: Yi-Chung Chen

This solo performance premiered at and was commissioned by the National Theater & Concert Hall, Taipei, in October 2019.

PRE-SHOW PROGRAM

FreeSteps – NiNi (TAIWAN)

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

CHOREOGRAPHER: Wei-Chia Su

PERFORMER: NiNi (Yu-Ting Fang)

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Chia-Ming Liu

SOUND DESIGNER: Yannick Dauby

PRODUCER: Wen Huang

TOUR MANAGER: Nung Lin

Launched in 2013, choreographer Wei-Chia Su's ongoing *FreeSteps* project explores the relationship between contours, forms, movements, trajectories and characteristics.

FreeSteps – NiNi premiered in March 2019 at the Taiwan International Festival of Arts held at the National Theater & Concert Hall. That same year, this performer-centric and crowd-friendly piece was performed at National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts, Chiayi Dance Festival (Chiayi Performing Arts Center), One Dance Week (Boris Hristov House) and National Palace Museum, among others.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kentaro Kujirai (choreographer/dancer), born in 1980, Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, began studying butoh under Akira Kasai, one of the progenitors of butoh dance. Four years later, he was selected as the main dancer and eurythmist in Kasai's famous Tenshikan (Sant'Angelo) company, which led to many subsequent performance in local and international festivals. To further his career in butoh, he founded the dance unit CORBUS with his colleague at Tenshikan, Makoto Sadakata and later on, founded his own company KENTARO KUJIRAI Konpeito in 2015. His work has received awards such as the Newcomer Prize in the annual Dance Critics Awards in 2018, for *A HUM SAN SUI*, and the Miyagi Prefecture Art Encouragement Award Dance Section Newcomer Award in 2019.

Barabbas Okuyama (choreographer/dancer), in 2001, joined Dairakudakan (meaning "Great Camel Battleship"), the internationally known and legendary, large-scale butoh company founded and led by Akaji Maro. Aside from taking roles in all of Dairakudakan's main productions, he has choreographed and performed his own original works including *Sagram-Boy* (2009), *Crucifixion* (2013) and the solo piece *U*

TSU SHI MI (2016). In April 2019, Barabbas and fellow dancer Kentaro Kujirai started a project named KENTARO KUJIRAI & BARABBAS OKUYAMA, in which they staged their dance-duo work *Hi No Shi Du Ku*. Barabbas has performed in butoh and contemporary dance programs, and at several international dance festivals in South Korea, Hungary and other countries.

Minsun Choi (choreographer/dancer) is the co-director of Choi x Kang Project. She graduated from Yonsei University and received her master's degree from the Korea National University of Arts. She was a member of the National Contemporary Dance Company from 2011 to 2016.

Jinan Kang (choreographer/dancer) received his BA from Kyung Hee University. He was a member of the National Contemporary Dance Company from 2011 to 2015 and is currently co-director of the Choi x Kang Project.

Taegyong Kim (video director/performer) graduated from the Korea National University of Arts with a degree in Broadcasting and Video. She later joined the Choi x Kang Project. Notable works include *Complement: Inside and Outside* (2020), *Complement* at SPAF (2019), and *A Complement Set – Disappearing with an Impact* at Korea National Contemporary Dance company's *Step Up* (2019).

Heeji Seo (performer) graduated with a bachelor's degree in dance from Hansung University. Her main works include *Uncomfortable sound* (2021) by Yelim Kim and *Challengers* (2021) by Project S (Suksoon Jung).

Eunjin Jo (stage manager) is a production stage director. Notable works include the Korea National Contemporary Dance Company's *Step Up* as well as their 10th Anniversary Festival *Let's Be Friendly*, the Ahn Ae-soon Project's *Time Square*, the Choi x Kang project's *Complement: Inside and Outside*, and the opening performance of the Tongyeong International Music Festival.

