

Getting to *Noh* - from Page to Stage

Between the Stones

(Phase 1)



Presentation by Jannette Cheong
Author of '*Between the Stones*'

Overall Project Vision

The project aims provides opportunities, in four phases, for an up-close understanding of *noh* from 'page to stage – and beyond'. Project activities will be of interest to those engaged in, or fascinated by, Japanese arts and culture. It will also build new relationships, and share ideas and learning through cultural and educational engagement both inside and outside the world of *noh*..

Phase 1: Illustrated Talks/Readings (2018)
Phase 2: Development Workshop/ Talk (2019)
Phase 3: Performance tour (Europe & Japan) (2020 dates tbc)
Phase 4: Production report (Dec 2020)

The *Between the Stones* & *Getting to Noh* Project aims:

- To contribute to the development of new audiences for traditional and contemporary *noh*
- To foster a better understanding of the key elements of *noh* internationally (as well as in Japan) from 'page to stage'
- To improve international cultural relations and development through cross cultural artistic engagement
- To highlight the creative connections between *noh*, and other forms of art, culture and society
- To give focus to *noh* as not only a continuously performed theatre art but also one that is continuously developing and expanding its reach.

What is *noh*? And how is a new *noh* in traditional style conceived - from 'page to stage'?

'*Noh*' is classical Japanese theatre which combines elements of dance, drama, music and poetic text into a highly aesthetic form of art that has been performed continuously for 650 years. In contrast to its minimalist stage, *noh* uses elaborate costumes and exquisitely carved wooden masks.

This Illustrated talk and reading is designed to introduce audiences to the key elements of *noh* and to have a close up and interactive experience of how a new *noh* is developed from page to stage.

The new *noh* *Between the Stones* brings together three iconic Japanese cultural forms (*noh*, *karesansui* gardens and *furin* wind chimes). It was written following the deaths of family members and a mentor and friend close to the author. The piece explores how the burden of grief turns into an understanding and celebration of life, death, friendship, beauty and love; as well as the transformative power of gardens to nurture and heal the soul...

The author of this two-act English language *noh* drama, Jannette Cheong, will share her experience of *noh* and how a new *noh* is developed from the poetic text in preparation for a stage production.

This is the third *noh* performing arts collaboration between Jannette Cheong and Richard Emmert following the acclaimed success of *Pagoda* (European Tour - London, Dublin, Oxford, Paris 2009, Asia Tour - Tokyo, Kyoto, Beijing, Hong Kong 2011) and *Opposites-InVerse* (London 2017) .

This 90 minute event is organised by the Japan Society Ireland. It will include: an illustrated introductory talk - 'what is *noh*?'(30 mins), plus a reading of the new *noh* '*Between the Stones*' (30 mins) followed by an opportunity for questions and answers (30 mins).

DATE: 23 September 2018
PLACE: TBC

TIME: PM 3-4.30pm
CONTACT: Darina Slattery



“Pagoda is a triumph. To have created a new Noh play but retained total authenticity is nothing short of brilliant. It is something that devotees of Noh will savour.”

*The Stage:
3 December 2009*

After seeing *Pagoda* performed at the National Noh Theatre in Tokyo, Noh Critic, Nishino Haruo, wrote:

“We have seen noh earnestly and brilliantly cross over national borders”

*TOKYO SHIMBUN,
3 July 2011*

Notes on the author and composer of *Between the Stones*

Jannette Cheong

Jannette Cheong is a poet, writer, designer, curator, and an affiliated artist with Theatre Nohgaku. Born in London, Jannette has worked nationally and internationally in higher education and has organised many successful international education and creative arts collaborations for 25 years. She was the first British person to write an English language noh play (*Pagoda*) using traditional noh techniques in collaboration with Richard Emmert, the Oshima Theatre and Theatre Nohgaku. *Pagoda* was premiered at the Southbank Centre, London, in 2009 and toured to Dublin, Oxford and Paris. In 2011 *Pagoda* opened at the National Noh Theatre in Tokyo and toured to Kyoto, Beijing and Hong Kong. Related activities included collaboration with theatres, universities, schools, museums and festivals. In 2009 (London) and 2015 (Shanghai) Jannette facilitated two international performing arts forums. She also curated a major retrospective exhibition of celebrated photographer Clive Barba in 2012 and 2014. Recently, she wrote *Reflection* (2017) composed by Evan Kassoff, and co-produced 'Noh time like the present...' an acclaimed tribute to professional noh actor Akira Matsui with Richard Emmert and Unanico Group, at LSO St Luke's, London. The programme included her most recent cross-cultural collaboration work (*Opposites-InVerse*) (2017) with Richard Emmert, Akira Matsui, Peter Leung, Li Meili, Piran Legg, Eitaro Okura and Kayu Omura.

Richard Emmert

Richard Emmert is a professor of Asian performance at Musashino University in Tokyo. He has studied, taught and performed classical noh drama in Japan since 1973 and is a certified Kita school noh instructor. He directs an on-going Noh Training Project in Tokyo, has for twenty years lead a summer Noh Training Project Bloomsburg in Pennsylvania (US), and still leads an intensive summer Noh Training Project UK sponsored by Royal Holloway, University of London. He has co-authored with Monica Bethe a series of Noh Performance Guides, and is presently working on a complete series of noh play summaries, both published by the National Noh Theatre. Emmert has led noh performance projects in Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, France, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the UK, and the US. He has composed, directed, and performed in eleven English language noh plays, including British poet-playwright Jannette Cheong's *Pagoda* performed in 2009 at the South Bank Centre, London as well as in Oxford, Dublin and Paris, and again in 2011 at the National Noh Theatre in Tokyo, as well as in Kyoto, Beijing and Hong Kong. The founder and artistic director of Theatre Nohgaku, a company dedicated to performing noh in English, he has led performance tours of the company in the United States, Europe and Asia.



*“Winter butterflies released -
silent in the breeze,
silent in the ocean's waves...”*