

Getting to noh

A Tribute to Richard Emmert - a man with a constant vision

Presented in London, January 2020



Getting to noh...

Richard Emmert

An extraordinary man with a
constant vision and many talents:
*performer, composer, director,
academic, teacher and international
friend*



*Eliza. Richard Emmert (Nochishite).
Umewaka Noh Theatre. May 1990*

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Getting to noh ...

This tribute to Richard Emmert in his 70th year gives recognition to his lifetime's contribution to our understanding, appreciation and engagement with the wonderful art of noh. It lists his accomplishments and partnerships and includes tributes from people around the world who have been fortunate to know and work with him.

To understand why Richard is so highly regarded, both inside and outside Japan, one needs to appreciate that his uniqueness comes from the fact that few, if any, foreigners have achieved Richard's range and depth of engagement with noh. Richard is an academic, teacher, performer, instrumentalist, composer and director - an extraordinary range of talents for anyone to achieve in a lifetime.

However, Rick, as he is known around the world, is also a creative leader extraordinaire! He has not only helped to establish noh training projects together with his colleagues in Japan, the USA, UK, Mexico (and soon) Sweden, but also travelled the world training or collaborating with those he feels have a serious intention, or interest, in noh. Many friends and collaborators say this is because of his kind and generous spirit.

But there has to be more than this that has bound him to stories and artists internationally and given him the unique accolade of the only person in the world who has composed and directed most of the new English noh that have been developed in the 20th and 21st centuries. His is truly a remarkable life.

Richard Emmert

There is a tradition that authors' names are given prominence in the noh world. This comes from the fact that when noh was first developed the performers were most often the writers and they were writing for a form they 'inhabited' in their performance. Rick often says the only thing he has not done in noh is written an original noh. But this statement belies the fact that Rick has translated existing classical noh into English and encouraged translations in other languages and, if we were to use the western tradition of putting the composer's name first, the current list of English language noh would be dominated by Richard Emmert. Add to this that the majority of contemporary English noh writers cannot compose noh music and you realise that the contemporary English noh repertory only exists because Richard Emmert has worked hard with others helping them to create these new noh works.

Rick once said his own test for new work is: will it be remembered in 200 years time? If humanity retains the humility, generosity and kindness that Richard Emmert has shared throughout his lifetime then there is a good chance, but only because Rick is willing to share everything he knows about this extraordinary art form. Why? It is simple; he knows that noh has already stood the test of time - 650 years and counting...





Introduction

Richard Emmert is a professor of Asian performance at Musashino University in Tokyo. He has studied, taught and performed classical noh in Japan since 1973 and is a certified Kita school noh instructor.

The founder and former 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 and specific noh performance projects in Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, France, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Switzerland, Singapore, the UK and the US.

Creative leadership

As an example of his creative leadership, Professor Emmert and others in Theatre Nohgaku continuously explore training support for the longer-term sustainable development of noh internationally. They have established Noh Training Projects since 1991 in Tokyo and subsequently in the USA, the UK and soon to be established in Sweden. Specifically, Richard directs an on-going Noh Training Project in Tokyo, has for twenty years lead a summer Noh Training Project in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania (USA), and has led an intensive summer Noh Training Project UK sponsored by Royal Holloway, University of London as co-founder and Artistic Director since 2011. Richard continues to be invited as guest faculty for noh training internationally, having undertaken 30 such commitments since 1984, either working with Japanese professional noh actors, or leading training events in other countries.

This book brings together the voices of his teachers, students, collaborators and friends who wish to pay tribute to his lifetime achievements in the art of noh and to mark his special 'koki' (70th) year.

While teaching at Musashino University, Mr Emmert separately created a theatre group called 'Theatre Nohgaku', an international performance ensemble dedicated to the performance of noh in English and Japanese. Embracing the philosophy of creating noh written in the language that lives within him, Mr Emmert has given countless opportunities to those who do not understand Japanese to access and engage with noh.

In February 2019, an English-language noh project ***Between the Stones***, a collaboration with Jannette Cheong, was introduced through a series of lectures and demonstrations in various venues in the UK, including the Embassy. Noh, as an art form, may be difficult even for Japanese people to understand. Yet, somehow, when performed in English, it seemed that the very core of the art form unfolded before us. Which is to say, the efforts of Mr Emmert to make noh accessible in English, has itself opened up new possibilities for understanding noh, even for Japanese people. I have no doubt that his efforts are not over, and that he will continue to promote and expand the possibilities of noh for years to come.

Takeshi Ito
Minister for Public Diplomacy and Media
Director, Japan Information and Culture Centre
Embassy of Japan in the UK

Lecture-demonstration, Oshima Kinue (costumed), Oshima Teruhisa and Emmert (chorus), Embassy of Japan, London. February 2019.





Richard Emmert

a remarkable life





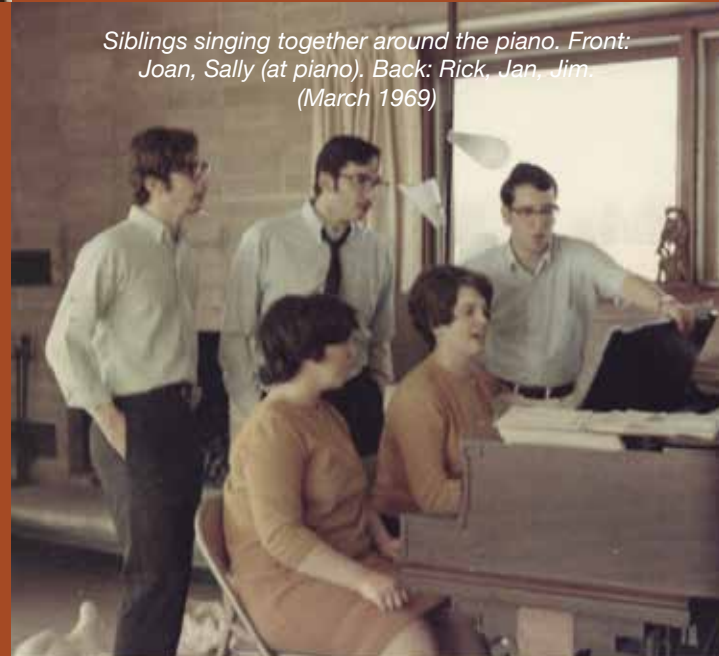
Childhood home. Near Bluffton, Ohio (1970)



Tokyo University of the Arts. Noh chant club. Instructor: Kita School shite performer Fukuoka Shusai sensei. (April 1978)

Born in Bluffton, Ohio, USA on 28 December 1949, Richard finished his first degree in history and Japanese at Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana in 1972.

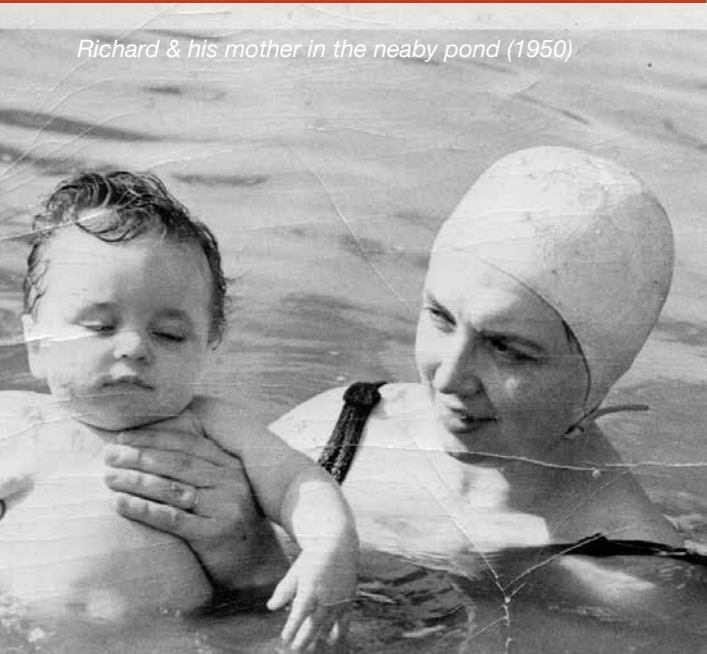
Richard moved to Tokyo to study at the Tokyo University of Fine Arts where he completed his masters and the coursework for a PhD in musicology in 1985. His training in noh began in 1973 and continues to this day.



Siblings singing together around the piano. Front: Joan, Sally (at piano). Back: Rick, Jan, Jim. (March 1969)



Performing a shimai on the Asaba Inn outdoor noh stage, Izu, south of Tokyo. (1977)



Richard & his mother in the neaby pond (1950)



Singing chant with taiko drum played by Gentaro Mishima sensei in small home recital with students of Mishima-sensei. 1980?

Noh Performance Training:

1973-1979 Utai/Shimai with Matsui Akira (Kita school)
1975-1978 Utai with Fukuoka Shusai (Kita school)
1979-present Utai/Shimai with Omura Sadamu (Kita school)
1975-2004 Nohkan (flute) with Issa Yukimasa
1975-1983 Kotsuzumi (shoulder drum) with Sumikoma Akihiro
1977-1985 Otsuzumi (hip drum) with Kakihara Takashi
1977-present Taiko (stick drum) with Mishima Gentaro

RICHARD EMMERT

Major Noh Performances in Japan:

2007 (December) main role (*shite*) in noh **Sumidgawa** in Sadamu-Kai recital, Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo
2002 (December) main role (*shite*) in noh **Kiyotsune** in Sadamu-Kai recital, Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo.
2000 (October) main role (*shite*) in noh **Kantan** in Sadamu-Kai recital, Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo.
1994 (September) main role (*shite*) in noh **Momijigari** in Sadamu-Kai recital, National Noh Theatre, Tokyo.
1991 (December) main role (*shite*) in noh **Fujito** in Sadamu-Kai recital, Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo.
1987 (November) main role (*shite*) in noh **Kurozuka** in Sadamu-Kai recital, Kita Noh Stage, Tokyo.
1986 (September) Director/composer/jigashira for the English noh **Drifting Fires**, Zojoji Temple, Tokyo.
1985 (August) Director/composer/jigashira for the English noh **Drifting Fires**, Tsukuba Science Exposition, Tsukuba.
1983 (October) Nohkan performance of **Sanbaso** in the Yucho-Kai Performances, Tessenkai Noh Stage, Tokyo.
1982 (May) Director/composer/nohkan of the English noh, **At the Hawk's Well**, Umewaka Noh Stage, Tokyo.
1978 (May) main role (*shite*) in noh **Kumasaka** in Kisho-Kai Performances, Ginza Noh Theatre, Tokyo.

a man
of many
talents

Tributes from Japanese
Teachers and Friends



増田正造

武蔵野大学文学
部名誉教授
能楽資料センタ
一元センター長

バリ島の彼の別荘で50の賀が催され、各国人に伍して70歳の私も参加した。そのエマートさんが70を迎えるという。これからが直線コース、ラスト・スパートはどんなにか素晴らしいものになるだろう。英語能ほか、能の海外普及の業績は、余人のなしえぬところである。日本の研究者は、ほとんど古文書に偏る嫌いがある。アメリカ人でありながら、エマートさんは喜多流ばかりか、能の囃子全般にわたって、プロに準ずる実技を習得し、能の実践者として希有の存在となった。

小泉文夫、横道萬里雄という碩学の教えに接し、能管の一噌幸政の懇切な指導を受けえたというのは、なんたる幸せであったことか。それに喜多流の師であり、同志でもある松井彬、大村定との緊密な縁と、世界的な活躍。

私は「セント・フランシス」の映像で、来日前から彼に注目しており、やがて大学の同僚に迎えた。黒川能もバリも仲間であるが、あまりにその存在が大きすぎ、近すぎて、いま改めて驚嘆することを恥じる。「碧い目の太郎冠者」ドナルド・キーン先生すでなく、それに続く文化功労者としてのエマートさんを讃えたい。

SHOZOH MASUDA

Professor
Emeritus,
Musashino
University
Former
Director of the
University's
Noh Research
Archives

At the age of 70, I celebrated along with others from several countries at his small hotel in Bali when he turned 50. And now Emmert-san himself has turned 70. From here on, it is straight ahead. How magnificent will this last spurt be? His contributions of English noh and the introduction of noh in various foreign countries are something that others are unable to do. Most Japanese researchers are mainly research classical texts. But even though an American, Emmert-san has mastered noh performance at a professional level in terms of both the Kita School of *shite* actors as well as the four *hayashi* instruments, and in that sense is a rare practitioner of the art of noh.

How fortunate for him to have been taught by the great scholars Koizumi Fumio and Yokomichi Mario, and also receive the thorough guidance of Isso Yukimasa on the noh flute. And then through the like-minded yet rigorous training under Matsui Akira and Omura Sadamu of the Kita School, he has been able to share his noh abilities throughout the world.

I knew of him through his performance in the film *St. Francis* even before he came to Japan. Eventually I invited him to the faculty at my university. Now, as a colleague interested as well in the arts of *Kurokawa* noh and Bali, his activities are so varied and he is so close to me personally that it is embarrassing to once again extol his wide-ranging abilities. Donald Keene-sensei of *Aoi Me no Taro Kaja* (*The Blue-eyed Taro Kaja*) fame has passed away. So in that vein, I wish to next praise Emmert-san as a *Bunka Korosha* (Person of Cultural Merit).

*Fujito. Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo. December 1991.
Emmert (shite). Yoshikatsu Tsukuda (okawa) and
Akira Nakatani (nohkan).*



三島元太郎

能楽金春流太
鼓方
人間国宝

リチャード・エマートさん古希を迎えられて、心から祝福申し上げます。

1977年5月26日の日記にありました。「今日稽古日、Rエマート優秀だ。「打込」「打返」三度目マスター。」とあります。以来記録を調べる必要がありますが、40余年、能のシテを相手したのは「熊坂」、「黒塚」でしょうか。数多くの英語に依る新作能。イエイツの「鷹の井戸」、バイチマンの「票炎」、マレットの「イライザ」も楽しかった。喜多流の人達と一ヶ月あまりのオランダの各地での演能もなにかと大変だったし、楽しかった。二人で招かれて行ったプロモーターのダシルバ親分の家のごい蒐集品。

人生百歳時代。百歳を古来稀なり。とする中国の詩に、九十、八十と並べて、七十は得ること多し。とあります。

能を深く学ばれ、流暢な日本語を通しての日本文化の理解。そして世界文化との交流の成果は心から讃えるに惜しみありません。

太鼓は豊かな掛声で自在。一噌流の笛は何でも即座に応じて流麗足る音色。大したものです。益々の御活躍を祈ります。

GENTARO MISHIMA

Komparu School
Taiko drummer
Living National
Treasure

First, I wish to give my heartfelt congratulations to Richard Emmert-san as he reaches the age of 70.

I found the following in my diary for 26 May 1977.

"Today's lesson, R. Emmert was excellent. He mastered *uchikomi* and *uchikaeshi* (basic drum patterns) on his third try." I am sure I could find more entries since then. Over a 40-plus year period, I have performed taiko for his *shite* of the Japanese noh plays **Kumasaka** and **Kurozuka**. And I have performed in several of his newly created English noh plays. Yeats' **At the Hawk's Well**, Beichman's **Drifting Fires** and Marett's **Eliza** were all quite enjoyable. The month-long performance tour of Holland with the Kita School was difficult but it too was enjoyable. In Holland, I remember when the two of us were invited to the home of the promoter Da Silva to see his amazing art collection.

This is the era of living to 100. There is a Chinese saying that "it is rare to live to 100, whereas there are many who live to 90, 80 and 70."

Having studied noh deeply, his Japanese fluency has allowed him to learn much about Japanese culture. I also must praise him for what he has done for cultural exchange throughout the world.

He has a rich *kakegoe* (drum call) voice when playing *taiko*. Everything about his *Isso* School flute playing is exact and has an elegant tone quality. All this is a considerable feat. I pray for his continued success in all his activities.

Kurozuka. Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo. November 1987. Richard Emmert (*shite*). Sadamu Omura (*hidden*) and Akio Sato (*koken*), and Gentarō Mishima (*taiko*).



