

# TOMOKI

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Dance, Object theatre  
Tsurukam Company



*« What do we mean by a being, a soul?*

*Sometimes I wonder...*

*I think of my brother, who passed away 23 years ago.*

*He was only 22...*

*He disappeared from our family so suddenly,*

*He used to say “when a man gets to the end of his path, he has to go.”*

*Why did he have to leave so soon ?*

*Perhaps his soul was destined to live in some other way ?...*

*My brother has always been with me in my dreams, but since the birth of my child, He is no longer there. I believe he is present, within us...*

*Since Tomoki came into our lives, it has become clear to me why my family is so precious. It was my family who brought me into this world, and it is they who keep me going through my life today.*

*For my parents, Tomoki is like the return of their lost son. Naturally they are very happy to see him...*

*I don't know where we begin...*

*For me, life and death are inseparable.*

*Life can be so fleeting, and yet so wonderful... »*

*« Mother, you will stay with me for eternity ...*

*These were my brother's last words to his mother. »*

# TOMOKI

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Original concept: Kaori Suzuki

Genre: Dance, Object theatre

Performers: Kaori Suzuki & Sébastien Vuillot

Sound: Franck Berthoux

Lighting design: Romain Le Gall

Photography: Noémie Geron, Compagnie Tsurukam

*TOMOKI* - Our son's Japanese name is Tomoki, meaning wisdom and a noble heart, here it refers to a project which explores the soul, existence, nature, the cycle of life, the sacred, connection, heritage, transmission.. almost like a film about someone's life. Our art is intimately linked to the poetry of existence, to man's life, and to his death. How does he evolve, through the meetings and challenges of this mystical journey? What is it that makes life so special, so beautiful, and violent? How, at the end of this earthly adventure do we continue into other forms, other lives... Is there a border, a dividing line between life and death?...

No, We don't think so.

TOMOKI is both a philosophical and a spiritual investigation into the continuum of life and death.

Every emotion, movement, material, object, sound, light, space, and time, has its place. They co-relate, each having its own very specific place and purpose in a story or a lifetime.

## RESIDENCIES

- August 2011 - Théâtre aux Mains Nues (TMN)
- January / April 2012 - L'Espace Arta
- 2012 - Compagnie Beau Geste en Main
- from 23 to 30 may 2013 and from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4 July 2013 - TMN

## DATES

- « Traverses de juin » in TMN - Théâtre Aux Mains Nues, 7 square des cardeurs, 75020 Paris – June 30<sup>th</sup> 2012.
- July 4<sup>th</sup> 2013 in TMN
- International Festival of Mont Laurier (Quebec), September 8<sup>th</sup> 2013
- "Petit Festival de Théâtre" 2014 of Dubrovnik (Croatia), from 20 to 29 June 2014

# STAGE SETS

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## **A CENTRAL MIRROR: PLACE OF LIFE, FROM ITS BEGINNING TO ITS END.**

The mirror is always present throughout the piece. Its symbolic and narrative significance changes throughout the piece, as different lighting states are projected onto its surface.

In Buddhism, the mirror symbolizes wisdom and the skill of understanding, one of the most important qualities.

It symbolizes a passage, a door, or a frontier leading us to another world.

It is also the “reflective mirror”: the discovery of the self. It is a source of surprise and curiosity, sentiments such as empathy, pride, shame, and their opposites.

The mirror is also “Narcissis’s friend”: it changes mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors. Socially, it isolates a person, blinding them with their own reflection, or their perception of it.

It is also often associated with truth, as well as the distortion of truth.

## **HARNESS : PLACE OF THE IMMATERIAL BEING**

The definition of a harness is an object to stabilize and protect a person. It is a cord to which a person can attach themselves, a lifeline.

The choice of the harness is critical to the piece, the cord represents many things, the umbilical cord, and the verticality of the mind and/or of thought. The person, or the being, is weightless, suggesting almost an absence of material being. The verticality of the being in contrast with horizontality of the mirror...

...

## **JAPANESE PARASOLS: THE MEETINGS AND METAMORPHOSES OF A LIFETIME.**

The parasol is a symbol of sovereignty in Asia.

The parasol is one of the auspicious signs, it protects a person from suffering.

For us it determines the identity, the clothing, the attire of the earthly being.

## **KRAFT PAPER – MOUNTAINS, PAPER TSUNAMIS, DEATH AND MATRIX.**

Kraft paper (literally in German: strong paper). This material, surprising as it may seem for paper, is very sturdy and has an amazing capacity for metamorphosis.

Kraft paper will hold its shape once formed. A loud cracking noise accompanies its internal deformation: here, it represents nature, unchanging, generous, powerful and dangerous, and most importantly, the womb of the cycle of rebirth.

