

Peterborough New Dance presents

Denise Fujiwara

Sumida River



February 18, 2006
Market Hall Performing Arts Centre
Peterborough ON

Sumida River

Choreography	Natsu Nakajima
Performer	Denise Fujiwara
Costume Design	Natsu Nakajima, Michiko Nakamura, Cheryl Lalonde
Lighting Design	Roelof Peter Snippe
Composers	Soga Masaru, Junko Handa, Makoto Sato, Jean Michel Jarre, Mum
Music Compilation	Natsu Nakajima
Set Design	Michiko Nakamura
Set Construction	Cheryl Lalonde
Rehearsal Director	Elizabeth Langley
Technical Director	Roelof Peter Snippe
Stage Manager	Cheryl Lalonde

Sumida River premiered at the Canada Dance Festival, National Arts Centre, Ottawa, June 19, 1994. It was created with assistance from the National Association of Japanese Canadians, the Japan Foundation, the Ontario Arts Council and The Canada Council for the Arts.

On Butoh and Sumida River

"Butoh is one of the major developments in contemporary dance in the latter half of the 20th century. It has revolutionized the way people view what dance is, and can be. Originating in Japan in the turbulent early 1960's, butoh was an attempt to create new forms of movement and expression." Jean Viala, *Butoh, Shades of Darkness*

Natsu Nakajima was a protégé of both of the great founders of Butoh, Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno, and is a master in her own right. My experience of working with her was both terrifying and enlightening. Western contemporary dance values line, form, technique and technical virtuosity, dynamics, filling space, sending energy out to the audience and charismatic performance. These are the values of my early training. While Butoh may at times possess some of the above qualities, it values none of them. Rather it values the inner life of the dance and dancer, the embodiment of the irrational, the expansion and contraction of time/space, the absence of technical virtuosity and the obliteration of the self.

Natsu Nakajima's choreography is a contemporary interpretation of the renowned 15th century Noh play Sumidagawa by Motomasa. Sumidagawa is the universal story of the tragedy of a mother who has lost her child and the difficult inner journey of a woman. The choreographer has not attempted to narrate the story but rather, has sought to approach the core of the dance in a contemporary way through image and metaphor.

- Denise Fujiwara, January 31, 2005

Background on the original Noh play - *Sumidagawa*

Contemporary urban planning in Tokyo ensures that the Sumida River still threads its way through the great city as part of a revived waterway system. In springtime you can enjoy a magnificent boat ride along that river, cherry trees in bloom on both banks near Asakusa.

Spring is the season of the noh play, *Sumidagawa*, written in the early fifteenth century. For its Japanese audiences, the play is so well-known that a few simple references to the place, the season of the year, the boat, the boatman, and the distraught mother (perhaps only seeing the performer carry the bamboo that denotes her anguished state of mind) is sufficient to clue them into what they are seeing.

The situation in this drama - a mother's grief over her lost child - is universal. The son has been kidnapped and taken away to the north by a merchant who hopes to sell him (evidently a popular profession at the time.) The boy, however, sickens and dies along the way.

One year later, the local people gather along the banks of the Sumida River where he is buried to perform a ceremonial dance in his memory. At just this moment, the boy's mother, driven to distraction by a prolonged search for her son, arrives at the Sumida River where she asks a

boatman to ferry her across. The sorrowful experience of travel has deranged her mind. Once on board the boat, she asks the boatman about the people gathering on the other shore. He tells her the story of the death of a boy, a stranger to the area, exactly one year ago.

From the story, the woman recognizes the boy as her son. She is taken to the grave and joins in prayers for his salvation. Her son's voice can be heard chanting in the background. She is reunited with his spirit and her madness is transformed into a deep sorrow. The play closes with the merged voices of mother, the on-stage chorus, and the ghost of the boy:

*"Is it you, my child?
Is it you, my mother?
And as she seeks to grasp it by the hand,
The shape begins to fade away;
The vision fades and reappears
And stronger grows her yearning.
Day breaks in the eastern sky.
The ghost has vanished;
What seemed her boy
Is but a grassy mound
Lost on the wide, desolate moor.
Sadness and tender pity fill all hearts,
Sadness and tender pity fill all hearts!"*

Fujiwara Dance Inventions gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Japan Fund, Department of Canadian Heritage, Ontario Arts Council, and Toronto Arts Council.