Kumasaka. Ginza Noh Theatre, Tokyo. May 1978. Richard Emmert (shite). Akira Matsui (koken) and Gentaro Mishima (taiko) can be seen at back left.



Richard Emmert performing the shite in *Kiyotsune*, December 2002. Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo.

松井彬

能楽喜多流シテ方

御神酒徳利

リックの能稽古を指導始めたのは凡そ46年前になろうか。その一年後、東京で英語能「セントフランシス」の演出を手掛けた。この時の音楽監督がリックであった。これをきっかけに能を指導したのがそもそも御神酒徳利の関係にとつづく。

私にとっては能とは無関係な英語への世界に飛び込んだ。この付き合いが現在までつづいている。この頃の思い出は、この文章を書きながらも走馬灯のように思い出させる。余りにも書きたいことが多く、どこを切り取って書くべきかと思案している。

まず彼の能楽への功績を挙げるとすれば、何と言っても英語能と言う基礎を創り上げた事である。彼無くしてはここまで英語能が発展したか疑問である。私もそのおかげで幾つかの作品に参加ができ、とてもいい経験と成っている。

簡単に英語能と言っているが、勿論公演を實行するには英語が堪能な役者、演奏家を造らなければならない。その為には自分自信の訓練をし演能可能な役者を育てなければならない。ゼロからの出発。Noh Training Project Bloomsburgをアメリカに置き、能の基礎から囃子まで指導し、現在まで多くの仲間を輩出して居る。これらの応援して下さる人達を育てあげたのも彼の力である。

海外(日本から言う)でのワークショップを始め、公演指導を共に数十年がかりであった。師弟関係では無く仲間のお神酒徳利。

能「猩々」の謡の中に「汲めども尽きぬ、飲めども変わらぬ」があります。この謡文句の様に彼は今後も能楽発展のために尽きぬ力を注いでくれるものと期待をしている。



Rehearsing Teater Cahaya's
Siddhartha, Akira Matsui and
Emmert, Bali, January 2003.

AKIRA
MATSUI

Kita School
shite actor

Omiki tokkuri (Sacred Sake Bottle)

It has been about 46 years since Rick began taking noh lessons from me. A year after he began, I directed the English noh play **St. Francis** in Tokyo. Rick was the director of music. It was through teaching him and working together with him that our relationship became like that of an *omiki tokkuri* (literally, “sacred sake bottle” but is used to refer to people sharing sake as they work together).

For me, it was through noh that I jumped into the unrelated world of the English language. That association continues today. As I write this, memories from that time flash before my eyes. I would love to write about so many of these that I am left to ponder what I should tear off and write about here.

In regards to Rick’s accomplishments in the world of noh, more than anything else he has created the foundation for noh in English. It is doubtful as to whether English noh would have developed this far without him. And because of that, I, too, have participated in a number of performances, all of which have been great experiences.

I mention English noh quite simply, but of course to perform noh in English you have to train skillful speakers of English as actors and performers of noh. For that, he himself took on the training of such performers. Starting from zero. He began the Noh Training Project Bloomsburg in the United States teaching the basics of noh chant and dance as well as *hayashi* instruments, and up until now he has trained many students to become fellow noh performers. Educating audiences to support such performances is also one of his activities.

Beginning with giving workshops abroad, together we have worked for several decades giving performances and lecture-demonstrations. We no longer have a teacher-disciple relationship, but are colleagues sharing sake (*omiki tokkuri*).

The noh *Shojo* has the chant about a special sake barrel: “no matter how much you dip, it never runs dry, no matter how much you drink, it never changes.” Like these lyrics from noh, I look forward to his strength “to never run dry” in working for the advancement of noh.



大村定

能楽喜多流シ
テ方

リチャード・エマートさん古希おめでとうございます。

エマートさんとは、同年令で、彼が東京芸術大学卒業後、四十数年にわたって、能楽の指導をさせて頂いています。能も「黒塚」から「隅田川」まで、六番組舞われました。

能楽の稽古においては、おぼえがはやいのに加えて、とてもセンスが良いのには、驚かされます。

彼自身も英語能を作り、演じて、全世界に能楽を広く普及させている事は誠に素晴らしい次第です。

人生の普遍的テーマ、喜怒哀楽、愛別離苦などを題材として、最適な英語能の作品をも作り上げています。

これからも意欲的に世界に向けて、能楽を発達させて頂きたいと思います。

**SADAMU
OMURA**

**Kita School
shite actor**

Richard Emmert, congratulations on reaching your 70th year.

Emmert-san and I were born in the same year, and now for over 40 years, ever since he was in Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music, I have been fortunate to be able to teach him noh. During that time, he has danced six full classical noh plays, from **Kurozuka** to **Sumidagawa**.

In his noh training, it is surprising how quick he has always been to memorize as well as to demonstrate an excellent sense of performance.

It is truly wonderful how he has created new English noh, performed them, and in so doing has spread noh throughout the world. His English noh creations display universal themes which run the gamut of human emotions—joy, anger, pathos, and humor, or the pain of separation from loved ones.

It is my wish that he continue to be ambitious in fostering noh throughout the world.

Left: Sumidagawa. Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo. December 2007. Richard Emmert (shite). Sadamu Omura (koken).

水島敏夫

読売新聞元 ワシントン支 局長

一九七一年晩夏、羽田から飛び立ったチャーター機の中で、リック・エマートと初めて出会った。早稲田大学での留学を終えアールム大学に戻るリックと、早稲田からアールムに留学する私の、太平洋を挟んだそれぞれの旅の終わりと始まりの交叉であった。

一ドルが三百六十円で沖縄は米国治政下、ベトナム戦争が泥沼化していたころである。

アールムでリックは聖フランシスの生涯を能楽風に描いた芝居を演じ、日本に再留学した際には、私が安アパートの四畳半で、漱石の「三四郎」をテキストに日本語を教えた。その二十数年後、米国育ちの私の娘がコロンビア大学から早稲田の国際部に留学した九七年、なんと、今度は、リックが教壇から、娘に日本文化を教えた。

不思議な縁である。

リックは東京の中野坂上に四十年以上も住んでいるが、その場所は、私が学生時代に暮らしたアパートのすぐそば。お互い頻繁に行き来したもので、青白い理想と甘酸っぱい夢が詰まった、ささやかな、中野つながりである。

二〇一九年春。リックは東京都心にある、ホールのステージに和服姿で現れ、能・狂言の公演に先立ち、ほとんどが日本人の聴衆を前に日本語で、滔々と演目の解説を行った。さて、そのホールは私が定年まで勤めていた新聞社のビルにあり、そのイベントの主催者でもあった。

これも、縁。

ざっと半世紀前、羽田発のチャーター便で始まった奇妙で貴重な縁は、まだまだ切れそうにない。二人とも古希を迎えた。

At the home of Toshio Mizushima in Mito, north of Tokyo. Wife Junko (center). May 1976.



TOSHIO MIZUSHIMA

Former
Washington
Bureau Chief,
Yomiuri
Shimbun

In late summer 1971, I met Rick Emmert for the first time on a charter flight that had taken off from Haneda International Airport. For Rick, who had finished a year as a foreign student at Waseda University and was returning to Earlham College, and for me, leaving Waseda to go to Earlham as a foreign student, it was an intersection over the Pacific Ocean of a journey just ending and one just beginning.

It was the time when a dollar was worth 360 yen, Okinawa was still under the control of the United States, and the Vietnam War was turning into a quagmire.

At Earlham, Rick had performed in a play in noh style about the life of St. Francis. When he returned again to Japan as a foreign student, I taught him Japanese in my cheap four and a half tatami mat room using the text of Natsume Soseki's novel *Sanshiro*. Then some 20 plus years later in 1997, my daughter, raised in the United States, went as a foreign student from Columbia University to Waseda University's International Division where, lo and behold, she took a class on Japanese culture taught by Rick.

We have a strange connection.

Rick has lived in the area of Nakano Sakaue in Tokyo for over 40 years, which is very close to where I lived in my cheap student apartment. So we are also connected through Nakano where each of us has frequently come and gone and which now seems modestly packed with our honest ideals and bittersweet dreams.

Spring 2019. On a stage in a hall in the center of Tokyo, Rick appeared before a noh and kyogen performance dressed in Japanese *kimono*, and in fluent Japanese gave a pre-performance talk to a mainly Japanese audience. That hall was in the building of the newspaper company for which I had worked until my retirement and the event was sponsored by that same newspaper.

That too was our connection.

That curious and precious connection that began about a half century ago on a charter plane from Haneda doesn't look like it will end soon. We both have just recently turned 70 years old.

近衛忠大

公益財団法人 十
四世六平太記念財
団 理事長 株式会社
curioswitch CEO/
クリエイティブ・ディレ
クター

リチャード・エマート先生は今や喜多流、いや能楽界に欠かせない方です。私が生まれた年、1970年に来日されて、1973年から能の稽古を始められているので、ほんの数年前からお能と関わり始めた私にとっては、実年齢以上の先輩でいらっしゃいます。そしてお能の面白さと可能性を教えて下さった方でもあります。

先生の功績は既にメンションされていると思いますが、最大の業績は6冊に及ぶ能の演目の英語版解説を作られたこと。そして能の公演時に使用する事に関して自由にコピーが可能にしたことだと思っております。喜多能楽堂でもいつも使わせて頂いております。心より御礼申し上げます。

私は古い伝統文化に関わりの深い家に生まれたにも関わらず、スイスで幼少期を過ごしました。そのため日本の伝統文化は身近で有りながら、極めて理解が難しいものでした。お能もその最たるものです。

エマート先生が続けていらっしゃるNoh Training Projectを初めて観たのは2017年でした。全く日本語が出来ない参加者が殆どの中、初日から正座で反復練習だけ。日本人の能楽師と同じような稽古に衝撃を受けました。そしてそこから僅か三週間ほどで行われた発表会では更なる衝撃を受けました。想像以上の完成度と、何より参加者全員がお能のファンであり、理解者になっていた事に、あらためて能の魅力を再認識させて頂きました。

なかなか席が埋まらない公演、少ない若年層の観客と若手能楽師。能の魅力を伝えきれていないのでは、という自責の念と、自分自身が理解できていないという焦りとで理事の仕事が重荷に感じていました。しかしNoh Training Project以来、理事としての仕事は俄然楽しくなりました。能の魅力は時代や言葉を越え、若い層にも、海外にも通用するんだと実感できたことが大きな勇気になりました。

エマート先生。これからも日本の能楽界を支え、応援して下さい。

TADAIRO KONOE

Chairman,
Kita Roppeita
XIV Memorial
Foundation
CEO/Creative
Director,
curioswitch, inc.

Richard Emmert-sensei is indispensable to the present, to the Kita School and to the noh world. He first came to Japan in 1970, the very year that I was born, and began taking lessons in noh in 1973. As someone who only from the last several years began to have a relationship with noh, he is more than just my senior in terms of age. He is also someone who has taught me what is interesting about noh as well as its possibilities.

I am sure sensei's accomplishments are mentioned elsewhere. I think his most significant contribution is the series of six books in which he explains in detail all of the 240 plays in the classical noh repertory. He also made it possible for presenters of noh to freely make copies of each play when it is being performed. We always use these explanations for plays performed at the Kita Noh Theatre. I thank him for this.

Even though I was born into a family that has a long relationship with traditional Japanese culture, I spent much of my childhood in Switzerland. For that reason, even though it should have been close to me, Japanese traditional culture was extremely difficult for me to understand. Noh was conspicuously so.

In 2017, I first saw the Tokyo version of the Noh Training Project which Emmert-sensei originated. Most of the participants who could not even speak Japanese sat Japanese style *seiza* from the first day. I was shocked to see them receive the same kind of training as Japanese professional performers. And from there, within a short three-week intensive period, I was shocked again in seeing the final recital. With an unimaginable level of perfection, clearly all the participants had become fans of noh and had come to understand it. From that, I was able recognize anew the fascination of noh.

It is difficult to fill all the seats of a noh performance, and there are few young members of the audience as well as few young noh actors. Finding it difficult to communicate the attraction of noh and blaming myself for it, I was feeling the weight of my work on the board of directors and becoming impatient with my own lack of understanding. But since the start of the Noh Training Project, my work on the board of directors has suddenly become enjoyable. I have come to understand that the attraction of noh can cross ages and language, and young people as well those from abroad can come to appreciate it. That has given me a new found courage.

Emmert sensei. Please continue your support and encouragement for noh and the noh world.

Kantan. Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo. October 2000. Emmert (shite), Keichiro Kaneko, Tadahito Tomoeda, Yasumasa Izumo (chorus).



Momijigari. National Noh Theatre, Tokyo. September 1994. Emmert (shite), Jun Kunikawa (okawa).



私は、いつも仕事帰りに寄る居酒屋ののれんをくぐると、日本人とは違うカン高い声が聞こえて来た。片手に猪口を持ち、青い眼の外国人が笑いながら楽しんでいった。

流暢な日本語を話している。「何者かな!」と。私が彼と出会ったのは酒の縁であった。「能を勉強している!!」と聞き、ビックリである。

「能は複雑な音楽劇です。会話劇ではなく、詩的な文章でできています。能は表現を少なくして、不必要なものを削ぎ落とすことによって、最大の表現を深く見せていくものです。能の演者は力量がないと勤まりません。観る側が感動するにも、想像力が必要です。」何、何、この人は何を言っているのか?!と二度ビックリ。面白いことを言う人だな。。。?と思いました。興味を持った。

当時自宅を尋ねて2Kの日本畳部屋のアパートに住んでいた。窓を開け放すと、目の前は墓地で、墓石と卒塔婆の向こうには新宿の高層ビルが林立していた。部屋の壁には、東南アジアのお面や絵、民芸品が所狭しと飾られている。足の踏み場がないほどに、世界各国の芸能の本が並んでいる。家を尋ねて来る人は、海外からの芸術家が多い。面白い人脈たちだなと。増々興味を持ち、刺激された。

精力的に世界を飛び回る彼に多方面のジャンルのパフォーマンス公演に同行をさしてもらい、私も、世界の舞台公演を撮影している。

日本人よりも日本人らしいと言われるエマート。彼は異国である日本人らしさを突き詰めることで、かえって普遍性を獲得したのだ。

インドの女性だけ描くミテラ絵の取材。イタリア、アメリカ、アジアをめぐり、各国の伝統芸能を融合させた「ドラゴン・ボンド・ライト」の舞台も撮影した。

役に立つものであれば、すぐに何でも取り入れ、勉強し、エネルギーに行動を起こす前衛的な音楽師である。日本と西洋、アジアをつなぐ、世界交流を推進する人間味あるリチャード・エマートさんである。彼の写真を撮り続けます。



Lifting the short *noren* entrance curtain to the Japanese pub I often dropped by on the way home from work, I heard a high-pitched voice that was different from a Japanese. There sat a “blue-eyed” foreigner with a sake cup in hand laughing and enjoying himself.

He spoke fluent Japanese. “Who is that?” I thought. Our chance meeting came about that day due to sake. I was surprised to hear him say, “I study noh.”

“Noh is a complex form of musical theatre. It is not dialogue theatre, but rather built on poetic text. Noh cuts out unnecessary physical movement, and in so doing demonstrates a much deeper expressiveness. Noh actors cannot perform without skill and strength. For the audience members to be moved, they must use their imaginations.” What? What? I was surprised for the second time wondering what this person was talking about. He certainly said interesting things, and my curiosity was aroused.

I visited the “2K” apartment he lived in at the time, having a kitchen and two rooms, one of Japanese *tatami*-style. The back window opened onto a cemetery with headstones and Buddhist grave tablets, and in the distance in a line stood the high-rise buildings of Shinjuku. Masks and paintings from Southeast Asia hung on the walls of the room and other crafts ornamented the narrow space. Books on performance from around the world were lined in shelves leaving very little room to pass. The people who visited his house were generally artists from abroad. What an interesting network of connections! My curiosity was further aroused.

I traveled with him to photograph stage performances as he energetically flew around the world performing with a variety of performance genres.

Emmert is said to be more Japanese than a Japanese person. But he has also probed into what for him is the foreign quality of the Japanese psyche, and as a result has come to possess a universal sensibility.

