



## **An Evening of Japanese Animals, Angels, Gods and Puppets**

Brought to you by Colleen Lanki of TomoeArts Vancouver and Laurence Kominz and students of Portland State University

Phillip T. Young Recital Hall  
University of Victoria  
September 22, 2018  
7:00 pm



## 「蟹山伏」 *The Mountain Wizard and the Crab*, a kyōgen play

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Traveling east of Kyoto, a boastful mountain wizard and his disciple encounter a grotesque creature while crossing Crab Marsh. It is a crab monster, and it will test the wizard's magic powers to the limit.

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Wizard                  | <b>Laurence Kominz</b> |
| Porter                  | <b>Laura Dooley</b>    |
| Crab Spirit             | <b>Katt Lemmon</b>     |
| Koken (stage assistant) | <b>Hannah Bell</b>     |

## 「海士」 *Ama / The Fisher*

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(Nihon buyō, Gidayu Music. Choreography by Fujima Yūko 藤間由子)

Based on the noh play of the same title, *Ama* is about a diver who retrieved a special jewel from the underwater palace of the Dragon King. She had a son with a Minister of State from the capital, who requested that she dive to rescue the precious object. She agreed on condition that he make their son his sole heir, and rescued the jewel by sacrificing her own life. Her son, now himself a Minister of State, knows nothing about who his mother was, but has heard she died at Shidō Bay. He travels there and meets a mysterious woman, who recounts the story, ultimately revealing that she is the ghost of his mother. The section danced here is the woman's final story, and is part of a twenty-five minute classical dance-play.

Ghost of the Mother (a fisherwoman) **Colleen Lanki (Fujima Sayū)**

**Text of the *Gidayu*** (translated by David Crandall)

The diver told the minister, "I'll retrieve the jewel, but only if you promise to make our son your heir. My life is as fleeting as the dew; it's no great loss to cast it aside for the sake of my child.

"Tying a long rope to my waist, I told the people gathered there:

'Hold the rope—I'll shake it when I have the jewel. Promise me you'll pull me up with all your strength.' Thus assured, I drew a single, sharpened blade—

"And plunged into the water toward the cold abyss  
Thrusting forward, through the pluming waves and mist  
Far out in the offing where ocean touches sky  
Boundless, the surge gave way then closed behind me  
I looked down, but found no sign of bottom or edge  
Utterly alone, I felt the void encompass me  
This was a quest beyond the reach of flesh and bone  
Only a miracle could make the jewel mine

"Diving deep, I came at last to the Dragon Gate,  
Peered inside the courtyard crowned by a great tower  
Soaring sixty fathoms high, glittering with gems  
Flowers and incense were placed in offering  
Wreathed around the gleaming spire that held the jewel I sought  
Eight dragon kings arrayed themselves in ranks  
Cruel sharks and other deadly creatures of the sea  
Kept ceaseless watch; I knew I'd never leave alive

"My heart ached with tender longing  
My thoughts fled in blank despair to my beloved home  
Far beyond the waves that now encircled me  
There my son awaited me  
And his father, the noble minister of state

Sweet faces I would never see again  
Our final parting left my soul in tatters

“Holding back my tears, I stood with grim resolve  
And joined my hands together in humble supplication:  
‘Hear me, Bodhisattva Kannon of Shidoji!  
Grant me your holy strength to do the task that I must do.’  
Reverently, I touched the sacred sword of mercy to my brow  
And burst into the Dragon Palace in swift attack  
The guardians scattered in alarm, giving me my chance  
Rushing in, I stole the jewel and quickly fled  
The dragon kings raged after me in furious pursuit  
But I had devised a desperate plan  
I reversed my grip and turned the blade upon myself  
Gashed the flesh beneath my breast and pushed the jewel in  
I cast the sword aside and lay as still as death  
I knew no palace denizen could tolerate a corpse  
No glaring sea beast dared approach my stricken body  
Darkness seeped into my eyes as I shook the rope  
Sending a furtive signal to those awaiting me above  
With hope and joy they kept their word and drew me up  
In a crimson flash of foam...

“With jewel in hand the minister brought peace to all the land. The child was named Fusazaki, a namesake of this bay. I indeed am the mother you seek.”

Voice trailing, the diver fades from view, her face a ghostly wavering as she sinks beneath the sea.