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For more information on Fujiwara Dance Inventions please visit www.fujiwaradance.com

Artists' Bios

Natsu Nakajima

Natsu Nakajima, choreographer of *Sumida River*, was born on Sakhalin in 1943. She trained in classical ballet before studying modern dance with Masami Kuni. At 19, she entered the Kazuo Ohno Dance Institute and only one year later became a founding member of the first Butoh dance activity with the late Tatsumi Hijikata. In 1969, Natsu Nakajima formed the Muteki-Sha Dance Company. Her extraordinary performances *Niwa* in 1985 and *Sleep And Reincarnation* in 1989, have taken her on tours throughout North America, Australia, Asia and Europe. In 1989 she received support from the Saison Foundation to present her work at La Mama in New York City. In 1992 she established "The Class for Body and Mind" and "Dance Education for the Handicappers" in Tokyo. She is an Assistant Professor at Nihonbashi Gakkan University in Japan and continues to teach and lecture internationally.

Denise Fujiwara

Denise Fujiwara is a choreographer, dancer, actor, dance impresario and teacher with 28 years of professional experience. She began her interesting career in childhood, as a gymnast and competed internationally on the Canadian Modern Gymnastics team. Upon completing an Honours B.F.A. in Dance at York University (1974-1979), she became one of the founders of T.I.D.E. (Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise). Here she was instrumental in the creation of a diverse body of work for the now-defunct but still notorious company that danced across Canada for 10 years.

She has created and toured five exquisite solo concerts. *Sumida River* has been featured in dance festivals in Seattle, Washington DC, Vancouver, Calgary, Copenhagen, Ecuador and India. It was named the Best Dance Performance of 2000 by Toronto NOW Magazine. *Elle Laments*, her fourth concert of site-specific solo dances, was a highlight of the Canada Dance Festival, Vancouver's Dancing on the Edge Festival and the St. John's Summer Dance Festival in 1998/99. Her 5th solo concert, *Brief Incarnations* received two Dora Award nominations. A return to ensemble choreography resulted in *Conference of the Birds*,

a site-specific work for 9 dancers and 3 musicians that was called, " - *the best thing to premiere at the (FFIDA) festival in many a year*" by the Toronto Star. *Conference of the Birds* tours to Peterborough and Ottawa's Canada Dance Festival in June. *Komachi*, by Tokyo Butoh luminary Yukio Waguri. *Komachi* will tour to Ecuador and Vancouver in March.

She also works in theatre, television and film. *Walls*, a CBC documentary about her life and work by filmmaker Jeremy Podeswa won a 1995 Gemini Award. In 1997 she co-founded and continues as the Artistic Director of the CanAsian Dance Festival in Toronto.

Fujiwara's approaches to the disciplines of dance technique, improvisation, performance and choreography have developed over more than two decades of intensive research, practice and performance. She has had remarkable mentors including Tokyo Butoh master Natsu Nakajima, Montreal dance pedagogue Elizabeth Langley, the now disbanded Mangrove Dance Collective of San Francisco, the American theatre director Anne Bogart, and the late choreographer Judy Jarvis.

Cheryl Lalonde

Cheryl Lalonde was born and raised in Toronto. She began her career in the arts with Act IV Theatre at Adelaide Court. After two years backstage at Toronto Workshop Productions her design debut was for the premiere production of Thompson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* under mentor Larry Lewis (director). Splitting her time between stage management and design has allowed her to travel the world as well as collaborate with many companies, including Desrosiers Dance Theatre, The Danny Grossman Dance Company, CORPUS, Fujiwara Dance Inventions, Eclectic Theatre, The Alberta Ballet, Theatre Smith Gilmour, and Kaeja d'Dance. Ms. Lalonde has been nominated for four Dora Mavor Moore Awards for design and was honoured in 1997 for her design of Eclectic Theatre's *Chutzpah a-go-go*.