With him, I have traveled to India to photograph *Mithila* paintings made solely by women. I have traveled to Italy, the United States and throughout Asia to photograph the preparations and performances of *Dragon Bond Rite* featuring the collaboration of traditional performances of several Asian countries.

He is an avant garde noh performer whose energetic activities come to the fore as he finds something of interest and studies it. Richard Emmert demonstrates his humanity by promoting world exchange as he ties together Japan and the West with Asia. I plan to continue to take photos of him and his activities.

Left: Emmert performing the maibayashi of *Yorimasa*, Kita Noh Theater, November 1996.

For other Inoue photographs see pages: 24, 34, 42 (bottom), 53, 54, 55, 58 (centre & bottom), 59 (centre), 64, 66 (all), 68 (left)

能楽喜多流シテ方

エマートさんはジェントルマンだ。物腰柔らかく、誰にでも優しい。けれど同時にとても頑固者でもある。作品作りのミーティング中、人の意見に対してエマートさんが腕組みをして「うーん、どうでしょうかねえ」と言い出したら要注意だ。彼が声を荒げて反対意見を言うことはないけれど、そのかわり梃子でも動かない。絶対に自分の信念を貫く、意志の強い人なのだ。

そうでなければ日本という異国の地で40年以上もの長い間、能の道を歩き続けることは出来なかつただろう。それも、多くの人々に能の魅力を伝え、巻き込んで、母国アメリカのみならず世界各国で能を広めて来られた。まさに能の伝道師だ。

「能は日本人だけのものじゃない。世界の人が共有できる文化なのです。」エマートさんの確信に満ちた言葉には説得力がある。

私がエマートさん率いるシアター能楽と一緒に仕事をするようになって15年ほどになるが、彼らの能に対する真摯で熱意溢れる姿勢に、エマートさんの信念が皆に伝播している事を実感する。

これまで偉大な仕事を成してこられたとは思いますが、能を世界へ広める伝道師として、まだまだ更なる飛躍をお祈りしたい。エマートさんどうか健康で長生きしてください！

Kita School *shite*
actor

A Noh Missionary

Emmert-san is a gentleman. He has a soft manner and is gentle with everyone. At the same time, he is quite stubborn. In the midst of a meeting for creating a piece, you should be careful if he folds his arms and says, “hmm, I wonder about that”! Though he won’t raise his voice to express the opposite opinion, he refuses to budge. He absolutely sticks to his convictions. He is strong-willed.

If he hadn’t been, he probably would not have been able to stay for over 40 years in a foreign country following the path of noh. And doing so, he was able to spread noh to not only the United States but to countries around the world, impart his fascination with noh to many, and draw them into the noh world. Clearly he has been a noh missionary.

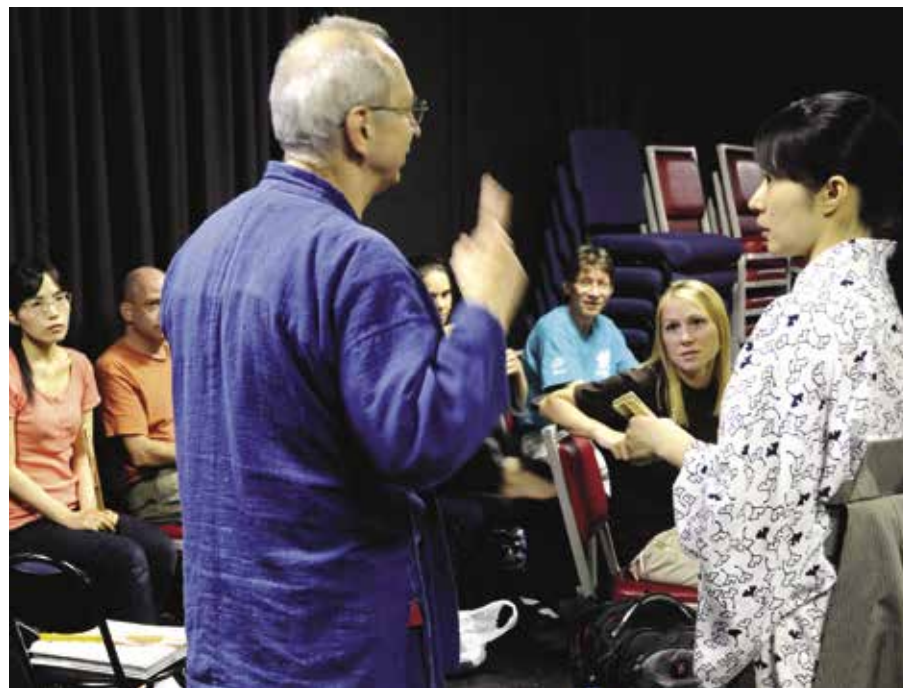
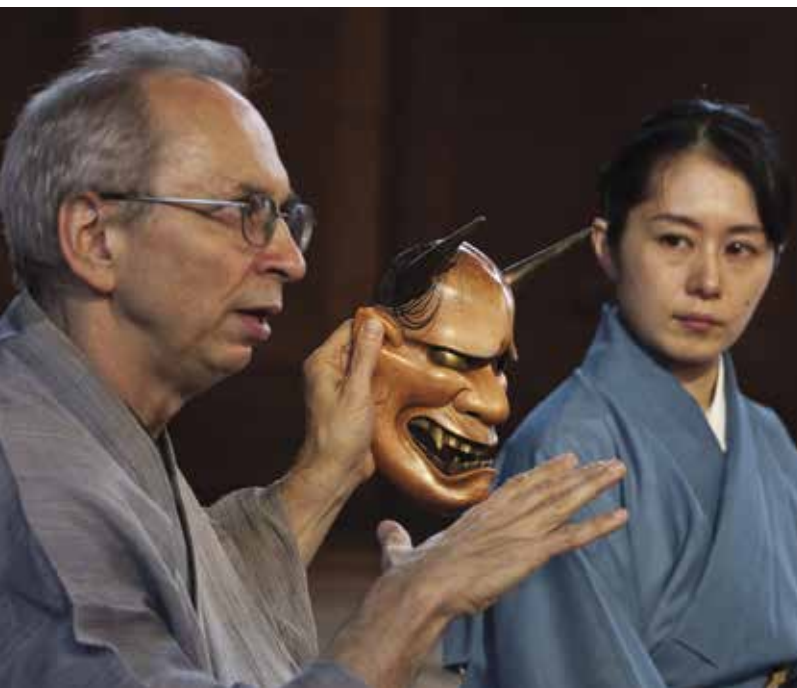
“Noh is not only for Japanese. It is a cultural art belonging to the entire world.” Emmert-san’s words full of his strong conviction have a persuasive power.

I first began working with Theatre Nohgaku led by Emmert-san some 15 years ago. Already then, I felt strongly that Emmert-san’s convictions had been transmitted creating in the entire company an overflowing sense of earnestness and enthusiasm for noh.

While I believe that he already has accomplished a great deal, I pray that he will be even more active as a missionary in spreading noh throughout the world. Emmert-san, please stay healthy and live long.

Left: Emmert and Kinue Oshima, lecture-demonstration, UK schools, September 2009. Middle: Discussion on noh with Emmert and Kinue Oshima. Noh Training Project, Bloomsburg 2006.

Right: Kinue Oshima and Emmert, watching *Pagoda* rehearsal, London, Dec. 2009.



徳丸吉彦

聖徳大学教授
お茶の水女子
大学名誉教授

エマートさんとの出会い

リチャード・エマートさん(愛称リックさん)に私が初めて会ったのは、リックさんが東京藝術大学の大学院で日本音楽の研究を始めた頃で、1975年のことでした。アメリカのアーラム大学で、日本の地歌・箏曲を専門に研究しておられたレナード・ホルヴィク教授の薫陶を受けてから来日されました。すでに日本語に堪能で、日本語でグジャレを連発する能力をもっていました。リックさんは、大学院で能を研究テーマにしていますが、尺八の山口五郎師(1933-99)のもとで尺八も学んでいました。

1970年代は、日本が世界に向けて日本とアジアの音楽を積極的に発信することを始める時期でした。例えば、日本の国際交流基金は他のアジア諸国との音楽的な交流を盛んにするとともに、その成果を録音や映像で世界に発信しました。1974年に、私は、東京藝術大学の小泉文夫(1927-83)、大阪大学の山口修とともに国際交流基金から新しいプロジェクトの推進を委嘱されました。それが、『アジア伝統芸能の交流』(英語名 Asian Traditional Performing Arts、略称ATPA)と呼ばれる15年に及ぶ長期プロジェクトです。

その第一回の会合が東京で開かれたのが1976年です。演奏者と研究者によるセミナー、公開の演奏会、そして、録音・録画が行われました。そのすべての過程で、日本語と英語話す研究者として重要な役割を果たしたのがリックさんでした。その報告書が翌1977年にAsian Music in an Asian Perspective (Tokyo: Heibonsha)として出版されました。これは英語による出版でしたので、リックさんは、編集にあたった小泉・徳丸・山口をassistant editorとして支えてくれました。第二回以降のATPAで、彼はさらに大きな役割を果たしました。

ATPAに対しては、民族音楽学の会合で、主としてアメリカの研究者から、「日本がアジアの音楽を変質させている」という批判が寄せられました。これは、まったくの誤解です。例えば、タイの伝統音楽家たちが、ATPAで多様な音楽を聴いて、自分たちも「新しいこと」を行いたいと考え、普段は行なわない編成を試しました。それを私たち日本の監修者が録音・録画して公開したのです。それが、「伝統は過去のもの」と考える研究者から批判を受けたのです。しかし、ATPAの目的は、アジアの音楽を固定して記録することではなく、それぞれの伝統の担い手が起こす変化を認めて、伝統を「生きている」ものとして存続させることになりました。

言い換えれば、ATPAの背景には、「伝統には未来がある」という信念がありました。これは、日本の能楽にも当てはまることです。能楽が明治維新後も、また、第二次大戦後も、生きた伝統として存続したのは、新しい作品が生まれ、古典に対する新しい解釈が生まれてきたからです。リックさんが行ってきた英語能も、能を活性化する試みです。そして、それは、長い歴史をもつ能が、文化と言語を越えて、新しいものを生成する能力をもっていることを示しています。リックさんの英語能が、さらに世界の楽劇に新しい刺激を与えることを期待しています。

TOKUMARU YOSHIKO

Professor,
Seitoku
University
Professor
Emeritus,
Ochanomizu
University

My Encounter with Emmert-san

The first time I met Richard Emmert-san (nickname, Rick-san) was in 1975 when he was beginning to research Japanese music in the graduate school of Tokyo University of the Arts. He came to Japan after studying at Earlham College in the United States under Professor Leonard Holvik who was a specialist in the research of Japanese *jiuta* and *koto* music. Rick-san already skillfully spoke Japanese and had the ability to pun in rapid succession. He had *noh* as his graduate school research theme, but also learned *shakuhachi* under Yamaguchi Goro sensei (1933-99).

The 1970s was a time when Japan became proactive in introducing the music of Japan and the rest of Asia to the world. The Japan Foundation actively began supporting musical exchanges with other Asian countries recording and filming these exchanges to introduce to the world. In 1974, myself along with Koizumi Fumio (1927-83) of Tokyo University of the Arts and Yamaguti Osamu of Osaka University, were asked by The Japan Foundation to lead a new project. This came to be known as Asian Traditional Performing Arts (ATPA) and it became a long-term project that lasted for 15 years.

The first weeklong event for this was held in 1976. It consisted of a seminar with performers and scholars, performances open to the public, and recordings and film documentation. During the entire process, Rick-san had an important role as a researcher who spoke both Japanese and English. The report of the event was published in book form in 1977 entitled Asian Music: an Asian Perspective (Tokyo: Heibonsha). Since this volume was in English, Rick-san took a major support role as the Assistant Editor to the Editors Koizumi, Tokumaru and Yamaguti. Rick-san took on an even larger role from the second ATPA.

At an ethnomusicology conference, there was criticism of ATPA mainly from American researchers that “Japan is altering the music of Asia.” That was a complete misunderstanding. For example, there were Thai traditional musicians who listened to the variety of music at the ATPA events and decided that they wanted to “create something new,” and attempted a musical arrangement that normally was not done. That arrangement was recorded and published by the Japanese supervisors of ATPA. As a result, the scholars who seemed to think “tradition is only something from the past” were critical of our process. But the goal of ATPA was never to record the music in order to “set” the tradition, but rather to recognize that each bearer of tradition can cause change and that tradition is a “living” entity that allows for its continuation.

In other words, in the context of ATPA, there was the conviction that “within tradition lies the future.” Japanese *noh* can be said to have the same. After the Meiji Restoration (1868) and again at the end of World War II, its living tradition was able to continue because new pieces were created and a new interpretation of classical *noh* was born. The English *noh* that Rick-san has created is also an experiment in invigorating classical *noh*. It too shows that *noh* with its long history has within itself the ability to cross both culture and language to form something new. I envisage that Rick-san’s English *noh* will stimulate anew musical theatre throughout the world.

北澤秀太
能面打師

エマートさん70歳のお誕生日おめでとうございます。

新作英語能に使う能面製作の仕事をさせていただき15年になります。その間英国、フランス、中国、香港、シンガポール、オーストラリア、アメリカといろいろな国と一緒に旅しましたね。

どれもとても良い思い出です。中でも2009年のパゴダは、私にとって人生の大きな転機になりました。文化庁の助成を受けた企画で、エマートさんが面打師として私を、原作者のジャネットさんと喜多流大島家に推薦してくれました。限られた期間で新作面4面と舞台の作り物を製作するという大変な仕事でしたが、ヨーロッパツアーに同行させていただき、観客の拍手を聞いて、今までにない満足感に浸ることができました。

エマートさんとの仕事はいつも、今までどこにも無い面を創作しなければならない難しい仕事です。しかし信頼して仕事を依頼してくれたことを意気にかけて、少しでも良い面を作ることが職人の心意気だと思います。

エマートさんの頭の中には、まだまだ新しい英語能のアイデアがたくさんあると思います。どんな注文にも答えますよ。これからも一緒に旅をしましょう。

HIDETA
KITAZAWA

Noh
maskmaker

Emmert-san, congratulations on reaching your 70th birthday.

It is now 15 years that I have worked with Emmert-san making masks for new English noh. During that time, we have traveled together to various countries including the UK, France, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and the United States. All of them have been excellent experiences. Among them, the 2009 tour of *Pagoda* was a major turning point in my life. That project had the support of Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs. Emmert-san recommended that I create the new masks and introduced me to the author of the play, Jannette Cheong, and the Oshima Family of the Kita School. In a limited time, I had the important task of creating four new masks and the *Pagoda* stage prop. I also joined the performance tour of Europe and on hearing the applause of the audiences, was filled with an immense satisfaction that I had never previously experienced.

The work I do with Emmert-san is difficult as it always entails creating a new mask that has never existed elsewhere. But being trusted for the commission of such a work gives me the enthusiasm and the will to create the best I can, which I feel is the spirit of a craftsman.

Certainly, Emmert-san must have the ideas in his head for many more new English noh. I will be glad to work on anything he requests. And I hope to have many other chances to travel with him.

