Welcome to Spotlight Japan, a vibrant and vital festival that is part of a city-wide celebration of Japanese arts and culture. Spotlight Japan marks Canadian Stage’s second International Spotlight Festival. The principle that guides these festivals is our desire to share with our audiences the truly contemporary performance work from various countries around the world. Over the last 40 years, Japan has marked itself as a hotbed for persistant innovation in all creative disciplines. We were all impressed 30 years ago when the Butoh movement swept across Europe and then North America, and again today there are creators in Japan who are challenging artistic disciplines and inventing new ways of telling stories. Within a very strong aesthetic, Japanese artists are exploring profoundly human questions surrounding the pressures of urban life today as they pertain to our society, making these pieces a great choice for Canadian Stage this season. We are thrilled to have two of these Japanese creators – choreographer Hiroaki Umeda and writer/director Oriza Hirata - come and showcase their performances in Toronto.

Hiroaki Umeda has invented a dance form that is feisty, irreverent, playful, and his pieces that you’ll see here combine hip-hop, soundscape, video and light effects. Haptic and Holistic Strata, presented as a double-bill, are two truly hypnotic hip-hop and video extravaganzas, created in association with Umeda’s sound and lighting company S20. Also featured will be Oriza Hirata’s remarkable plays for actors and robots - yes - the world’s most cutting-edge thespian robots will perform in Android-Human Theater Sayonara and Robot-Human Theater I, Worker, two tales about the place of compassion - apparently a uniquely human trait - in the contemporary world. Hirata is one of the most outstanding Japanese playwrights of today and both these pieces, created in collaboration with Seinendan Theatre Company and Osaka University, show how far Japan has gone in experimenting with the theatrical form, and how willing they are to play with the confines of the discipline.

In addition to these innovative performance pieces, the Berkeley Street Theatre will be abuzz with artistic, gastronomic and musical offerings from Japanese and Toronto-based Japanese partners. Take a look at the schedule in this program to find out what’s happening today.
As Consul-General of Japan in Toronto, nothing makes me happier than witnessing Canadians gain greater insight into Japan and its culture. The start of the year 2013 is proving to be a treasure trove in this respect as Canadian Stage, along with the TIFF Cinematheque, Soundstreams, the Japan Foundation and the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, presents Spotlight Japan, a celebration of the best of contemporary and traditional Japanese culture.

Today’s Japan is a world leader in both digital media and robotics. Canadian Stage’s presentation of works by digital choreographer Mr. Hiroaki Umeda and Mr. Oriza Hirata of Android Robot-Human Theatre is sure to convey both the beauty and the complexities of modern Japan to Toronto audiences.

I would like to thank Canadian Stage for realizing such a culturally rich and entertaining program. I also am grateful for this opportunity to join them in welcoming you to Spotlight Japan. Please enjoy tonight’s performances.

Sincerely,

Eiji Yamamoto
Consul-General of Japan

It is a great privilege to have this opportunity to address the audience of Spotlight Japan. We are deeply honoured that Canadian Stage has chosen to feature Japan in the second edition of their International Spotlight Festival, and delighted that they have selected such exciting and innovative programs to showcase contemporary Japanese performing arts.

The past two years have been a time of great change and rebirth in Japan, as the country has come together to rethink and rebuild after the East Japan earthquake of 2011. It is fitting that Canadian Stage has programmed performances by Japanese artists who are unafraid to challenge previously held conceptions of their media, and whose fearless work is reshaping how audiences around the world think about theatre and dance.

In addition, Canadian Stage has generously broadened the reach of Spotlight Japan to include several other organizations that are featuring the work of Japanese artists in their winter and spring programming. We are grateful to Canadian Stage for initiating this powerful season celebrating Japanese art, film culture and theatre.

I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Canadian Stage for their brave and thought-provoking work, and my sincerest wishes for the continued success of the International Spotlight Festival.

Takashi Ishida
Executive Director,
The Japan Foundation, Toronto www.jftor.org

The presentation of Spotlight Japan is made possible, in part, due to the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada.
**Haptic**

CREATED AND PERFORMED BY
Hiroaki Umeda

CHOREOGRAPHER
Hiroaki Umeda

SOUND
S20

LIGHTING
S20, Hervé Villechenoux

PRODUCTION
S20

COPRODUCTION
Théâtre de Nîmes
Festival d’Automne à Paris

ASSOCIATE PRODUCTION
Quaternaire/Sarah Ford

STAGE MANAGER
Joanna Barrotta

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**Holistic Strata**

CREATED AND PERFORMED BY
Hiroaki Umeda

CHOREOGRAPHER
Hiroaki Umeda

MANDATED BY
YCAM (Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media)

CO-DEVELOPED WITH
YCAM InterLab

SOUND
YCAM InterLab

VISUAL PROGRAMMING
YCAM, S20

PRODUCTION
YCAM, S20

ASSOCIATE PRODUCTION
Quaternaire/Sarah Ford

STAGE MANAGER
Joanna Barrotta

Haptic runs 20 minutes and Holistic Strata runs 30 minutes. There is a brief intermission.