## **PUPPETRY: CONTINUITY.**

A puppet is a lifeless object, which has the remarkable capacity to come to life as soon as it is in movement. It represents the spirit, which animates matter. As an art form, it is common to all civilizations, and its sacred character is perennial. The puppet imposes its unreality as reality, and like man, it has a very particular relation to verticality. In this context this element represents rebirth.



# PHYSICAL STATES

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**WATER** : in its various forms. An element which is both wet, cold and binds the organism.

**AIR** : whose essential characteristic is mobility, here manifests itself as the vital breath within the body.

**FIRE** : perceived as light and heat, is a form of radiance, spreading throughout the body.

**EARTH** : present in the form of bones and muscles, the solid framework of the body.

# MUSIQUE

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## First part

*Gagaku, is sacred music, the spirit of Japanese culture.*

*Its rhythm, its suspensions, tensions, and sounds, help us to feel the force of nature and of the spirit.*

**Gagaku** : It is similar to other Japanese art forms such as the Chado or the Kyudo, which involve working towards self-control and practising techniques of spiritual exploration. Participants have no margin for improvisation or interpretation, every element is fixed: this is what gives a ritual or ceremonial character to the performances.

When all of the sounds are united, cosmos can be heard, imagined, in the flickering candle of time (Sounds of Antiquity, Elegance enduring).

The instruments most commonly associated with Gagaku are the Sho, the hichiriki and the ryuteki.



Sho..the light which pierces through the heavens  
Ryuteki... The dragon which ascends to dance in the sky  
Hichiriki...The voices echoing on the Earth

## Second part

*A space for life, words and body ...bossa nova*

*A music so soft, rounded and sensitive.*

*This music brings us calmness, protection and replenishment.*

*It is popular. Its words speak of the normal lives of normal people, simply and with an open heart. Full of games, humour, love, seduction, doubt, sensitivity, reserve, gentleness, pain, life, the music helps us to enjoy the moment.*

**Bossa nova** : the name comes from the Portuguese bossa, meaning in the first instance bruise or bump, but also used to mean 'aptitude' or 'vocation', in this case it loosely translates as 'new trend'.

## Third part

*A space for nature and the soul with Kitaro*

*It speaks of sentiment and nostalgia.*

*In this scene the body is no longer of importance.*

*We feel what's happening in the air.*

*Then, through the strong tribal rhythms, we look at the transition, the moment when nature takes back its dues, its body...*

**Kitaro** : in terms of his compositions, one of his goals was to unite popular music (Japanese rock) and traditional music. Nature is very present in his music.

## Epilogue

*The Rebirth*

*It's simply a wish: "hoping for desires to come true"*

*Today everything moves fast, we force ourselves to get somewhere...*

*It's difficult to stop and to allow oneself to be alone in the face of nature, simply to feel the forces of life flowing.*

**Louis Armstrong** : his voice reminds us that man has to live according to his heart and soul.



# TEAM

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## Kaori Suzuki

She completed her classical training in Singapore ( Royal Academy of Dance method) and in Japan at the Tokyo Ballet school and with Saboro Yokose.

From 1989 to 1996, she worked in Japan as a soloist performing classical repertoire and collaborating with various Japanese choreographers, as well as teaching ballet.

Since 1997, she has lived in Paris and has worked with: Matthew Hawkins at the Royal Ballet, London in "Angle and Exile" (back stage project), Carlotta Ikeda in "Rite of Spring" (buto), Karry Kamal Karry in "Siamois" and Jacky Auvray in "parenthèse" and "d'x". She choreographed and performed in Philippe Dormoy and Valerie Jolly's "Silence" (musical theatre). She also worked with the Cie Remue et Ménagement (street theatre). This year she will be working on "On Air" a collaboration between the Shayela company and the band the "Guns of Brixton".

She danced at the Paris Opera and the Theare du Chatelet in operas directed by Ennosuke 3, Yannis Kokkos, La fure del baus, Micha Van Hoecke and Gilbert Deflo.

She performed in Emir Kusturica's "le temps des gitans", an opera/rock adaptation of his film, an acrobatic duet intended to bring a surrealist element to the drama.

Together with Sébastien Vuillot, she founded the company Tsurukam and has participated in the elaboration ..and performance all of the companies pieces.

## Sébastien Vuillot

He studied dance with Françoise Raquin (Jazz) and Hélène Sadovska (ballet), and theatre with Yves Carlevaris. It was Roger Bergerin who gave him a sense of independence and originality by introducing him to tap and musical comedy. He continued to develop his artistic style alongside Yano Yatrvides (contemporary dance) and Jaime Cortes (neutral mask). It was thanks to Alain Recoing (master of hand-puppets) and Christian Remer that he discovered the powerful dramatic art of puppetry.