40

41

BLUE MOON OVER MEMPHIS
(MAESHITE)



BLUE MOON OVER MEMPHIS
(NOCHISHITE)



EMILY (MAEISHITE - OLD MAN
MASK)



EMILY (NOCHISHITE -
HERBERT JONES MASK)



PAGODA (MAESHITE - MEILIN
MASK)



PAGODA (NOCHISHITE -
MEILIN MASK)



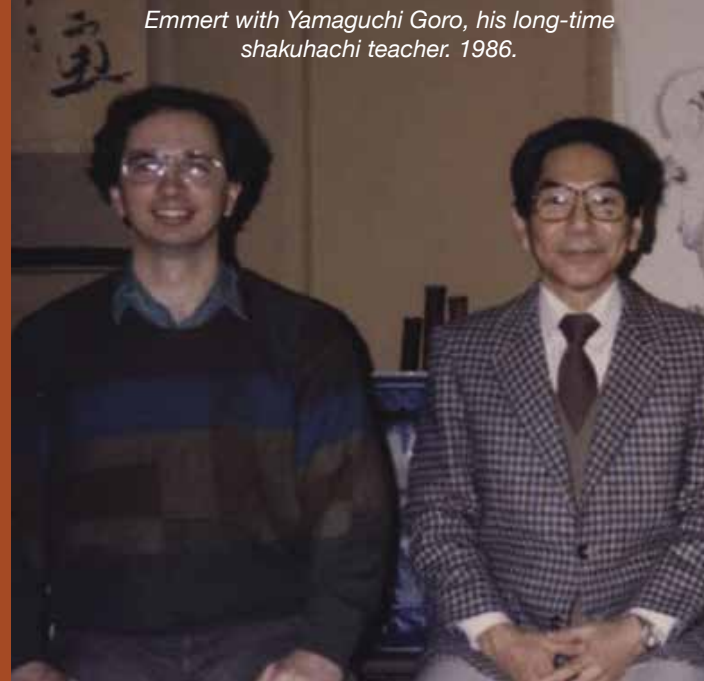
Emmert with foremost noh scholar Yokomichi Mario (left) and foremost ethnomusicologist Koizumi Fumio (right), his most influential professors from Tokyo University of Fine Arts, 1976.



Members of Tesarugaku no Kai on Sado Island noh stage for summer rehearsals, August 1984. Includes Kinuyo Kama (seated front row 2nd from left), Mitsuo Kama (kneeling front row right), David Crandall (back row 4th from right), Emmert (back row 2nd from right).



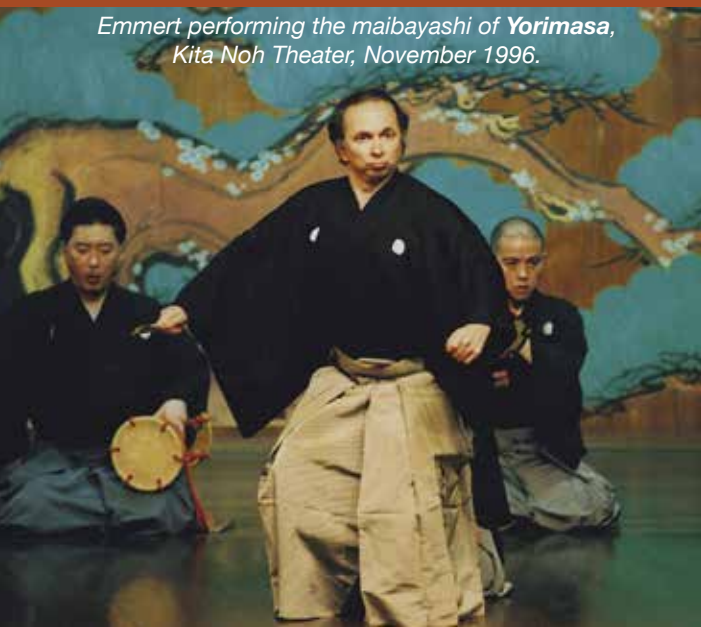
Emmert with Yamaguchi Goro, his long-time shakuhachi teacher. 1986.



Students of nohkan teacher Isso Yukimasa on excursion to Izu, 1986. Emmert (kneeling left), Isso Yukimasa (kneeling right).



Emmert performing the maibayashi of Yorimasa, Kita Noh Theater, November 1996.



Emmert and Masanobu Oshima, post-performance talk for Pagoda, Southbank Centre, Dec. 2009.



RICHARD EMMERT

a scholar
of noh

Publications:

Books Author

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1978 *Asian Music in an Asian Perspective*. Report of Asian Traditional Performing Arts 1976. (Assistant editor. Edited by Koizumi Fumio, Tokumaru Yoshihiko and Yamaguchi Osamu.) Tokyo: Heibonsha and The Japan Foundation. Reprinted 1984 by Academia Music, Tokyo.

Recent TV Appearances

2013 (July) NHK World, "Zeami: Pursuing the Flower." <http://bestofnhk.tv/>
2012 (March) NHK BS-1, NHK World. Begin Japanology. <http://bestofnhk.tv/>



Emmert performing
maibayashi of
Takasago, Kita Noh
Theater, Tokyo, 1982?



Emmert performing
the maibayashi of
Yamamba, Kita Noh
Theater, 1995.



Emmert performing
nohkan for Makura
Jido with Isso
Yukimasa (koken), Yurai
Noh Theater, Tokyo
1983.

THOMAS HARE

Author,
Professor
and Chair of
Comparative
Literature
Department,
Princeton
University

ミドルベリの思い出 An Acrostic Sageuta-Ageuta Happy 70th, Rick!

Y R U B E L D D I M

上歌
下歌ツミ 中めでたやめでたい
何時上だったか
同窓生の今昔ハル。同窓生の今昔。
読書会話漢字の練習。
ラング下エージ・プレッジの関の戸を。
エイと通り過ぎハル土曜騒ぎ。
ボートと二日の酔い朝の。
うれしかりしは。
リックさんの高砂。
宿の前。リックさんの高砂宿の前。

Tom Hare, Fall 2019

Oh happy day . . . hip hooray . . .
But when was it?
Once upon a time we were classmates,
Once upon a time we were classmates:
Conversation, kanji practice,
Don't trip over the language pledge:
That's a pass I gotta get through. Whew! It's Saturday,
hanging over, just a bit, to Sunday.
One thing I remember, though, with a smile:
Rick-san's **Takasago**
There in front of the dorm,
Rick-san's **Takasago**.

**MONICA
BETHE**

Noh Scholar/
Teacher

Rick, was it forty years ago that you came for the first time to Kyoto to spend an end-of-the-year *hayashi* gathering with me? What a long way you have come, yet already then you spoke of staging noh in English. Few people manage to fulfil their life vision so explicitly and fully. Congratulations.

Since that first encounter, our lives have interwoven at times tightly and at other times more loosely. There was *tesarugaku*, then early productions of English noh with talk of costumes, masks, musical rendition, possibilities and parameters. Next, the many years producing books together for the National Noh Theater. In addition, Theater Nohgaku took off. With that you began to implement your idea that training was at the core of building a core of people able to effectively perform noh in English. I was pleased to contribute my small bit when this expanded to understanding costumes.

I am told you are entering “golden” years. I am not sure my seventies can be described as “golden”, but I definitely hope yours are.

Series of seven volumes entitled Noh Performance Guides co-authored with Monica Bethe and published by the National Noh Theatre, 1992~1997.

**MICHAEL
WATSON**

Professor of
Classical Japanese
Literature, Meiji
Gakuin University

Many other tributes will surely focus on Rick as a performer, teacher, and as founder and artistic director of Theatre Nohgaku, celebrating his long career devoted to opening up the traditions of noh theatre to non-Japanese performers and to audiences outside of Japan. Others will certainly focus on his achievement in creating, directing, and performing in original noh plays in English, not as a one-off experiment, but in a disciplined way that others can learn from and emulate. There is now an ever growing repertoire of English-language plays on striking new topics.

Here I should like to pay tribute to another lasting contribution, one that moves the study of noh from a text-centered approach to one that focusses on dramatic structure and performance. The six volumes of ***The Guide to Noh of the National Noh Theatre: Play Summaries of the Traditional Repertory (2012–2017)*** take us through astonishing range of plays, 238 in total, each one carefully analyzed. The copyright notice specifically allows organizers of noh performances to provide photocopies of plays being performed. The entries go far beyond bald plot summary of earlier guides. They cover essential elements of staging, from costumes and masks to variant performance traditions, with close paraphrases of key passages. The scene-by-scene analysis greatly enhances the appreciation and understanding of those who watch a noh performance, as valuable for regular theatre-goers as for those experiencing noh for the first time. Although the first English translations of noh appeared some 140 years ago, we are still very far from having reliable translations of the entire canon of plays in the performance repertoire. **Future generations of theatre-goers, readers, students, and scholars will forever be in debt to Rick’s distillation of his life-time involvement with noh.**

Series of six volumes entitled The Guide to Noh of the National Noh Theatre published by the National Noh Theatre, 2011~2016.



**SHELLEY
FENNO
QUINN**

Professor of
Japanese
Literature,
Ohio State
University

I have known Rick Emmert as a colleague in the field of Japanese Studies for about thirty years. During that period, I have seen him grow into a skilled and innovative actor, musician, and composer, as well as a dedicated teacher and scholar. As I recall, our acquaintance began at the 1988 Midwest Japan Seminar at Rick's alma mater, Earlham College, where I attended a student performance of *St. Francis* (1970), a noh play in English. Rick was in charge of the musical adaptation and he was co-director of the production. I remember being struck with the level of Rick's commitment to developing and staging English noh. At the time he seemed a lone voice, and I recall wondering whether there would be enough support and enough likeminded performers for him to pursue such a goal.

Turns out I needn't have worried. By the time Rick co-founded Theatre Nohgaku in 2000, he had succeeded in bringing together a group of talented artists who shared the commitment to bringing noh to English-speaking audiences. Build it and they will come. During these nineteen years, the troupe's explorations into the expressive possibilities of noh techniques as contemporary theatre have led to a series of beautiful and provocative productions.

I want to offer hearty congratulations to Rick upon his seventieth birthday and to recognize him for all the building he has done. I also want to emphasize how much I look forward to Theatre Nohgaku productions going forward.

**LIM BENG
CHOO**

Associate
Professor,
Dept of
Japanese
Studies,
National
University of
Singapore

When I first went to visit Rick at his office at Musashino University more than twenty years ago, I did not know that it would be an important visit that answered, over time, a key question I have had. Then I was a graduate student trying to establish a meaningful connection between noh and the world I was in. Studying chanting and dancing at Rick's noh classes turned out to be not just about learning to perform noh, but also about actually navigating that connection that I thought was forever lost to me. The most memorable moment was when I did a shimai donning the noh mask. Through that little slit of vision frame I saw that noh itself is the connection, and observing Rick's teaching and performances I have understood that the connection will always be there – be it in a different time frame, language or cultural context. I am just so glad I made that visit to his office. Thank you very much, Rick, may there be many more opportunities to see you teach and perform again.

JONAH SALZ

Ryukoku
University
Director,
Noho Theatre
Group, Kyoto

Praising with superlative Ps

I was introduced to Tokyo Geidai graduate student Richard Emmert when commissioning him to compose the score for Yeats' *At the Hawk's Well* for the Noho Theatre Group's program of Kyogen and Beckett on noh stages in Kyoto, Osaka, and Tokyo in 1981. After this one-time only event of like-minded performers, I proposed we form a company sharing noh and kyogen training skills. We would perform plays by Beckett, Shakespeare, and Yeats, bilingually alongside Japanese professionals. I would produce and direct. Those who had lived and studied noh and other Kyoto arts for far longer replied, "Who are you (25, little Japanese or noh-kyogen knowledge) to decide on play production and direction?" Yet Noho remains a small company now in its 40th year.

Rick, however, re-directed *the Hawk* in Tokyo, then continued to assemble a group of sympathetic performers, leading eventually to Theatre Nohgaku. How was he able to fulfill his vision? Rick has the performance skills, in song, instruments, and dance to command immediate respect. He has the patience to teach newcomers, often through an interpreter in foreign countries, endlessly repeated basics. Although well-versed in noh's poetry and philosophy, he emphasizes the practical: how to harness the power of noh's musical structure and physical expression for lyrical storytelling.

As the high priest of noh performance, Rick is an artfully gentle proselytizer. His relaxed personality is built on genuine curiosity. Comingling with his good humor is his intense passion for noh as sublime human achievement for all to share and appreciate. I am in awe of Rick's tentacular social interactions, having taken a more solitary path as a scholar and director. With a humble bow, I tip my kyogen *eboshi* to his profound, historical achievements.



*Rick and Jonah in New York
City, August 2018.*

**JADWIGA
RODOWICZ
CZECHOWSKA**

Former
Ambassador of
Poland to Japan,
Noh scholar and
playwright

Before I met Richard Emmert in person, I knew about him for many years from papers on experimental noh forms. I heard of him only after finishing my scholarship at Tokyo University in 1979, and during writing of my PhD thesis on noh at Warsaw University in 1982.

Although I studied the classical form of the noh, especially the theoretical treatises by Zeami Motokiyo and later dramatic texts as well, I was always interested in theatre in the actor's skills and understanding of his own body, both as an instrument of transmission of the word and as vehicle for overcoming limits of everyday behavior. Polish theatre director and thinker Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999) influenced my generation, at least in my country. During my scholarship in Tokyo I studied noh technique at Tessenkai under *Kanze Shizuo* (later *Tetsunojō VIII*). I knew from some of my training mates of a certain American man who was learning the noh with the Kita school and I envied him from afar because I knew that if he wanted, he could actually become one.

As I was writing about the noh I read then about the first noh in English to which Richard Emmert composed the music. It was *At the Hawk's Well* – the legendary play which “commuted” between Europe and Japan, starting with W. B. Yeats' drama for dancers, then the *Yokomichi Mario's Taka no Izumi* in 1949 with Kita Minoru's music, and now, in 1981 in an English version of *At the Hawk's Well*. I also read about more of his achievements - rearrangement and re-composition of music in noh style for the English noh *Saint Francis* (text authored by Arthur Little, original music by Leonard Holvik) and his new creation of the noh music for another English noh *Drifting Fires* (libretto by Janine Beichman).

I think I first met him in person in the nineties, perhaps in Tokyo at the symposium organized by the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties in 1991, or maybe it was in London at the conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and I saw him playing the nōkan. His play was great, with the shrilling sound of the flute piercing through the space, after which everybody became silent. Perhaps it was at that time that I received the CD with the musical selections from two classical Japanese noh plays and four original noh plays in English, published by Tokyo Teichiku Records. This served me a lot since, as I for years I was teaching to the students of both Japanese Studies (at Warsaw University), and Theatre Studies (at Theatre Academy, Warsaw). Richard Emmert's work and creation is an example of how flexible the spirit is.

It was in the nineties, when Japanese friends from the noh world started to talk to me about *Emaato-san* as a very important figure in linking noh with the Western culture. And finally we were able to meet more often, when I started to work for the Polish diplomatic service and was posted to Japan for many years, including my last mission as an Ambassador. It was fantastic to have Emaato-san come together with *Matsui Akira* for a special presentation of the noh and kyōgen in Visegrad Countries in 2014. He played the nohkan, performed and made a workshop for Polish participants. People were struck by the energy, accomplishment and ease with which he explained most complicated matters pertaining to the art of noh.

I wish Emaato-san, by now Emaato Sensei would come more often to Poland. I can hardly express the respect I feel for him and my admiration.