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**Creator's Note: Haptic and Holistic Strata**

In *Haptic*, I wanted to leave behind computing and video projection, concentrating this time on the effects of light and colour.

More than an association of the chromatic prism with physiological stimuli – red/anger, blue/reassurance – I used this performance to focus on the physical aspect of the perception of colour, not simply to show it, but to give substance to the relationship it has with dance.

In *Holistic Strata*, the title derived from my thoughts about dance. Individual movement strata compose the holistic movement strata, and the holistic movement strata contribute to individual movement strata. I focused on movement of different elements, particles, dance and sound, and put it as one.

**Hiroaki Umeda**

Creator, choreographer, performer

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**About Hiroaki Umeda**

One of Japan’s most exciting young avant-garde performers, Hiroaki Umeda is a dancer, choreographer and a sound, video and lighting designer whose inimitable body of work has been raved as a visual and sensorial experience that is both minimalist and radical.

Part art installation, part dance performance, and part visual light show, Umeda’s works often comprise combinations of electronic soundscapes, dramatic strobe lighting, cyber-imagery and frenetic gestures; all of which are designed by him. He has also started working on video and sound installations as an extension of his solo projects. Since his first group piece 1.centrifugal, he has also started to incorporate more dancers in his 10-year long project *Superkinesis.*
Robot Theater Project began four years ago at Osaka University. The initial goal of our project was to change the status of robots from being merely displays at expositions to becoming essential elements of theatre arts. At these expositions, where scientists gather to present their latest technologies, we saw that while robots “impressed” audiences, they never “moved” them - and we wanted to show that robots could really move people. We believe that our mission should be to help lead current research efforts that examine how robots can be part of the future of human society – how robots can be created so as not to alienate people, or scare children or the elderly.

The first short play that we created for the Robot Theater Project was I, Worker, a story about a husband who no longer works, and a robot which no longer can work. For this monumental launch of robot theatre, we addressed two juxtaposing issues: machines developed by humans to work, and the fundamental meaning of robots as machines developed by humans to work, and the fundamental meaning of human existence in contemporary society.

The next work was In the Heart of a Forest, a 90-minute piece in which robots and men discuss the differences between humans and apes. Since there already exist many sci-fi works that address the differences between robots and humans, I wanted to take an unprecedented approach in this work. This piece premiered in 2012 at the Aichi Triennale. Sayonara, also created in 2010, is the first robot theatre work to feature an android. Using the limitations of the android’s inability to walk to our advantage, I came up with a story in which the android’s role is to sit and read poems to a dying girl. Thanks to the ease of transporting the android, we have been able to perform this piece many times in Japan as well as abroad. Last year, we presented Sayonara in Thailand.

Following March 11, 2011, when northern Japan was hit by the earthquake and tsunami, we created a slightly longer version of Sayonara, a 25-minute length piece that includes a newly added scene. This version will be performed today. Our most recent robot theatre production, Three Sisters, Android Version, based on Chekhov’s original play with the same title, is the first in the series to feature both an android and a robot.

Oriza Hirata

Playwright
ABOUT THE PLAYS

SAYONARA

This short play is performed by two human actors and a Geminoid F - a humanoid robot developed by a robotics laboratory led by Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro. Seinendan Theater Company notes: “This work poses the question ‘what does life and death mean to robots?’ It is meant to alter the audience’s perception of robots and humans, and present a compelling fusion of theatre arts and science.” The original version of Sayonara was performed by one human actor, who plays a girl suffering from a terminal illness, and a Geminoid F, which plays an android purchased by the girl’s father to console her through the reading of poetry. The production won an honorable mention at Prix Ars Electronica 2011 in the Interactive Art category. An additional scene where the android faces a new mission was added later, in reflection of the nuclear disaster caused by 3/11. This new version will be presented today.

I, WORKER

Created in 2008, I, Worker (Hataraku Watashi) is the first full-scale robot-human theater production from the collaboration between Oriza Hirata and Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro, and features two robots and two human actors. Set in the near future when robots are commonly found in family households, I, Worker portrays a young couple, the Mayamas, who live with two housemaids - robots named Takeo and Momoko. While the husband, Mr. Mayama, struggles with grief following the loss of his child and his unable to work, Takeo also suffers from malaise and loses his motivation to work. This play questions what “work” means to us as humans, by juxtaposing Mr. Mayama with Takeo, which was built to work but cannot work.