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## INTERMISSION

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「神鳴」 ***The Thunder God, a kyōgen play***

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Fleeing his reputation for incompetence in Kyoto, a quack doctor is traveling eastward to set up practice in the provinces. Along the way, he encounters a violent thunderstorm ... and what is even more alarming, the Thunder God himself! The Thunder God has fallen from the sky, injured his hip, and demands medical attention. The only treatment possible on the road is acupuncture, and to treat a god the doctor has to use *really big needles!*

|             |                        |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Doctor      | <b>Katt Lemmon</b>     |
| Thunder God | <b>Rei Barnes</b>      |
| Chorus      | <b>Laurence Kominz</b> |

「羽衣」 ***Hagoromo / The Celestial Robe, nō shimai – kiri***

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This is the *kiri*, or closing dance from the noh play *Hagoromo*. The shite (main character) is a Celestial Being/Angel who came to earth and took off her feathered robe to bathe. While in the water, a fisherman stole her robe, refusing to return it until she showed him the dances of the heavens. She promises, he returns the garment, and she dances in joy before flying off above Mount Fuji and back to her home—teaching him a lesson about human mistrust and deceit in the process. In this short dance, she is giving gifts to the earth and soaring above the clouds.

|           |                        |
|-----------|------------------------|
| The Angel | <b>Colleen Lanki</b>   |
| Chorus    | <b>Laurence Kominz</b> |

## 「櫓のお七」 *Oshichi at the Firetower, a kabuki dance play*

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It is a snowy night, and Oshichi is desperate to visit and rescue her lover, Kichisa. But the neighborhood barrier gates in the city of Edo are closed at night and she has no right to pass through. If fire alarms sound, the gates will open to allow free passage to fire brigades and refugees. But arson is a capital offense. This dance derives from a *bunraku* play and the first part is performed in *ningyō-buri*, puppet imitation style.

|            |                                   |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Oshichi    | <b>Devon Duncan</b>               |
| Puppeteers | <b>Rei Barnes, Laura Dooley</b>   |
| Gidayu     | <b>Laurence Kominz</b>            |
| Shamisen   | <b>Mitch Iimori</b>               |
| Tsuke      | <b>Hannah Bell</b>                |
| Kurokko    | <b>Hannah Allin, Kieran Dunch</b> |

### Featured performers

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**Laurence Kominz** is Professor of Japanese literature, theatre and film at Portland State University. His research specialty is Japanese drama, and he has taken performance lessons in Japan in noh, kyōgen, kabuki and gidayu bushi. He also directs kyōgen and kabuki plays in English, the most recent being productions of *Chūshingura* (2016) and Izumi Kyōka's *The Castle Tower* (2017).

**Colleen Lanki** is a performer, director, choreographer, educator, and lover of total theatre. She was based in Tokyo for many years studying Nihon buyō (Japanese classical dance) and noh, and working in contemporary theatre. She is the Artistic Director of

TomoeArts, a company that specializes in Japanese performing arts and the creation of new dance-theatre works. She is currently working on her PhD at the University of British Columbia researching avant-garde playwright and theatre creator Kishida Rio. Recent projects: performing in Kishida's *Four Letters* in Tokyo; directing *Kayoi Komachi*, a new chamber opera combining noh and classical music; and creating/performing the interdisciplinary performance piece *Weaver Woman*. ([www.colleenlanki.com](http://www.colleenlanki.com); [www.tomoearts.org](http://www.tomoearts.org))

**Michinobu "Mitch" Iimori**, aka "Mitch the Ultimate Multi-instrumentalist" was born in Kanagawa, Japan. He received a BM in Oboe Performance and minor in Chinese from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester in 1993.

Since 1997, he has lived in Oregon, practicing as an active performer and teacher in various instruments and musical styles. He has performed with the Oregon Symphony, Salem Chamber Orchestra, Third Angle, Friends of Rain Contemporary Music Ensemble, Linfield Chamber Orchestra, Willamette Master Chorus, among others. He also appears in the orchestra pit of many local musical productions. With the Oregon Symphony, he has appeared with the Hammered Dulcimer and the Erhu, as well as oboe and English Horn.

## Crew

Costume Designer and Chief Dresser **Toshimi Tanaka**

Costume Construction **Felicia Cantu, Laura Dooley, Honomi Yokoi**

Wig Construction **Asami Samoto, Yasuyo Strassmeier**

Mask Construction **Rebecca Teele**

Sign Calligraphy **Sora Shodo**

Music **Mitch Iimori**

# The Nonhuman

in Japanese Culture and Society:  
Spirits, Animals, Technology

日本の社会および文化における「人外」  
という概念: 霊・動物・テクノロジー



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Cover image: Wind God (detail), by Minagawa Kien (1734-1807), a student of Maruyama Ōkyō