**The Legendary
Emaato-san**

**CAROLYN
MORLEY**

Professor of
Japanese,
Wellesley
College

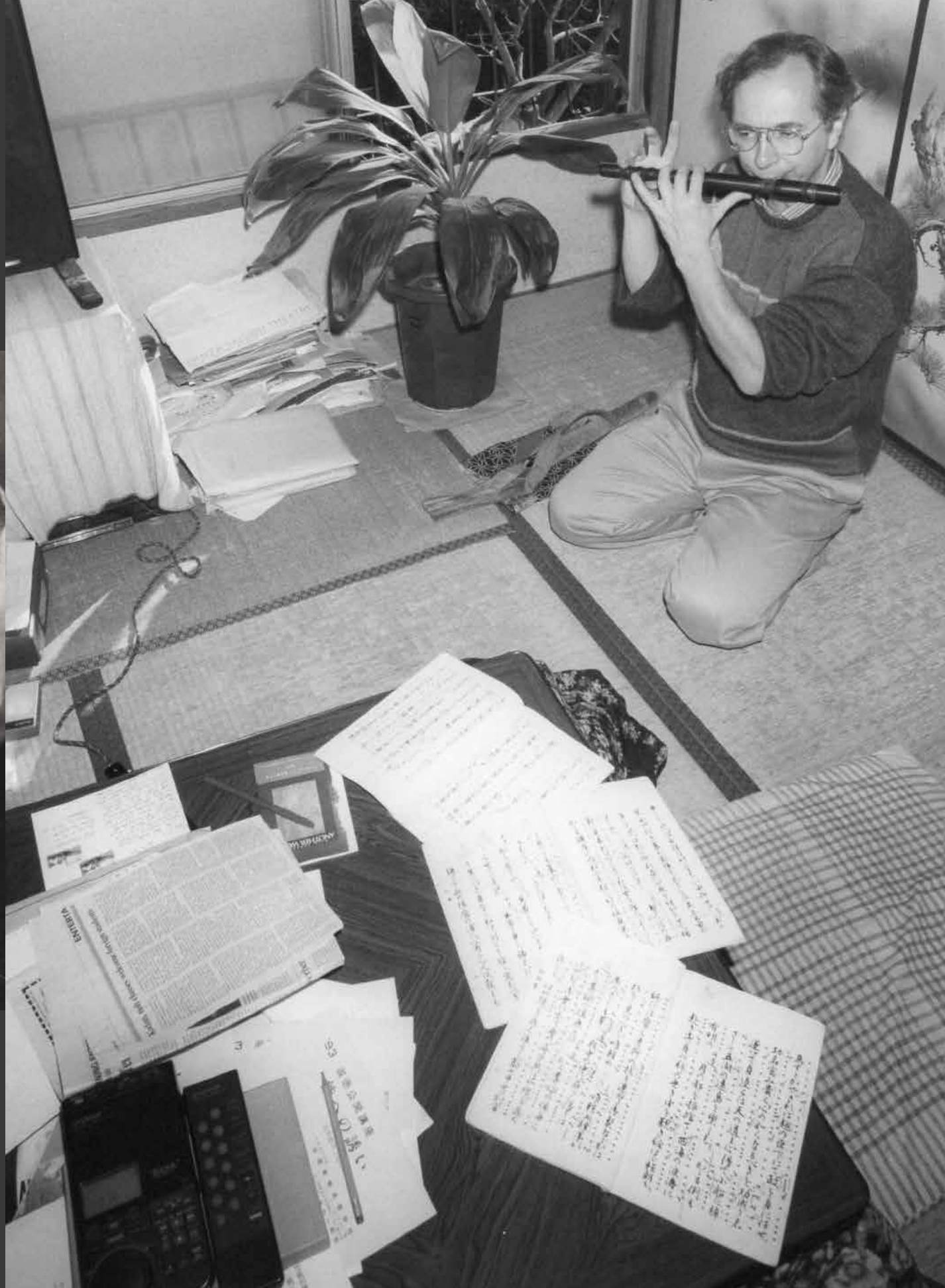
I met Rick through David Crandall in the 1980's when we were studying noh in Tokyo. Rick, David, Jane Corrdry, and I spent New Year's together at Monica Bethe's house in Kyoto. Jane had been studying with *Mansaku sensei* for a number of years and invited me along. I was really the outlier in the group as I was neither a musician nor a dancer while the others were experienced performers. I watched from the sidelines as they practised together with noh actors from the Kyoto area.

On New Year's Eve we climbed a hill outside Kyoto and in the bitter cold we rang in the New Year. I can still feel the cold, the excitement of the starry night, the warmth of being with friends, and an astonishment that I was there at all. The conversation was full of Rick's and David's dreams for English noh and their recent performance of *Crazy Jane*. We made plans for attending as many of the New Year *Okina/Sanbaso* performances as possible, tossing out ideas for a study of *Okina*, for performances in the States; anything and everything was possible that evening. Later, we ate Monica's warm homemade bread and German Christmas cookies around the *kotatsu*. I remember Rick recounting how he had performed the flute for a noh performed in the Tohoku region. We asked how he was received, and he responded, “Oh, it was kind of like being the dancing bear.”

Classroom of
Musashino University,
1994.



*Noh mask
exhibition, Tokyo,
1994.*



*Right:
Tokyo apartment,
1994.*

RICHARD EMMERT

56

Intercultural Collaborations:

2017 (February) Composer/Director/Nohkan for the original collaborative noh/opera/ballet **Opposites-InVerse** (libretto by Jannette Cheong). Performed at LSO St. Luke's, London.

2014 (December) noh performer in **Bedhaya Hagoromo**, a classical Central Javanese bedhaya/noh collaboration in Yogyakarta, Indonesia directed by Didik Nini Thowak.

2003 (October) Facilitator/Co-director/Performer in **Siddhartha** featuring traditional performers from Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan making up a company called Teater Cahaya, Malaysia Center in Kuala Lumpur.

2001 (November) noh performer in **Bedhaya Hagoromo**, a noh/classical Central Javanese bedhaya/noh collaboration in Yogyakarta, directed by Didik Nini Thowak. Reworked and re-presented in Jakarta in October 2004.

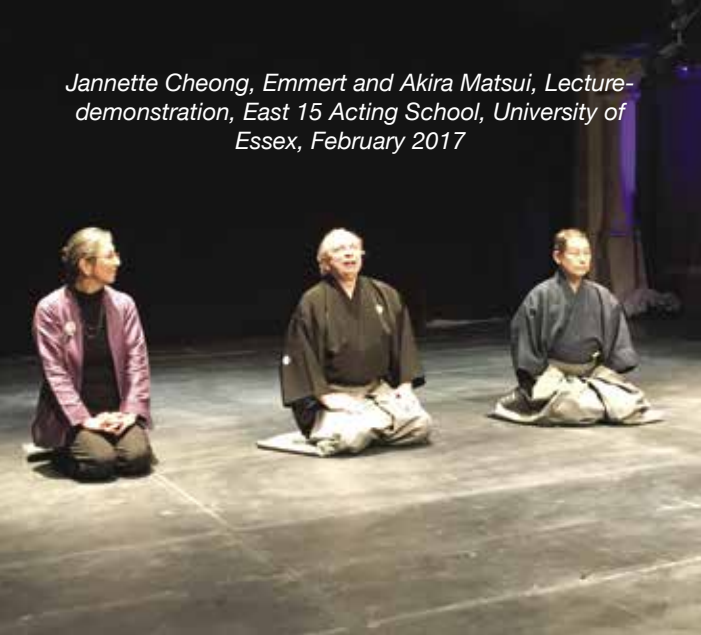
2001 (September) Composer/Performer in **Crazy Horse** directed by Yuriko Doi for the Theatre of Yugen in San Francisco. With Noh and Native American performance elements.

1998 (October) Performer in **The Mysteries of Eleusis** by Greek director Vasillios Calitsis in the BAM Festival at The Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York.

1997 (May-June) Artistic Director/Choreographer/Performer in **Dragon Bond Rite** featuring traditional performers from Japan, Korea, Indonesia, India and Tuva. Performed at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Japan Society in New York, and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. Also in the Hong Kong Festival, August 1998.

intercultural
collaborator
and friend

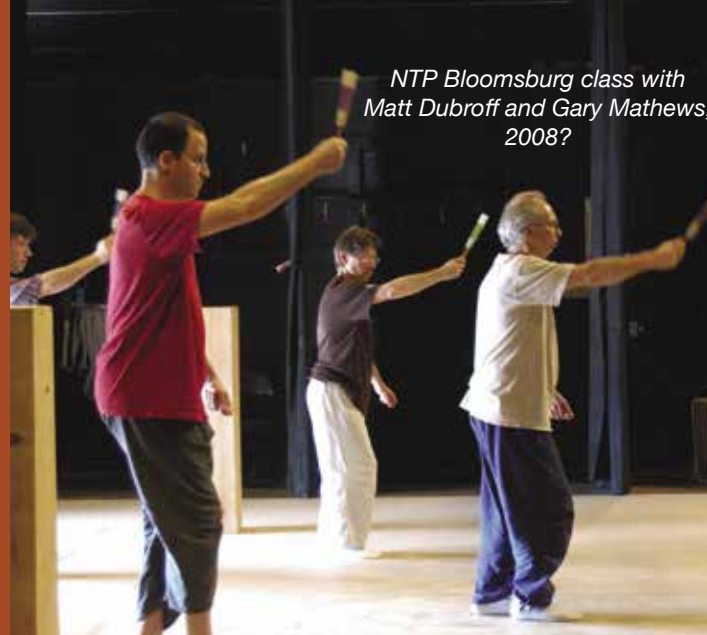
Jannette Cheong, Emmert and Akira Matsui, Lecture-demonstration, East 15 Acting School, University of Essex, February 2017



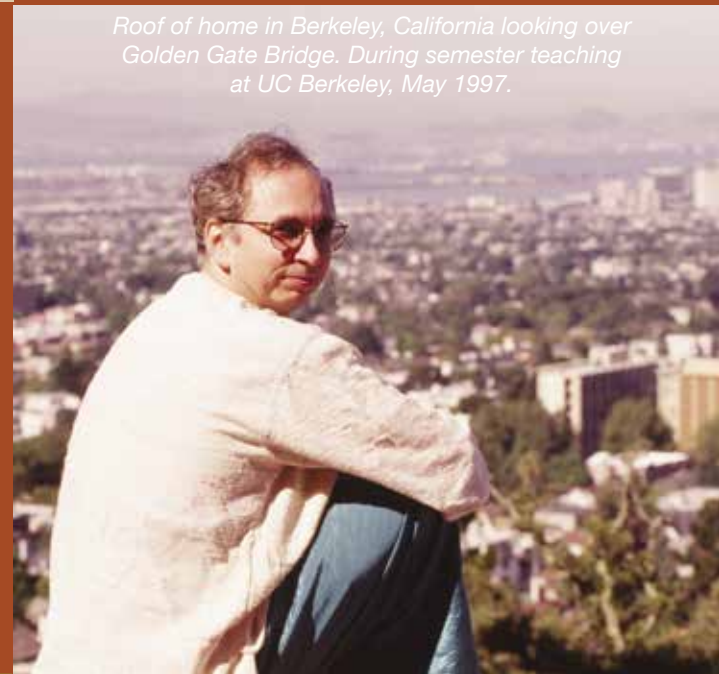
*Below:
Home of Mithila painter Pushpa Kumari in front of one of her paintings with her grandmother renowned painter Mahasundari Devi in Madhubani, Bihar, India. Kazuhiro Inoue (left). March 1998. Both Inoue and Emmert have collected many excellent Mithila paintings.*



NTP Bloomsburg class with Matt Dubroff and Gary Mathews, 2008?



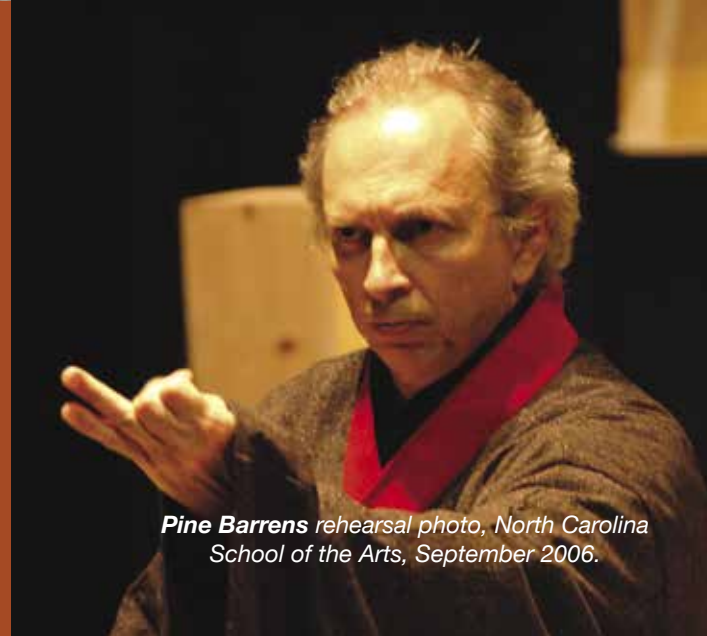
Roof of home in Berkeley, California looking over Golden Gate Bridge. During semester teaching at UC Berkeley, May 1997.



Downtown Bellagio, Italy for Dragon Bond Rite rehearsals. Korean drummer Choi Jong-Sil (left), Emmert, Akira Matsui, and Korean singer Kang Kwon-Soon. October 1996.



Pine Barrens rehearsal photo, North Carolina School of the Arts, September 2006.



RALPH SAMUELSON

Shakuhachi player and teacher and Senior Advisor of Asian Cultural Council

A Magical Man

Rick, do you remember that time four of us were sitting around in your living room, and we discovered that we were each born in succeeding years: me in 1946, two friends in 1947 and 1948 (was it Niimi San and Alan F.), and you in 1949? Well Little Brother, your time has come--welcome to the golden years!

Although you've been living in Japan for so long, you are an Ohio boy at heart, and I'm sure you recall a legendary figure in the history of 19th-century America named John Chapman. Kind, generous, cheerful, and eccentric, he traveled westward from his home in Massachusetts planting apple seeds, growing orchards, and spreading cheer, and of course he was affectionately known as Johnny Appleseed. He loved apples, he loved people, and he ended up living in Ohio, I believe not far from your hometown.

Rick, you are the Johnny Appleseed of noh, just as passionate, generous, knowledgeable, and cheerful. (But not quite as eccentric; perhaps just a bit.) Your infectious spirit touches all who meet you and, like Johnny, you are already a legendary figure.

I think we met in 1975 at the first ATPA (Asian Traditional Performing Arts) symposium in Tokyo. Later, you helped me a lot when you agreed to serve as the Asian Cultural Council's representative in Japan in the mid 1980s. And I still admire your special words about Yamaguchi Goro in some of his early international LP liner notes. Most significantly, when the history of the global reach of noh is written, your name will be at the top: Rick Emmert, noh's magical Johnny Appleseed. (Hmm, I'm already imagining a new play...)

Left: Georg Kochi who succeeded Emmert as Asian Cultural Council Representative in Japan. Then Ralph Samuelson (sitting) with wife Andrea (in front kneeling), and Emmert (standing in back). In the Tokyo art conservation studio of Masako Koyano, leading art conservator, on the day of her annual art class for children. 1992. Right: Ralph Samuelson and Emmert on excursion while attending International Folk Music Council conference in Seoul, 1983.



BONNIE C WADE

Professor Emerita, Department of Music, University of California, Berkeley

To my friend and colleague, warm words of appreciation. I haven't noticed any slowing down! Just think of all you have accomplished, what a rare path you have followed, the rich quality of your life! It has been an honor and a pleasure to know you--and to learn from you.

Our acquaintance began in 1995 or 1996--very late, given our mutual interest in Japanese traditional arts.

Little did I know that a windfall opportunity would arise at University College Berkeley to fulfill a years-long wish to replace my teaching in one term with a multi-departmental semester on the noh. But suddenly the opportunity arose and the search was on. Who might we invite to teach in both the Dramatic Arts Department and the Department of music AND in conjunction with courses in East Asian Languages and Literature on the historical, literary, and cultural space of the noh? EALC selected Arthur Thornhill as a visitor for that last, but who was qualified to offer instruction in the music AND the movement AND be responsible for end-of-term performances of a complete play sponsored by all the departments? Not to mention assisting in bringing a Japanese artist for part of the term? No problem for Theatre of Yugen in San Francisco to know just who to recommend--you of course! Who else had achieved Japanese accreditation as a shite actor, had acquired the skills and knowledge from traditional teachers to play nohkan and the drums of noh, was deeply knowledgeable about the noh repertoire of plays, was on the faculty of a Japanese university, had extensive experience working with both international students and the very special shite actor Matsui Akira? No one but Richard Emmert!

Since 1997 we have reminisced together about your semester at Berkeley but this tribute permits me to extoll you publicly for that extraordinary experience for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and a Bay Area audience. It was (mostly) fun, due to your spark, your persistence, your flexibility, your sense of humor, and your imagination--that included imagining that a play might be effectively performed in Japanese by students whose competence in Japanese was nil. You pulled it off! And provided all of us with unforgettable moments in our lives. How very special that you and I have been able to gather in Tokyo fairly regularly with that exceptional cluster of individuals in the Japanese arts. All the more precious now that the group is beginning to disperse as we grow older. I wish you many more years in your exceptional life, Rick.