ABOUT SEINENDAN THEATER COMPANY

Seinendan, founded in 1983 by playwright and director Oriza Hirata, is recognized as one of the most progressive and acclaimed theatre companies in Japan. Hirata’s “contemporary colloquial theatre” has received considerable attention and greatly influenced the Japanese theatre scene since the 1990s. His style of theatre was a reaction against modern theatre in Japan, with its long tradition of importing theatre and performing styles from the West. Seinendan’s depiction of the quiet moments in daily life precipitated the Quiet Theater movement of post-bubble Japan. The theatre of Seinendan has come to be known as distinctively Japanese in reflecting and distilling the rhythms, subtle tones and ironies of postmodern life in Japan.

Seinendan has been invited to numerous international festivals and venues, including Festival d’automne in Paris, La Bâtie-Festival in Geneva, Dublin Theatre Festival, and Théâtre Les Tanneurs in Brussels to name a few. Hirata and Seinendan have gained much recognition in France in recent years, and have been invited to perform and/or produce new works at venues that include Théâtre de la Ville, Théâtre de Gennevilliers, Centre Dramatique National de Besançon, Théâtre and National de Marseille. Japan Society in New York produced Seinendan’s U.S. debut tour with Tokyo Notes (Tokyo Note) in 2000 and another tour in 2006.
CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM: SAYONARA AND I, WORKER

WRITER AND DIRECTOR
Oriza Hirata
Oriza Hirata (playwright, director, leader of Seinendan Theater Company, and Artistic Director of Komaba Agora Theater), born in Tokyo in 1962, is a leading figure in Japan’s contemporary theatre scene. While in college Hirata founded Seinendan to pursue and practice his “contemporary colloquial theater theory,” a method which has had great influence on theatre in Japan and throughout the world.

In recent years Hirata has been highly involved in collaborations with international artists from France, Korea, Australia, America, Ireland, and Canada, among other countries. Hirata is currently professor at Osaka University’s Center for the Study of Communication-Design, and lectures and acts as special assistant to the Principal at Shikoku Gakuin University. His plays have been translated in six languages and are published all over the world. He serves on the boards of many theatre institutions in Japan, and holds positions including: President of the Japan Performing Arts Foundation, Japan Commissioner of the BeSeTo (Beijing+Seoul+Tokyo) Theater Festival, among others.

ROBOT AND ANDROID CREATOR
Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro
Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro received a D.Eng. in Systems Engineering from Osaka University in 1991. He currently teaches in the Department of Systems Innovation in the Graduate School of Engineering at Osaka University (2009–) and is the group leader (2011–) of the Hiroshi Ishiguro Laboratory at the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute (ATR). Dr. Ishiguro’s research interests include distributed sensor systems, interactive robotics, and android science. He has published more than 300 papers in major journals and conferences, and has developed many humanoids and androids which have been featured in major media outlets. Ishiguro received the best humanoid award four times in RoboCup. In 2007, Synectics Survey of Contemporary Genius selected him as one of the top 100 living geniuses. In 2011, he won the Osaka Cultural Award for his contribution to the advancement of culture in Osaka.

Dr. Ishiguro directs the Intelligent Robotics Laboratory at Osaka University, which aims to develop technologies that support future generation information infrastructures based on computer vision, robotics and artificial intelligence. Through this research, the laboratory hopes to create robots that can successfully co-exist with humans.

PERFORMERS
Geminoid F
Geminoid F (Sayonara) is a female type tele-operated android that resembles the person it was originally modelled after. Geminoid F is equipped with 12 motorized actuators powered by air pressure, which allows her to mimic human facial expressions. Geminoid F is more cost-efficient and lightweight in comparison to the other model, the Geminoid HI-2. Because of these features, Geminoid F has real potential to go beyond just an experimental platform, and become a commonly used robot in human society. Geminoid F made its theatrical debut in Sayonara.

Bryerly Long
Bryerly Long (Sayonara) joined Seinendan in 2010. Long has performed in Oriza Hirata’s The Balkan Zoo (Balkan Dobutsuen), Citizens of Seoul 1939 and The Yalta Conference (Yalta Kaidan) [English version]. Shortly after moving to Japan, Long appeared in the film Hospitalité directed by Koji Fukada, which received the Japanese Eyes Best Picture Award at the 2010 Tokyo International Film Festival. Long studied Japanese in college and translated Sayonara from Japanese into English, French and German.