He went on to create Kagome, and then in October 2010, to make Vilbrequin, a collaboration with JP Desrousseaux (a puppet parody based on the myth of Don Juan) which was performed as part of the Festival Again at the Theatre aux Mains Nues.

He continued his professional development, doing courses on Kabuki and No theatre with Master Kanze and Master Yamamoto, and on the theatricality of mouvement with Claire Hegen and Yves Marc. In 2009, he travelled to Nagano to study the work of Hoichi Okamoto (Dondoro theatre). In 2010 he learnt about lighting design with JP Lescot, and in March 2011, was able to learn from Nomura Mansai (Grand Master of Kyogen Theatre) on one of his rare visits to Paris.





For several years, he has been teaching puppetry, assisting Alain Recoing with his basic puppetry classes at the Theatre aux Mains Nues, as well as teaching actors at the Atelier-Theatre d'Asnières, and more recently at the "Loup qui Zozotte" school in Chauvigny (86).

Together with Kaori Suzuki, he founded the company Tsurukam and has participated in the elaboration and performance all of the companies pieces.

## Franck Berthoux

Although he has worked in the world of professional theatre for more than 10 years, Franck Berthoux has not followed the typical career of a typical Sound Engineer.

He trained on the job, working in various public structures (La Maison de Danse and Les Substances in Lyon). He set up his own recording studio in 1998 (Mix'Up) and used it as his laboratory.

He worked with a number of companies either as a technician, or sound designer (Emmanuel Meirieu, David Moccoelin) before deciding to establish himself as a freelance artist, joining the team at the Grame.

As a musician he played with the group Jade, they produced, recorded and mixed "Fresh Air," their first EP in 2004, followed by the album "Analogic" in 2006.

He has collaborated with a number of artists taking charge of the sound for their productions.

In 2008, he moved to Paris. He continues to work in both Lyon and Paris, on projects ranging from Live theatre, to contemporary music, sound illustration for multimedia supports.

## Romain Le Gall

Having completed his diploma as a lighting technician at the DMA in Nantes, Romain Le Gall worked with a variety of companies in the region of Nantes (La Lune Rousse, Cie Théâtre du Loup company, Les Aphoristes, Cie Théâtre Cabine company, L'Eternel Ephémère) before joining the technical team at the Théâtre aux Mains Nues, a theatre dedicated to the art of Puppetry, in Paris in 2010.



# TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

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## Staging

Minimum Stage area 8m x 6m

Central Mirror 2,40m x 2,40m

Harness suspended centre stage (minimum height 4m)

Hanging Japanese Parasols ( 2 fixtures for pullies on the grill, and three fixtures off-stage to attach ropes)

The Kraft Paper backdrop

Requires full blackout conditions.

## Sound

DVD player with STAND, amplifier, four speakers (2 STAGE 2 PUBLIC?), Mixing Table

## Lighting

3 PAR CP61

3 PAR CP62

2 PAR 16 25°

1 Zoom profile 650W 18°/32°

6 Mini Zoom profile

1 PC 1KW

1 Wind-up Stand

1 Floor Stand

4h for the work light, 4h to run through and technical rehearsal.

**DURATION : 45 MINUTES**

## CONTACT

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# TSURUKAM COMPANY

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## OCTOBER 2004

Founding of the **Tsurukam company** by Kaori Suzuki and Sébastien Vuillot. Their goals are to raise audience awareness about cultural exchange, and to take advantage of their different artistic talents in the creation of their theatrical works.

## JANVIER 2006 : **KAGOME**

An adaptation of a Japanese legend portrayed through dance, puppetry and mask work. The piece was performed in 2006 in the festival IN du mondial des théâtres de marionnettes in Charleville-Mézières, the festival de Gennevilliers, the festival de Hyères les Palmiers, the festival de l'association franco-japonaise de Bertin-Poirée, at the Solstice e la marionnette de Belfort and the Champs de la Marionnette in Essonne.

## NOVEMBRE 2007 : **SATORI**

A puppet theatre work based on Shakespeare's King Lear. Commissioned by the Mairie d'Argenteuil for the opening of K.LEAR by Emmanuel Labory (théâtre des malentendants). A full-length version is planned.

## OCTOBRE 2011 : **NINGYO**

1st prize Bertin-Poirée. Ningyo is an exploration into the transitional zones. The ability to bring an object to life or to end its life is something very special in the art of puppetry.

## 2011-2012 : **TOMOKI**.

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This solo includes elements of aerial choreography (suspended from a harness), dance, the use of props (Japanese parasols) and elements such as light and paper, as well as puppetry. There is no text but the character is accompanied by a complex soundscape (music, songs and sound effects).

# CONTACTS

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