Funabenkei at the Durham Studio Theater, University of California, Berkeley, May 1997. Department of Music, Department of Dramatic Arts, and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. In the center of the front row are, left to right, Akira Matsui (Kita-Noh), Bonnie Wade and Richard Emmert.



DAVID HUGHES

Research Associate and retired Head of Department of Music. Research Associate, Japan Research Centre, SOAS University of London

Wow, Rick Emmert is turning 70? Well, Rick, you're still younger than me!

Rick and I have known each other for more than half our lives. We met in 1978 as students at *Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku* ("Geidai", Tokyo University of the Arts). We both eventually ended up as university lecturers with active involvement in the performance of Japanese traditional music/theatre genres. Both of us were raised in the USA, but our jobs have kept us based elsewhere: Rick in Japan ever since, and me in England since 1981.

Our time at Geidai involved us in a range of Japanese traditional genres. Rick was particularly involved in noh, which of course became his career focus, and I was researching my PhD thesis on folk song (min'yō). But I also took lessons in noh from two *Geidai* teachers, one of them a Living National Treasure of noh flute, and Rick became a skilled player of folk *shakuhachi*.

Indeed, Rick performed in the Japanese folk world a bit. In 1979 he joined me, my wife Gina Barnes, and six other "foreigners" on the NHK TV show *Min'yō to tomo ni*. We opened by playing some Western folk instruments while singing the American song "Red River Valley", then we made a quick swap and did a trad min'yō, with Rick on shakuhachi.

Rick also tooted shakuhachi on two songs, and sang a chorus or two, on the min'yō LP Gina and I recorded with my teacher Tanaka Yoshio in 1980. The album-back photo shown here has Rick and his shakuhachi in the back row, second from left, and me in the middle back. (David Crandall, long involved in Rick's noh capers around the world, is at the back left.)

But of course, Rick's achievements in spreading the appreciation of noh globally have been most important. To focus on England: In 1991 I found funding to bring Rick and his Kita-school teacher Matsui Akira to my university, SOAS, University of London, for two months, to offer intensive noh lessons to about 30 Londoners. This launched the SOAS Noh Group, now the University of London Noh Society. He actually visited London several times in 1991, including with a group performing Shakespeare's *Falstaff* in kyogen style. And we performed noh in Hyde Park in September (see photo) – how on earth did Rick and Akira get us to a level that justified that?? (Well, it was a Japan Culture year, so a bit of amateurism was OK.)

In the past ten years, Rick has visited the UK many times (often with Akira and sometimes his US students), for noh summer schools, performances of new English-language noh (by Jannette Cheong and Ashley Thorpe) for which he composed and led the music, etc. We all look forward to his next visit!



BRIJ TANKHA

Emeritus
Professor of
Japanese History
at University of
Delhi. Currently,
Visiting Fellow
at the Institut
d'études
avancées
Nantes, France

I met Rick in the last century, in 1975. Its only as I write this that I think that's a long time; and we have remained friends. So that is something to celebrate.

I don't want to recount that history here but just to note that it was serendipity at work. We have both lost touch with the Indian who introduced us but we have continued to meet over the decades with sometimes long gaps in between. In those letter-writing days losing touch with friends was easier, and I only went back to Japan in the 1984 but he still lived facing the same graveyard, and we resumed our friendship. Through Rick I got to know Honcho Nichome (Rick's neighbourhood), and his favorite sushiya. I tried out his first computer (he had to write his dissertation and was in debt for a year). Computers were expensive, large, and the even thicker manual in Japanese, that I had to use to try and figure out how to save documents, was a nightmare. But it was because of him I was there when the hi-tech wave started.

Over the years Rick's friendship brought me in touch with a range of people, many from the world of noh that I would not have met but for him: Maki, Matsui and Inoue to name a few. I stayed many times at his place especially in the 1990's and saw the gestation of Theatre Nohgaku and the great and consistent work he has put in to make it what it is today.

I think Rick has many qualities, some we will discuss over sushi and sake, but what is admirable about him is his openness to ideas and people that allows him to be part of many circles, crossing cultures and national boundaries, and work on really a global scale. I am no expert but the few times I have seen him perform I was always impressed by the the intensity of the performance, the fruit of long years of hard practice and commitment.

I usually stayed away from Western expatriates in Japan because the conversations always revolved around set themes but in Ricks company that was never the case and I think that is why we have remained friends for so long; and I look forward to many more years of friendship, and hopefully one day seeing one of the noh plays in English.

JEFF JANISHESKI

Chair/Theatre-
Cal State Long
Beach

70 years old? Impossible! Doing noh for that many decades has obviously filled you with a grace and a lightness that few people have at that age! You are such a talented teacher and a special person. I cherish the many days I spent training with you: I learned so much from your wisdom, your experience and the gentle way you guided us.

Although, I don't technically use noh anymore in my theater teaching - so much of what you taught me has stayed with me to this day, and I actively draw upon the lessons I learned from you: about containment of energy, the economy of gestures, and the power of a single step.

Bringing you to NIDA in Sydney - exposing my students to my sensei - was a highlight of my career. And seeing your piece at UCLA recently reminded me of the importance of your project: I hope to see more noh plays in English!

Thank you for being such an inspiring teacher - and such a wonderful, compassionate, joyful soul!

ISAO KANO

Managing Director
Mitsubishi
Corporation
International
(Europe) Plc

Thank you very much for letting me know that Richard Emmert will become 70 years old, with its original literal meaning of 'rare in ancient time', namely *Koki* in Japanese (吉希).

I would like to express my hearty congratulations on his becoming 70 and for this celebration of the marvellous milestones of his life - having become 'married to noh'.

I do remember speaking to Richard and I immediately felt that this gentleman should be Japanese, namely Emaato Sensei, who looked like just an ordinary Japanese *Ojisan* (with a smile). Even if I shut my eyes he sounded like a native Japanese person who spoke perfect English!

Emmert's Tokyo home with Brij Tankha (left) and his wife Kamini and Musashino University professor, Nakamura Tsuyoshi. April 2010.





KIMIKO AOKI

Journalist

A Tribute to the Quiet Passion behind Pagoda

The first time I watched noh was when I was in high school. We all had to go as a part of our classics class. I remember the lights dimming. The chants starting. Actors in bright costumes appearing. Then no more. I fell asleep. I suspect this is a common experience for many of my peers. 25 years later, I was in London, working as a foreign news correspondent. I came across a press release announcing a series of noh workshops in schools. I was intrigued. Why would noh, difficult even for Japanese, be of interest to teachers and students in the UK? What would noh have to offer them? And how could noh be performed in English?

A series of inquiries and interviews lead me to **Pagoda**. It was the first noh play that made sense to me. I was amazed that I was able to understand the language and the story. The words were poetic, but clear in their meanings. The spoken English made the story immediate. The immortal tale of diaspora and migration felt relevant to our time. The performance took us on a journey across many boundaries.

Pagoda also made me also realize the art form allowed for the distilling of a complicated narrative down to its essence. And how practicing even the basic movements of noh could be a lesson in self-control, concentration and mindfulness. Perhaps all performing arts have these elements, but noh seemed to refine them into very simple acts. Taken together, it became apparent that noh lessons could go much further than studying a foreign culture.

In this way, **Pagoda** unlocked a heretofore closed door to me, and perhaps for many others. When I learned that the writing of **Pagoda** and the staging of the work by an international collaboration of artists would not have been possible without Professor Emmert's training and organization, I felt awe and gratitude for his years of dedication. In my mind, he is an unsung hero of noh, clothed in the dark chanters' wardrobe, an image of quiet passion and energy.

I continue to feel a sense of wonder for the fact that this art form has been kept alive for hundreds of years by actors, writers and teachers, to be passed on beyond our shores and brought home again, opening our eyes, bridging divides, and expanding the world for many. I hope the new journey that started with **Pagoda** will continue, for its creators as well as its admirers.



Pagoda. Kinue Oshima (shite), Teruhisa Oshima (nochitsure), Jubilith Moore (waki). National Noh Theatre, Tokyo June 2011

I can't think of Rick Emmert without thinking of **Dragon Bond Rite** (DBR). In 1993 I went to Japan with my Asian Cultural Council fellowship and Noh theater was one of my great fascinations at that time. Rick was a key person in Tokyo as a notable American noh performer/scholar and I was fortunate to meet him. I had a vision for a Pan Asian Mask Dance Drama blending Japanese noh, Korean Talchum, Indian Kuddhyatam, and Indonesian Topeng into a contemporary theater performance. Each drama tradition is based on singing, drumming and dancing. Rick already had researched all these traditions in Asia and as soon as I talked to him about my dream project, DBR, the sparks began to fly! We then traveled and worked in five countries for DBR. With his recommendation I was introduced to great Noh performers Akira Matsui, Shonosuke Okura, and Sadamu Omura. In 1994 Rick, Akira and I went to National Gugak Center in Seoul to meet Korean performers and then in 1995 Rick and I met with Paula Laurence, Executive Director at the Japan Society in New York.

In 1996 we traveled to India and Indonesia to research artists for the production - Rick already had great connections in India and Indonesia. With his generous guidance it was easier to meet the best Kudhyattam performers in Trivandrum. In 1996 Paula met us in Bali where we spent a week working with local artists and in 1997 the DBR artist team met at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center, Italy to workshop and create the piece. Rick was directing choreography while I was directing music. At the Walker Art Center, MN, the 14 member DBR team prepared for the premiere for the 90th Anniversary of the Japan Society. After a full house at the World Premiere DBR subsequently was presented by the Korea Society at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, Washington DC. In 1998 DBR was invited to the Festival of Asia in Hong Kong. It would not have been possible to achieve this incredibly successful project without Rick's generosity, knowledge and deep experiences of Asian theater traditions.

Left Photo: Rehearsal for **Dragon Bond Rite** at The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Italy. Akira Matsui (left), Emmert, Armand Schwerner (libretto), and Jin Hi Kim (composer). October 1996.

Right photo: Performers of **Dragon Bond Rite** at the Japan Society, New York, June 1997. Emmert (front left), then Sadamu Omura. Akira Matsui (in noh mask and costume, kneeling second from right), Jin Hi Kim (back row, second from left), noh otsuzumi drummer Shonosuke Okura, (back row far right).

JIN HI KIM

Composer/
Komungo player
Visiting Assistant
Professor, Music
Department
Wesleyan
University

ALEX DEA

Scholar/
performer
of Central
Javanese
music

In 1977, on my way home to the USA after two years of ethnomusicological field research in Indonesia, I was introduced to Rick in Tokyo, at the home of noted Japanese ethnomusicologist Fumiko Tamura. It was a dinner fete at her house when her father kiddingly challenged Rick to show what he had learned of noh drumming. Rick did very well. The food was swell too.

In 1992, I returned to Java to resume my research. One day around 1997, at the Kusuma Sahid Prince Hotel where I practiced gamelan, out appears Rick from nowhere. We got reacquainted.

In 1998, the riots in Indonesia happened while I was away in Malaysia. I could not endure the trauma of such burning of my beloved *Land of Dreams* where gamelan music lived. I ran to Japan. Rick's generosity in allowing me to stay with him was boundless, and the bonus was I started to learn noh from him. Soon after, Rick and I created Teater Cahaya inspired by the late director and set designer Manuel Lutgenhorst to produce Hesse's *Siddhartha*.

We gathered a group of superlative performers from Bali, Java, Japan, Malaysia, and India. The method and process of rehearsals was unique in having no single director. Each participant took turns directing scenes.

Many happy and fortuitous accidents proved the efficacy and value of this rare cooperation. We built 10 scenes in less than 10 days – an impressive feat. The result of these happy accidents was electrifying, and in 2003, *Siddhartha* was presented in Kuala Lumpur to great acclaim. Unfortunately, due to lack of funding support, that was the last of Teater Cahaya. The vision to forge ahead in experimental elemental essences of director-less theater art was stopped.

However, now in 2019, with great happiness, I see the bravery and courage of Rick evident in his marvelous work by creating the visionary English noh company Theatre Nohgaku.

Left photo: Siddhartha rehearsal, from left: Emmert, Makiko Sakurai, Alex Dea. Negara, Bali. Jan 2003.

Right photo:

During Siddhartha rehearsal, from left, Didik Nini Thowok, Emmert, Alex Dea. Akira Matsui (center back). December 2001.



DIDIK NINI THOWOK

Popular
traditional
Indonesian
Comedian/
Performer

I met Richard Emmert Sensei through Alex Dea when I needed a recommendation letter for a fellowship with the Asian Cultural Council.

Although that fellowship did not come through, The Japan Foundation Jakarta did support me to study in Tokyo during 2000 for three months, where I studied *nihon buyo* with Gojo Masanosuke sensei and noh with Richard Emmert Sensei.

Rick's excellent training of noh compositions *Yuya*, *Momijigari*, and *Hagoromo* was a great enhancement to my cross-gender, cross-border, and cross-cultural aspirations and career. This added knowledge inspired me to combine noh Hagoromo with Javanese bedhaya classical dance in 2001. This Bedhaya Hagoromo, mentored by Rick and with support from the Japan Foundation, was successfully performed. Rick Sensei danced, drummed, and sang with the best Javanese performers.

Besides this, we participated in *Siddhartha* in Malaysia with close friend Ramli Ibrahim and Sutra Foundation. Rick and I became closer friends then, and also when I enjoyed hospitality in his Tokyo home and at the Hotel Cahaya in Bali.

Siddhartha rehearsal members: includes front row from left: Alex Dea, then Akira Matsui. Second row from left: Emmert, Didik Nini Thowok, (center), Tetsuro Koyano (2nd from right), Ramli Ibrahim (far right). Solo, Java. May 2002.



RENATA WIMER

Directora Artística Teatro Del Mundo

MAKOTO NO HANA

In 2016 I was in L.A. searching for new dramatic literature. As a theatre maker I wanted to find something that could light up my inspiration as an artist. I went to many different bookshops and I felt quite discouraged because I couldn't find what I was looking for, but at the last minute my eyes noted a Japanese mask drawn in a b/white book: Five modern noh plays by Yukio Mishima. I started reading those stories and something awakened in me. I guess it had to do with a hidden and old admiration of the Japanese universe.

When I came back to Mexico I showed the book to a friend of mine. I told her I wanted to stage some of these stories and she suggested going further to the original noh plays. We read **Dojoji**, **Hanjo**, **Kanawa** and **Ono No Komachi**; we also read about Zeami's life and his vision of the art of the noh actor. After that, we realized we had to find a teacher. It was clear we couldn't go further without a proper guide into the beautiful universe of noh.

Magically Florencia remembered that in the past she had found a noh teacher on the internet called Rick Emmert, so we wrote to him again and to our surprise Rick's response was positive. We met him for the first time on Skype at the end of 2016. I remember his warm human quality, enthusiasm, and his great openness to collaborate with a pair of unknown Mexican theatre makers. His willingness to share his knowledge gave us the complete trust that he was the person we were looking for. The right human connection. An artist, a nice human being and a generous teacher.

In 2017 we organized a workshop for playwrights and a training retreat for performing artists. The residency program has continued since then every year opening the space for playwrights, actors, dancers, musicians and people interested in this tradition through master classes, conferences, presentations, and workshops.

We still have years left in order to continue our artistic journey deep inside the universe of noh with our sensei, Rick Emmert. We have in mind many beautiful projects to develop that include the publishing of noh written by Mexican playwrights and the production of **Sumidagawa**, which will be the first classical noh play ever to be performed in Spanish.

The quality of Rick's teachings is very special. Through him I have started, albeit very slowly, to understand beauty in a different way while contemplating a simple slow walk on the stage of a noh actor that shares a profound and mysterious sense of what beauty could be.

Noh has giving me a new perspective as a theatre performer. I have understood the power of stillness and simplicity. I think there are teachers that live their art deeply and thanks to that they are able to give the right transmission to their students. Rick has that special quality of a true guide and artist, the quality of a genuine flower... like Zeami used to say.

Curtain call of Teatro del Mundo performance with Florencia Ruiz Sandoval, Gitanjali Jain, and Renata Wimer. Teatro Orientacion, Mexico City, April 2019.