Hiroshi Ota
Hiroshi Ota (Sayonara and I, Worker) joined Seinendan in 1998. He has performed in numerous works by Oriza Hirata such as Citizen of Seoul 1919 and Tokyo Notes. Ota also appeared in The Cape of the Moon written by Masataka Matsuda (directed by Hirata), in the production Hiroshima, mon amour written by Marguerite Duras and produced by Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne in Switzerland and TBD-Centre Européen.

Minako Inoue
Minako Inoue (I, Worker) has performed in Hirata’s Tokyo Notes, From S Plateau (S Kogenkara), and Citizens of Seoul 1929: Graffiti (Seoul Shimin Showa Bokyo Hen). Inoue has also performed in The Cape of the Moon written by Masataka Matsuda (directed by Hirata), since its world premiere in 1997. In the most recent robot theatre play, Three Sisters, Android Version, Inoue plays a woman who has synchronous memory with an android.

Robovie R3
Robovie R3 (I, Worker) is a life-sized robot that was invented to research communications between humans and robots. Robovie R3 was released in the market in April 2010 as the successor of Robovie-R ver. 2, a high-performance robot designed to perform daily activities. Robovie R3 was developed to be able to move over raised marks on the sidewalk (designed to assist visually-impaired individuals) and down slopes at the speed of 2.5 km/h, making it able to provide services for the elderly and disabled such as accompanying and navigating in daily activities. Additional functions can be achieved by adding parts such as a wireless controller commonly used for home video games, a gripping-hand extension, and an omnidirectional device that allows the robot to move in all directions. Robovie R3’s theatrical debut was in October 2012, in the production of Three Sisters, Android Version, written and directed by Oriza Hirata.
ABOUT THE MUSICAL PERFORMERS
Each night of Spotlight Japan there will be a live musical performance in the lobby between shows and again later in the evening.

FEBRUARY 26 AND 27
Linda Kakô Caplan
Linda Kakô Caplan is Canada’s premier koto and shamisen artist. She is a Dai Shihan (Grandmaster) from the Chikushikai Koto School in Fukuoka, Japan, and is the only koto player of non-Japanese descent to attain this prestigious rank to date. As soloist, ensemble member, and studio musician, Caplan has performed for three decades in Canada, Japan, and the U.S. In addition, she performs at numerous private and diplomatic functions. Caplan is the Japanese Music Course Director at York University. She also teaches from her private studio, offering in-person and online lessons.

FEBRUARY 28
Ron Korb
Japanese-Canadian musician Ron Korb has toured extensively throughout North America, Japan, Australia, Taiwan, Mainland China, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Europe. He studied Gagaku court music in Tokyo while composing gold and double platinum selling hits for singers in Hong Kong while composing gold and double platinum selling hits for singers in Hong Kong. Last year, he was featured in a documentary called Stolen Memories about his family’s struggle during the internment. Ron has played flute on countless movie soundtracks such as Ang Lee’s The Ice Storm and Ride with the Devil, Mira Nair’s Kama Sutra and Merchant/Ivory’s The White Countess. He also worked with Robert Lepage on his film No. Ron’s latest album Europa released in 2013 has already won Album of the Year, Best Solo Performance, and Best Graphic Design at the Global Music Awards in Los Angeles.

MARCH 1 AND 2
Ten Ten
Ten Ten is a Japanese music ensemble led by Aki Takahashi on vocals and shamisen (three-stringed lute), Together with Kiyoshi Nagata on taiko (drums) and Heidi Chan on shinobue (folk flute) the trio performs original music inspired by Japanese folk songs known as Min’yo. In the Japanese alphabet, “ten ten” refers to two dots used to change the sound of a syllable. In the same spirit, the ensemble strives to create its own unique voice for Japanese folk music breathing new life into this traditional art form. It will be releasing its second CD at a concert in Toronto on Saturday, April 6.

ABOUT OUR FESTIVAL PARTNERS
Japanese food, beverages, and play readings are part of the Spotlight Japan programming. Join us at the times below.

FEBRUARY 26, 8:30 AND 9:30 PM
Soba noodle demonstration
Soba can refer to a type of noodles that are an indispensable aspect of Japanese food culture, as well as to the buckwheat from which they are made. Served either hot or cold, often with just dipping sauce or broth and a few toppings, the seeming simplicity of soba dishes are in stark contrast to the sophisticated skill and know-how required for preparation. This demonstration, generously presented by the Consulate-General of Japan, offers a glimpse into the preparation of the noodles, starting from the mixing of buckwheat flour with water.