Sin Ae Park (producer) is an international producer and founder of Korea Dance Abroad, who has been producing and programming numerous worldwide programs.

She is an artistic director of international solo dance festival *Monotanz Seoul* and curator of Paris *S.O.U.M* Festival international de danse.

Korea Dance Abroad (KDA) is a nonprofit organization that aims to support Korean dance artists by introducing them to international audiences. KDA has been presenting unique and outstanding dance worldwide since 2014. KDA's efforts to promote Korean dance are supported by collaborative cultural exchange programs.

Hao Cheng (choreographer/dancer) graduated with a BS in Mathematics and an MFA in Dance Choreography. His works frequently use the laws of physics as a basis and from there extend into the concept of the body's movement, building upon it with finessed analysis and deconstruction as emotional cornerstones of his creations. He has performed with Mark Dendy and Irish choreographer Emma Martin in 2016. Cheng collaborated with Xavier Le Roy on *Retrospective* at the Taipei Biennial. He also performed with the Belgian performance group Needcompany at the 2017 TIFA performance of *The Time Between Two Mistakes*. In 2019, he created his solo dance *Touchdown*; later, in 2021, the digital dance film version was part of the online Edinburgh Festival Fringe and won the 2021 Infallibles Award for Dance. Some of his major works include *Conditions of Momentum*, *The Sum of All Resistance*, *Mercury Conjecture* and *Beyond the Peak*.

Incandescence Dance was established in 2019 by choreographer Hao Cheng in Taiwan. His company creates contemporary dance works that explore the poetry of motion with scientific and mathematical thinking. Science and art are often seen as two cultures. Yet for founder Hao Cheng, the pursuit of science and the pursuit of art both stem from his curiosity towards the world. That curiosity is the drive behind all human activities. Beyond the complicated language of physics and mathematics, the poetry of science can be as accessible and enjoyable as art, and Incandescence Dance wishes to reveal that through dance.

Wei-Chia Su (choreographer), born in Kaohsiung, co-founded HORSE in 2004. His choreographies and collaborations include the group-created work *Velocity*, a winner of the 6th Taishin Arts Awards; the autobiographical piece *2 Men*, a collaboration with Wu-kang Chen; and the First Prize winner and Audiences' Choice winner of the 2013 Kurt-Jooss-Preis. In 2013, he started the *FreeSteps* project which focuses on exploring the deepest possibilities of the performers' physical abilities. A performance at Les Hivernales - CDCN d'Avignon in 2016 was described as "a succession of shocks that drive the imagination into obscure and delicious depths." In recent years, Wei-Chia enjoys using his findings from *FreeSteps* for public art education and dance promotions.

NiNi (dancer), also known as Yu-Ting Fang, trained in contemporary dance. She started her professional dancing career with Cloud Gate and participated in such Lin Hwai-Min productions as *Portrait Of The Families*, *How Can I Live on Without You* and *Nine Songs*. In 2015, she joined HORSE as a dancer and rehearsal director, and collaborated intensively with Wu-Kang Chen and Shu-Yi Chou in their choreographies. Currently, NiNi is the main dancer in productions of Wei-Chia Su's *FreeSteps* series. The premier of *FreeSteps – NiNi* at the Taiwan International Festival of Arts, held at the National Theater & Concert Hall, was selected as a finalist for the 18th Taishin Arts Awards.

HORSE Dance Company's logo is a Chinese character made of three horses, indicating the troupe's strong motivation and explosive energy. Founded in December 2004, HORSE has established a distinctive profile with delicate physical movements and unrestricted creativities. The unique and collaborative style brings the current generation beyond the standard frame of stage performances. The artistic policy of HORSE is to provide a platform for the creative expression of Taiwan's dance artists. By regularly staging works of Taiwanese choreographers as well as commissioning international artists to create pieces for the company, HORSE aims to create a fertile ground for mutual stimulation and to establish a repertoire of changeable, multifaceted and diverse styles.

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