Left: Teatro del Mundo production of Hagoromo shimai with Jessica Gamez and Emmert. Teatro Orientacion, Mexico City, April 2019.



Teatro del Mundo production of Emmert performing Rio Sumida shimai in Spanish with women's chorus, Teatro Orientacion, Mexico City, April 2019.

Teatro del Mundo production curtain call with performers including second from right, Renata Wimer. Teatro Orientacion, Mexico City, April 2019.



MARK HILL

Butoh
Performer/
Teacher

It is with a great sense of happiness that I write to celebrate this special birthday with you. I can't thank you enough for the grace of your spirit, energy, wisdom and experience, that you have so generously and lovingly shared with me, and others, over the years. Congratulations on the significant contribution you have made to Arts and Education, especially to noh, across the world, in such an inspirational, memorable and humble way. I can't wait to share many more experiences with you. Thank you for being a loving friend and mentor. Have a wonderful birthday!

CLIVE BARDA

Photographer

When I first met Rick I had absolutely no idea what to expect. Noh was an art form I had seen once in Japan but otherwise knew virtually nothing about it. It was therefore a thrilling experience to be closely involved with him conducting a noh workshop and, as I watched and photographed him, I immediately began to realise that I was in the presence of a unique individual in whom eastern and Western culture had become completely combined.

I still find it hard to believe that Rick, an Anglophone American, has been able to become so profoundly and totally immersed in the ancient and mysterious traditions of noh and his enthusiasm is irresistibly infectious. His company is always stimulating, both photographically and intellectually, and I much look forward to working with him again very soon.

See pages pp. 6 (photos 2&4), 10, 11, 36 (photo 1), 72, 116, 118, 119 for other Clive Barda Photographs

PAUL LAIKIN

Managing
Director
Unanico Goup

I have worked with Rick since we co-produced, together with Jannette Cheong, *Noh Time Like The Present* at LSO St Luke's, and now the European Tour of *Takasago & Between the Stones*. From the very first time we met, I was impressed by Rick's passion for and commitment to noh – a product of his decades of devotion to this fascinating art form. Rick combines a stern and serious approach to his subject with great energy, patience, and kindness, often with a mischievous twinkle in the eye. Through his global performance and academic activities, Rick truly brings people together, helping to foster international cultural understanding through his commitment to noh in Japan, the UK, Ireland, France and elsewhere. It is an honour to collaborate with Rick, and this tribute is richly deserved.

JONATHAN DOVE

Composer

It was a great privilege to meet you "on air" and I look forward to a longer conversation when we have the chance. It was enthralling and enormously illuminating to hear you explain and demonstrate some aspects of the performance and composition of noh, from your unique position as a modern Western creator and interpreter of this venerable Eastern art-form. Thank you for your wonderful generosity in sharing your knowledge and experience.

ORPHA PHELAN

Opera Director

Thank you for all you have given me - a love of Noh, a relationship with Japan, not to mention some rare opportunities to perform. I'll always remember your gentleness as my eyes welled in terror in Bloomsburg at the notion of performing in front of an audience. Your sense of calm and kindness have stayed with me, and I hope that I still manage to garner some of them when I deal with performers myself.

MARGARET COLDIRON

Deputy Head
of BA World
Performance
University of
Essex

I can only say that Rick is a wonderful artist and teacher and I have been delighted to see and take part in some of the work he has done in London. I hold him in such great admiration for the work he has done all over the world making noh more accessible to a wide audience. He is a treasure!



Left photo by Clive Barda. *Pagoda* performance with Elizabeth Dowd (left, *tsure*), Jubilith Moore (*waki*), Narumi Takizawa (far left, *nohkan*), and chorus members including front row from left, Ryoji Terada, Matt Dubroff, David Surtasky, Tom O'Connor, and back row from left, David Crandall, Emmert and John Oglevee. Southbank Centre, London, December 2009.



Emmert performing **Kurozuka** shimai with mask, Japan-Mexico Center, Mexico City, April 2018.

Emmert performing nohkan (above) and taiko (below). Teatro del Mundo production, Teatro Orientacion, Mexico City, April 2019.



RICHARD EMMERT

**constant
vision**

Major Performances of English Noh and Noh abroad

2020 (January/February) Composer/Director/Jigashira of English noh **Between the Stones**; a co-production with Unanico in association with the Oshima Theatre and Theatre Nohgaku. To be performed at Southbank Centre, Purcell Room, London; Kilkenny & Wexford in Ireland; and Musée Guimet, Paris, France.

2018 (October) Composer/Director/Jigashira of Theatre Nohgaku tour of English noh **Blue Moon Over Memphis**, University of Michigan, UCLA.

2018 (May) Composer/Hyoshi-ban (playing both tsuzumi drum patterns) performer/Co-director with Ashley Thorpe of his English noh play **Emily** with students of the Department of Theatre, Royal Holloway, UK.

2017 (August) Waki in Theatre Nohgaku presentation of English noh **Gettysburg**. Bloomsburg, PA.

2017 (March) Composer/Director of Theatre Nohgaku tour of English noh **Blue Moon Over Memphis**, Williams College and Earlham College, USA.

2016 (August) Director/Composer/Jigashira in Theatre Nohgaku presentation of English noh **Blue Moon Over Memphis**, NACL Theater, Highland Lake, NY.

2016 (March) Director/*Shite* in Theatre Nohgaku presentation of English noh **Sumida River**, Boston University, Massachusetts.

2015 (November) Director/Waki in Theatre Nohgaku tour of English noh **Sumida River**, University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Asia Society, Houston, Texas.

2015 (Sept-Oct) Director/Composer/Jigashira in performance of English noh **Oppenheimer**, University of Sydney, Australia.

2014 (August) Director/Waki classical noh **Takasago and Hagoromo** performed in Bloomsburg, PA, Noh Training Project.

2014 (June) Director/main actor (*shite*) in Theatre Nohgaku performance of English noh **Sumida River**, Zen Mountain Monastery, NY.

2013 (October) Member of performance team/taiko, Kita tour, Jakarta, Indonesia.

2013 (Feb-March) Member of performance team/nohkan/taiko/chorus/dance, Kita tour, Warsaw/Crakow, Poland.

2012 (August) Director, classical noh Atsumori performed in Bloomsburg, PA, Noh Training Project.

2012 (March) Leader of Theatre Nohgaku performance team residency and performance, Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia.

2011 (June~July) Composer/Director/Jigashira in Theatre Nohgaku/Oshima Noh Theatre's collaborative Asian premiere tour of Jannette Cheong's English noh **Pagoda** in Tokyo, Kyoto, Beijing and Hong Kong.

2009 (December) Composer/Director/Jigashira in Theatre Nohgaku/Oshima Noh Theatre's collaborative world premiere European tour of Jannette Cheong's English noh **Pagoda** in London, Dublin, Oxford and Paris.

2009 (August) Director for classical noh **Funabenkei** performed at Bloomsburg, Pa for the Noh Training Project's 15th anniversary celebration by Theatre Nohgaku.

2006 (September) Composer/Director/Main actor (*shite*) in Theatre Nohgaku's world premiere of Greg Giovanni's English noh **Pine Barrens** at the North Carolina School of the Arts, Duke University and Hampden-Sydney College.

2006 (April-May) Composer/Co-director with Akira Matsui/Chorus

leader for Pangaea Arts production of the world premiere of Daphne Marlatt's English noh play **The Gull** in Vancouver, British Columbia.

2005 (August-September) Composer/Musical Director/Nohkan player/Chorus leader for Theatre of Yugen's production of Erik Ehn's English noh **Moon of the Scarlet Plums (aka Crazy Horse)** at the Aichi Expo, Tokyo, San Francisco, Torrance, California.

2004 (August) Director/Chorus leader for classical noh **Kurozuka** performed at Bloomsburg, Pa for the Noh Training Project's 10th anniversary celebration by Theatre Nohgaku.

2002 (September) Director/Composer/Performer for premiere Theatre Nohgaku tour of seven US cities featuring the English Noh **At the Hawk's Well**.

2001 (September) Composer/Music Director/nohkan for Theatre of Yugen's production of Erik Ehn's English noh **Crazy Horse** in San Francisco.

1991 (November) nohkan with the Nomura Mansaku Kyogen Troupe of the newly-created kyogen Horazamurai based on Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor in performances in London and Cardiff.

1990 (June-July) nohkan with noh-biwa ensemble in a fusion arrangement of Dojoji in performances in Norway and Finland.

1989 (February) Toured with hayashi instrumental ensemble Tsuxma playing nohkan in performances in the United States.

1987 (April-May) Chorus and Nohkan Facilitator/Workshop Translator with six-person noh ensemble (Tsuxma) for performances and demonstrations in the United States.

1986 (October-November) Nohkan (flute) and Taiko (stick drum) Performer with Komparu School Tour of Hungary.

1986 (September) Director/composer/jigashira for the English Noh play **Drifting Fires**, Zojoji Temple, Tokyo. 1985 (August) Tsukuba Science Exposition, Tsukuba.

1986 (May) Facilitator/Workshop Translator for Kita School Tour of United States. (March) Flute Performer and Explanator with five-person noh ensemble for performances in New York City.

1985 (February/March) Facilitator for Kita School Tour of Holland and Belgium.

1970 (April/June) Main actor (*shite*) in student performance of English noh play **St. Francis** by Arthur Little and Leonard Holvik at Earlham College, Indiana.

Theatre Nohgaku and its Work (written by Richard Emmert in 2009)

After working on English noh in the 80s, it seemed clear that if it was to become viable, it was necessary to have a group of English speakers trained in noh. In 1991, I started an ongoing semi-intensive Noh Training Project in Tokyo, and then in 1995, a summer intensive Noh Training Project in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. Both continue today.

Thus, after some years of planting the seeds, Theatre Nohgaku was born. We had our first tour in the United States in 2002 of Yeats' *Hawk's Well*. In 2003, we began an annual Writers' Workshop geared to playwrights and poets interested in writing in the style of noh. In 2004, we collaborated with the Noh Training Project for its 10th anniversary performance in Pennsylvania of the classical noh *Kurozuka* in Japanese. In 2006, we toured Theatre Nohgaku member Greg Giovanni's *Pine Barrens*, a story of the devil said to roam the pine barrens of New Jersey. In 2007, we toured David Crandall's *Crazy Jane* which he readapted to be sung in noh style with a noh ensemble. In 2008 we again collaborated with the Noh Training Project for its 15th anniversary by performing the classical noh *Funabenkei* in Japanese.

The production of *Pagoda* in 2009 in collaboration with the Oshima Noh Theatre was another step in our development as a company. But perhaps more importantly, it was a step in making noh an accessible art form for the English-speaking world.

Extract from the Pagoda Programme 2009

*Rick playing the waki role in a rehearsal of David Crandall's **The Linden Tree**, performed in Tokyo in 1986.*



DAVID CRANDALL

**Director, Rogue River Noh Center Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Founding Member, Theatre Nohgaku**

A Constant Vision

It's hard to imagine what the world of English-language noh would look like if Rick Emmert hadn't been on the scene. He is neither the first nor the only person who perceived the intrinsic value of noh as a traditional art and its potential as a springboard for new work, but he has followed his vision with more passion and persistence than anyone else I know. Through his generosity as a teacher, Rick has been instrumental in spreading the gospel of noh far and wide among people of diverse backgrounds and talents. His deep grounding in the traditional form, his mastery of all performance aspects, and his unwavering determination to bring noh to non-Japanese audiences have created a framework that many people, including myself, have gratefully utilized. Rick is also a master of personal connections that have sparked new experiments now unfolding with ever more sophisticated and challenging artistic results. This is an exciting time for those of us involved in the tiny universe of English-language noh, and it is due in large part to Rick's constant vision of what can be. For that we can all be grateful.

David Crandall and Emmert at Tokyo University of Arts foreign student party, 1980.



ELIZABETH DOWD

Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, Ensemble Member Theatre Nohgaku, Founding Member Coalition for Social Equity, Steering Committee

In 1992 a six-month Creative Artist Fellowship from the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission took me to Japan to study traditional performing arts. As I contacted people asking where and with whom I might best spend this precious time, in the area of noh, all roads led to Richard Emmert. I became a student of his Tokyo based Noh Training Project and soon enough, Mr. Emmert became my friend, Rick. As the end of the fellowship period approached, I asked him to consider offering NTP/US at my home base, the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, a professional non-profit theatre located in rural Pennsylvania. Rick was intrigued. A non-urban setting for three-weeks of intensive daily noh training, free from the distractions and expenses of city life. This could put noh training within financial reach of professional artists. How could he say no? And so in 1995, Rick became Director of NTP/US. Under Rick's twenty-year leadership, NTP offered the most intensive training in noh available outside of Japan. Students came from across the U.S., Canada, Germany, Chile, Nepal, the Netherlands, the U.K, and even Japan to a small Pennsylvania town to train in the performance of noh. Amazing.

Through those years of collaboration on NTP/US Rick became my mentor and among my most cherished friends. Looking back I see ever more clearly how generous he has been with his time, resources (both financial and personal), patience and faith in us. Rather than dictate what we should do with what we were learning, he created opportunities that required our growth. He demanded much of us while accepting our limitations. I often felt myself in artistic positions I hadn't earned, but Rick helped (forced?) me to view putting myself beyond my depth not as failure, but as a fast lane to understanding where I was lacking - where my attention needed to be directed. It is no exaggeration to say that the study of noh changed my life. I have Rick to thank for that. And I do, with a profoundly grateful heart.

'The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.'

Pablo Picasso

Flute Blooms

A great teacher has great stories, and one of Rick's classic tales has to do with losing a beloved nohkan on a trip to India, a saga that Rick concludes by expressing the hope that his nohkan found a good home, perhaps sparking a local practice of nohkan playing in some secluded reach of the Indian subcontinent.

I was thirty-two when I discovered Rick and Elizabeth Dowd's Noh Training Project in Bloomsburg, that Pennsylvania town to which all noh roads in the U.S. led for some twenty years. This was my first opportunity to play the nohkan – an invigorating plastic student model – and after three weeks of playing it, I loved it so much that I bought it from Rick. The following summer I had my first chance to play in a full noh – a takigi performance of *Funa Benkei* on the banks of the Susquehanna, a consort of insects vying with me as I volleyed my hishigi out into the summer dark. And then it was Atsumori. And then Rick's English-language performing version of Sumidagawa.

And it occurred to me at some point that Rick Emmert doesn't lose flutes. He plants them. He plants them, and they grow. They grow in rural Pennsylvania and urban Texas. They grow in Tokyo and London. They grow in Mexico City and wherever he happens to go. How many teachers, having traveled all over the world and having taught untold numbers of students, could say the same? Thank you, Rick, for teaching that blooms.

Elizabeth Dowd and Emmert before performance of *Funabenkei* with Elizabeth as maeshite, Noh Training Project-Bloomsburg, August 2009.



KEVIN SALFEN

Associate Professor of Music, University of the Incarnate Word Member of Theatre Nohgaku

Elizabeth Dowd applauds Emmert after Noh Training Project Bloomsburg recital, August 2014.



**JOHN
OGLEVEE**

Founding
Member
of Theatre
Nohgaku

As a product of Rick's "noh proselytizing" I must say that Rick Emmert's importance as a rung in noh's continuing ladder towards global recognition cannot be overemphasized. Nohgaku has been evolving since its emergence in the 14th century.

To remain relevant amongst a sea of "entertainments," noh adopted strict rules and guidelines to help foster its growth. Remaining largely unknown to those outside of Japan, it was a true wonder that translations of its poetry made such an impact to those unfamiliar with its praxis. Thanks in large part to those working in the emerging fields of cultural anthropology and performance studies post-WWII, scholarship on noh began to flourish, but understanding did not.

Between noh's first translated literary releases in the early 20th century and up until a cadre of foreign students, Rick Emmert being among them, emerged in the 1960's and 70's to study noh's performance elements, noh remained somewhat enigmatic and shrouded in mystery. His faithfulness to noh's performance structure in his exploration of non-Japanese noh is a testament to his years of committed study and his love of the form. His passion for noh is contagious and he continues to be the catalyst in my own obsession with noh and its possibilities. He continues to practice noh in Japanese while simultaneously championing the exploration of noh in other languages. The path traditional noh takes in the coming years is still developing, but the number of people across the globe who have been introduced not only to viewing noh, but also to committing to its practice, can in no short measure be attributed to Richard Emmert. Thank you Rick.