Roelof Peter Snippe

Ron Snippe began his professional lighting design career with Toronto Workshop Productions under

the direction of George Luscombe. In 1973 he began a long working relationship with Toronto Dance Theatre creating designs for over one hundred and fifty works in the repertoire. Over his long and distinguished career as a lighting designer, stage manager and technical director, he has worked with major dance, theatre and opera companies across Canada and abroad. They include the National Ballet of Canada, The Danny Grossman Dance Company and Dancemakers. He has also worked and collaborated with many independent artists including Denise Fujiwara for whom he has previously designed *Sumida River*. Over the past ten years, he has toured with *Sumida River* across Canada and to the United States, Denmark and Ecuador.

Elizabeth Langley

Elizabeth Langley has been professionally involved in dance since 1953. Born in Australia she spent her formative years there, as a company performer, choreographer and teacher. She trained in the Martha Graham technique in New York in the 1960s and then moved to Canada where she continued her professional career. In 1979 she developed the Contemporary Dance Degree Program at Concordia University in Montreal where she taught until 1997. The same year she was awarded the Jacqueline Lemieux Prize. Since then she has studied at the School of New Dance Development in Amsterdam and re-established the performance and creative elements of her life working in Canada, Finland, Turkey, Cuba and Australia.

spring season
details and ongoing updates: www.publicenergy.ca

March 9 at 8pm

Natasha Bakht (Ottawa):
Obiter Dictum and *Triptych Self*
& José Navas (Montreal):
Portable Dances

Natasha Bakht and José Navas are two of Canada's most remarkable dancers. Natasha, a leading interpreter of the Indian classical form Bharata Natyam, will perform two solos, including *Triptych Self*, created for her by one of the world's leading contemporary Indian choreographers, U.K.-based Shobana Jeyasingh. *Triptych Self* was co-commissioned by Peterborough New Dance along with three other Canadian presenters and the CanDance Network. José is a Venezuelan-born dancer/choreographer who is one of Canada's leading international dance exports. He will bring to Peterborough two parts of his latest work,



Portable Dances, a suite of three works designed to be performed on their own or together, in which he performs with three remarkable women: Mira Peck, Magali Stoll and Chanti Wadge.

March 1 to 4 at 8pm

Raven Spirit Dance and Indigenous Performance Initiatives present
An Evening Of Indigenous Dance Performance
At NOZHEM: First Peoples Performance Space, Trent University
Tickets & Info: 748-1011 x 7466
Evening In Paris Directed by Muriel Miguel
Performed by Michelle Olson
Iskwew Created and Performed by Geraldine Manossa

March 23 to 26, various times

Emergency #14
Festival of New Dance and Performance by Peterborough Area Artists. Go to www.publicenergy.ca for schedule and details about the 24 works in this year's festival

May 5 and 6 at 8pm

Darrell Dennis (Toronto)
Tales of an Urban Indian

June 3 at 2pm

Denise Fujiwara (Toronto)
Conference of the Birds
At Millennium Park

All events at Market Hall unless otherwise noted.



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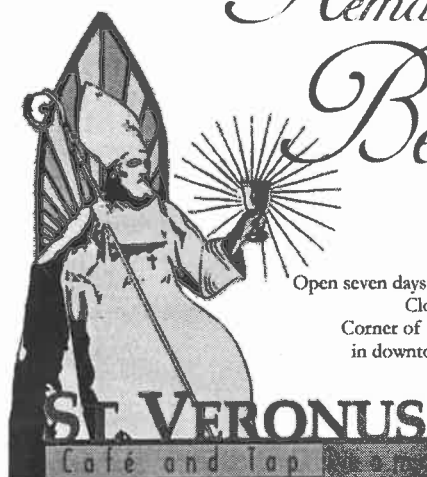
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