FEBRUARY 26, 28, AND MARCH 1 AT 7 PM
Free sake tasting
The Ontario Spring Water Sake Company, located downtown Toronto’s Distillery Historic District, is eastern North America’s first sake brewery. Hand-crafted using traditional Japanese methods and delicious Muskoke spring water, Torontonians and visitors alike can now enjoy fresh, unpasteurised, locally-brewed sake. The company’s sake retail outlet is located within the brewery premises, features a tasting bar with high ceilings and old limestone walls, and offers Tasting Tours for public and private groups. OSWSC’s IZUMI-branded sakes are served in many of Toronto’s finest restaurants, and are also available at LCBO stores throughout the province.

MARCH 1 AND 2 AT 4 PM
Free play readings
Join us for readings of two short plays by Oriza Hirata (writer and director of Sayonara and I, Worker). The 30-minute plays will be read back-to-back, in an hour-long session, on both days. Play readings are presented with support from the Japan Foundation.

Loyal Ronin: The Working Girls’ Version
By Oriza Hirata, translated by Hiroko Matsuda and Cody Poulton. Directed by Mitchell Cushman

The Yalta Conference
By Oriza Hirata, translated by Hiroko Matsuda and Cody Poulton. Directed by Moynan King

Donations accepted for the Actors Fund of Canada.

Chef Takeshi Sato
Oriza Hirata
### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

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Sake Tasting with the Ontario Spring Water Company  
Soba Noodles demonstration with Chef Takeshi Sato  
Wednesday, February 27 there is a post-show talk with choreographer and dancer Hiroaki Umeda following *Haptic and Holistic Strata*.  
Thursday, February 28 there is a post-show talk with playwright and director Oriza Hirata following *Sayonara and I, Worker*.
AS part of Canadian Stage’s commitment to involving the community in our work, we’ve invited local high school students to show off robotic creations during Spotlight Japan. Through a unique partnership with FIRST Robotics we are strengthening the relationship between robots and theatre in Toronto. FIRST Robotics Canada is a registered charity that inspires Canadian students to pursue further studies and careers in science, technology and engineering. It accomplishes its mission by offering opportunities for students, working in teams and assisted by expert adult mentors, to build robots and to take part in tournaments. Each year, high school teams build impressive 5 foot tall, 140 pound robots from scratch in only 6 weeks that compete in high-intensity robo-sports. The participants’ experience will culminate with a hands-on workshop with the technician of Sayonara and I, Worker for a behind-the-scenes glimpse into Android Robot Company’s high tech performers.

Meet FIRST Robotics students in the back lobby before and following Haptic and Holistic Strata on select dates as they proudly demonstrate their creations from last year’s competition.

Photo provided by FIRST Robotics

EDUCATION AT CANADIAN STAGE

Education is a vital part of what we do at Canadian Stage. We are committed to sharing material with our audiences that will challenge, enrich and deepen their perspectives. Sharing art diversifies our conversations, opens new frontiers of understanding, and helps build an appreciation for theatre.

We are able to offer abundant opportunities to learn and teach through theatre. Programs like our Educator Preview Nights, resources such as our Study Guides, and flexible Workshop opportunities equip teachers with the support to make the most of the theatre as a powerful educational tool.

To join our email list for invitations to upcoming education programs, please email Erin Schachter, Education & Enrichment Manager, at eschachter@canadianstage.com.

To support our education programs, please contact Marielle Bryck, Patron Development Officer, at mbryck@canadianstage.com or 416 367 8243 x 327.
Paying homage to the rich multicultural roots of our city, Canadian Stage presents the work of widely acclaimed artists from across the globe every year, including Akram Khan’s *DESH*, Hofesh Shechter’s *Political Mother*, Compagnia Scimone Sframeli’s *Nunzio*, and the productions you are seeing today. We also have an ongoing commitment to globally showcasing Canada’s own artists and their work. Remembering the success of our world tour of *The Overcoat*, we are planning a new journey with Helen Lawrence, stunning European audiences with some of Canada’s most innovative theatre. Our internationally-focused programming is ambitious and daring, both in terms of artistic expression and cost.

A donation to Canadian Stage helps us meet the portion of our artistic expenses that ticket sales cannot cover. It also empowers you to see, learn and discover more about our productions and the artists behind them.

Find out more at canadianstage.com, or by contacting our fundraising office: 416.367.8243 x327 or partnership@canadianstage.com.

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22
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Cellphones, pagers, candy wrappers and beeping watches are distracting for performers and audience members. For those who must have access to devices for emergencies, please leave them with the House Manager who will record your seat number and name. Please respect other patrons with sensitivity to perfumes.

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