*John Oglevee performs Young Man in David Crandall's **Crazy Jane**, with Hitoshi Sakurai (taiko), Mitsuo Kama (okawa), Narumi Takizawa (nohkan). University of Puget Sound, March 2007.*



**JUBILITH
MOORE**

Founding
Member
of Theatre
Nohgaku

As you know, I've been blessed with many fine teachers - it has been my privilege to follow several rivers upstream. Everyone who has studied with you Rick knows you to be a very fine teacher. You are incredibly kind, gentle, generous, know well what you are teaching and on and on. As one of your slowest "middle-old" students, (I am now the age you were when we first met) I finally realize what I most appreciate about my studies with you, and why I hold you in such high regard. You may be teaching me noh, but what I'm learning is compassion and the importance of patiently listening rather than the actual sequence of *kata*. It's as if noh is that thing that happens off to the side while you actually cultivate the stickiness of belonging.

For years now, following many a noh related activity, we'd sit around a table - with lots of little dishes - eating, drinking and listening as you regale us (while laughing like an Ohio schoolboy hearing *kakegoe* for the first time) with stories of your various noh missteps! As if to say, you are a student of noh, just like the rest of us. You're not of course. You're Richard Emmert!!! (sung in dynamic style to the reverberate hills!)

Happy Birthday Rick and many healthy returns of the day!
It's been my honor to walk these last few decades with you,
experiencing the happiness of the pursuit.

*Jubilith Moore and Emmert confer. August 2006 during the rehearsals for **Pine Barrens***



GARY MATHEWS

Professor of Classical Languages and Comparative Literature, North Carolina State University. Founding Member of Theatre Nohgaku

Of all the ways Richard Emmert has contributed to the world—as scholar and educator, as ambassador of noh both in Japan and around the world, as performer, composer/choreographer and all-around impresario of noh, and for all the related skills at which he has excelled, it is as a teacher that I most admire and celebrate him. Over the twenty some years since I started training under Rick, I have been privileged to observe at great length his teaching not just of me but of countless other students. And what I have found most impressive, besides of course his love of noh and passion for sharing it, are the limitless ways he finds to tailor his instruction so as to meet the need of the moment for each individual student. There is a word for this: care. Not just that, “he cares,” but that, “he takes care,” takes indeed every care to perceive what will be most helpful to the student before him at that exact time. And although many of his other contributions may have had broader impact, none has, I truly believe, given more value to people than this one. For this, Rick, my deepest gratitude.

MATTHEW R. DUBROFF

Chair, Department of Fine Arts Associate Professor of Theatre Hampden-Sydney College. Founding Member of Theatre Nohgaku

Over the past 30 years or so I have gotten to know Rick pretty well. I started out studying with Rick in his small apartment singing *Yuya* back and forth from one tatami to another. With his first group of NTP Tokyo students, Rick lead us on noh and culinary expeditions in and around Tokyo. Later I lived in Rick’s house as he traveled and returned from around the world. Many a night concluded with us watching videos at home and Rick would realize halfway through that he had seen parts of the film on an airplane going somewhere. Over the past couple of decades my time with Rick has been centered around Theatre Nohgaku activities and we have had globe-trotting thrills performing (and eating some more). The overriding experience throughout is that Rick lives life to the fullest. It is always an adventure with him, from food to singing *Yuya* for the umpteenth time. Rick inevitably brings joy and love for all that he is doing and love to the people who have the great fortune to be with him.

LLUIS VALLS

Founding Member of Theatre Nohgaku. Member of Theater of Yugen

Rick, I can’t thank you enough for sharing your love of noh. Not just the form: the *kata*, the melodies, the complex rhythms the strange growling chant of *gogin*, but the beauty that lies underneath it and envelops it. You are a wonderful teacher, patient and kind, and appropriately demanding, encouraging, and even pushing us to do pieces we may not feel ready for, showing your confidence in our group’s ability. Your generosity is boundless, exemplified by the many students and others who have crashed Chez Rick in Tokyo over the years. I am so grateful to have been one of them and look forward to many more opportunities to work and spend time together.

DAVID SURTASKY

Member of Theatre Nohgaku

I’ve known Rick Emmert for many years as teacher, mentor, and friend. There are not adequate words to express my thanks for what he has taught me, and further the opportunities that his teaching has provided to me in my life. (*DS Director of Production, Indiana University of Pennsylvania*)

COLLEEN LANKI

Artistic Director, Tomoe Arts, Founding member of Theatre Nohgaku

Rick Emmert is someone who opens doors to amazing new worlds. I will never forget the moment I first met Rick in the lobby of the National Noh Theatre and asked if it were remotely possible for an errant Canadian actor to study noh, and he replied, “Weeelll, I happen to teach....” His answer was the beginning of so many adventures: my first noh practice at a private noh stage buried in a Tokyo neighbourhood, a voyage to the snowy village of Kurokawa for all-night noh performances, an amazing trip to Bali for his 50th birthday with a group from all over the world, and the founding of Theatre Nohgaku. Rick also introduced me to people who have changed my life, including my nihon buyoh teacher, Fujima Yūko.

Rick’s house in Nakano-sakaue has been the Tokyo mecca for many. I have met so many creative people from all over the world at “Chez Rick.” It has been both a home-away-from-home where one could bake a Christmas turkey, and an international networking centre. I wonder how many books, performances and artistic projects have had their beginning at Chez Rick...

Rick - you have been the catalyst for so much. Thank you!

Colleen Lanki rehearsing hakama noh performance of Tomoe, National Noh Theatre Small Hall. Sadamu Omura (instructor, left), Colleen, Mitsuo Kama (okawa), Kokichi Umeno (kotsuzumi) and Emmert (nohkan). March 2001.



LAURA SAMPSON

Member of Theatre Nohgaku. Storyteller/Arts Promoter

So very many people's lives have been enriched by Rick's tireless efforts to spread the art of noh outside (and within) its homeland Japan: I'm proud to be one of them. Like so many, my first experience of *utai* was Rick's unmistakable voice; of *hayashi* - the voice of his *nohkan*. There's an army of us: once-upon-a-time new arrivals in Tokyo who, clutching a comp ticket (a gift from Rick), first sat in a noh theatre surrounded by snoozing grannies, watched an excruciatingly slow-moving performance ... and left afterwards, inexplicably smitten. One of many who, because of Rick, went to Japan for one thing, and came back with noh.

That Rick so regularly inspires 'foreigners' to practise Japanese noh seriously - or at all - is miraculous. For anyone living outside Japan, it's near-impossible to become proficient, let alone ever master or fully understand the form: a frustrating prospect for perfectionists like me. But, under Rick's tuition [rigorous, informal, inclusive], practising this time-consuming, medieval, 'no-shortcuts' form, painfully aware of your limitations, somehow remains an adventure. Somehow, wordlessly, Rick manages to remind you it's worth it anyway.

Since we first met in 2011, Rick's energy, hospitality, and generosity have inspired me on. Because of him, noh has infused my creative life in more ways than I could have imagined. Today, as *utai* singer, *nohkan* player, *shimai* dancer, facilitator (with Theatre Nohgaku and Noh Training Project UK) I still strive for one of Rick's rare compliments. Once in a blue moon - in the USA, UK, Japan, Singapore, or another of many places where noh has led me - I get one. Now, with a hard-won 'beginners' mind', cultivated by Rick, I can live with that.

MARIKO ANNO

Member of Theatre Nohgaku Associate Professor of Tokyo Institute of Technology

What a joyous day! Thank you for meeting with me in December 2004, when I visited Tokyo for my dissertation fieldwork - when this noh journey began! I wouldn't have made it this far without your help and guidance. You've paved the way for many of us, and we are grateful for your hard work and dedication! Also, thank you for your generosity and willingness to share your knowledge and expertise in noh! May you continue to create fabulous work, and I look forward to performing your works!

MIKA OSKARSON-KINDSTRAND

Member of Theatre Nohgaku

Three years ago, I met a man called Richard Emmert, when I attended the workshop Noh Training Project in Tokyo. I knew very little about noh at the time and even less about our teachers. But this man would become one of the most important people for me as I started to explore the path of noh.

Since that first meeting with Rick, he and noh has come to influence me greatly in my work and life. I don't know if it is possible to convey in words the sense of gratitude I feel. Not only did he open the doors to noh, but through that he also showed me a glimpse of what theatre was, is and can be. And I believe that as a theatre artist there is nothing more important than getting your preconceptions about art turned upside down once in a while.

Today I know more about what an important role Rick has played in bringing noh to the rest of the world. It amazes me that wherever I go in the world (Toga, San Francisco, Kerala, Singapore and even in a small country like Sweden) theatre artists and researchers know who Rick is, often in person, and everyone share the same deep respect for him and his deeds within noh and its music. It's hard for me to grasp how many international projects Rick has been and is a part of - and how the theatre around the globe can be so intertwined.

Thank you, Rick for your dedication, generosity and for spreading your knowledge about noh and the world of theatre. I look forward to continue to explore this art and to be inspired and learn from you for many, many years to come.

NAOKO MAESHIBA

Somatic Practitioner/ Performing Artist. Affiliate Member of Theatre Nohgaku

Thank you so much for having me as your student in nohgaku for the past 20 years. Through your masterful teaching, I was able to grow and achieve something I never thought was possible. I can never forget the experience of playing *nochi-jite* in *Atsumori* in 2012. Intensive immersed training in Tokyo, being on the actual noh stage, more training at NTP, and finally putting on the heavy costume and a mask to perform - the whole experience was so rich. The more I studied this art form, the more mesmerized I became with its depth. The more I practiced, the more challenges I faced. Throughout this process, you guided me and taught me with patience and generosity. It was truly inspiring and encouraging to be able to study with someone who has dedicated his life with such passion to the practice of nohgaku. The principles of nohgaku are not just ideas in my head but are deeply ingrained into my body, mind and spirit. It is not only alive in my performance life but also makes my everyday life much more potent. I feel so honored and fortunate to have been able to learn from you.

Noh Compositions:

2020 Music for the original noh play ***Between the Stones*** (libretto by Jannette Cheong) co-produced with Unanico in association with Theatre Nohgaku and Oshima Noh Theatre.

2018 Music arrangement for the classical noh play ***Sumidagawa*** into a Spanish version called ***Ri3 Sumida***.

2018 Music for the original English noh play ***Emily*** (libretto by Ashley Thorpe).

2017 Music for the original collaborative noh/opera/ballet performance of ***Opposites-InVerse*** (libretto by Jannette Cheong).

2015 Music for the original English noh play ***Oppenheimer*** (libretto by Allan Marett).

2013 Music for the original English noh play ***Blue Moon Over Memphis*** (libretto by Deborah Brevoort).

2009 Music for the original English noh play ***Pagoda*** (libretto by Jannette Cheong). Performances in December 2009 and June-July 2011 in the first Theatre Nohgaku and Oshima Noh Theatre co-production

2008 Music and Performance arrangement/translation of classical noh play ***Sumidagawa*** into English version called ***Sumida River***.

2006 Music for the original English noh play ***The Gull*** (libretto by Daphne Marlatt). Performances in May 2006 in Richmond, B.C. by Pangaea Arts.

2006: Music for the original English noh play ***Pine Barrens*** (libretto by Greg Giovanni). Performances in September 2006 by Theatre Nohgaku.

2001 Music for the original English noh play ***Crazy Horse*** (libretto by Erik Ehn). Performances by Theatre of Yugen, San Francisco in September 2001. Remounted as Moon of the Scarlet Plums in September 2005 in Tokyo, San Francisco, Los Angeles.

1989 Music for the original English noh play ***Eliza*** (libretto by Allan Marett). Performances first given by students of the University of Sydney in September 1989. Remounted in Japan in May 1990 .

1987 Rearrangement and recomposition of music for the English noh ***Saint Francis*** (libretto by Arthur Little, original music by Leonard Holvik). Performances in February-March 1988 at Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana.

1985 Music for the English noh ***Drifting Fires*** (libretto by Janine Beichman). Performances in August 1985 at the International Science Exposition in Tsukuba, and in September 1986 in Tokyo.

1981 Music for the English play ***At the Hawk's Well*** (text by William Butler Yeats). Performances by the NOHO Theatre Group (Dec 1981 Kyoto and Osaka, May 1982 Tokyo, August 1985 Kyoto and Osaka, July 1990 Kyoto. Also remounted August, 1984 Sydney by students of the University of Sydney. Featured play in the first seven-city US tour by Theatre Nohgaku/Theatre of Yugen in September 2002.)

RICHARD EMMERT

English noh

Extract from the programme for *Pagoda* performed at Southbank Centre, London (2009) written by Richard Emmert

Noh plays are not the same as Shakespeare plays which can be performed in a variety of ways and still be considered Shakespeare. Noh instead is like opera. Taking the text of a Verdi or Mozart or Britten opera, discarding the music and performing it in a style other than opera, would create a performance based on opera lyrics.

But is it still a Verdi opera when the lyrics are just spoken? Is it still a Mozart opera if the text is done in Beijing opera style without Mozart's music? Is it still an opera if it is done in the style of noh?

I don't think so. An opera is done in a style that we recognize as opera. Likewise, a noh play (and 'play' is a misnomer — it is more a musical or dance-drama) is done in a style that can be recognized as noh. A Mozart opera performed without Mozart's music in the style of noh, is noh. A performance using the libretto of the classical noh Kiyotsune sung in opera style is not noh, but is opera.

Though Yeats called his play a 'noh' play, it was, in my opinion, a Western musical performance whose text was influenced by noh. But it was not noh. That had to wait until the Japanese noh scholar, Yokomichi Mario, made an arrangement for *Hawk's Well* in Japanese in 1949 which had a production by noh professionals, and then yet another version and production of it in 1965.

Both of these have been often performed since. In the noh world, these are considered noh, but a version using the original music by Edmond Dulac is not. The version I composed in 1981 followed both the Yeats English and the musical style of noh. It was, to my knowledge, the first time that anyone had written strict noh music to go with the original English of Yeats' play. It was an English noh.

Other English Noh

After Yeats, there no doubt have been others who have written texts influenced by noh, and likely even called them 'noh plays'. Of course, in my view, they are not noh until they are performed at the very least in the musical style of noh.

One that came very close to being noh was the play *St. Francis*, written by Arthur Little with music by Leonard Holvik. This was performed in 1970 at my alma mater, Earlham College in Indiana. It was my second year, and these two professors conducted a noh seminar which I took. The seminar featured readings of noh texts in translation, listening to recordings of noh music and seeing the one available film about noh. We then began to rehearse the work which the two professors had created. The structure followed closely some of the typical structures of classical noh. The music suggested noh, but was written so American students not trained in noh techniques could still perform it. I was chosen to be the main actor for the production, hardly imagining that this would be a first step in what would become a lifetime relationship with noh.

Later when I went to Japan, I met a young noh actor — Akira Matsui and began to take lessons with him in traditional noh chant and dance. Then, I studied the four instruments as well and began to develop an understanding of the music of noh, in particular the relationship between the drums and the text and how text and rhythm are so important in creating the style of noh.

While studying noh in Japan, I was told by several people that the music of noh developed from the Japanese language and could not be done in other languages. Despite this, as I began to feel the rhythms of noh in my body, it seemed natural for this native English speaker to begin to think of English text and how it could fit with these rhythms. When Jonah Salz, a young American director based in Kyoto, asked me to write music for a production of *At the Hawk's Well*, it was easy to throw caution to the wind and to dive in and write music for the Yeats text in traditional noh style. Performances followed in Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo.

Yokomichi Mario, the director of the earlier *Hawk's Well* versions in Japanese and my professor of noh studies at Tokyo University of Fine Arts, told me at the Tokyo performances, that my version was 'too noh-like'. On reflection, his criticism suggested that I could have explored the noh style in a way which departed more from typical noh, but it clearly recognized, if there was still any doubt, that yes, noh can be performed in English.

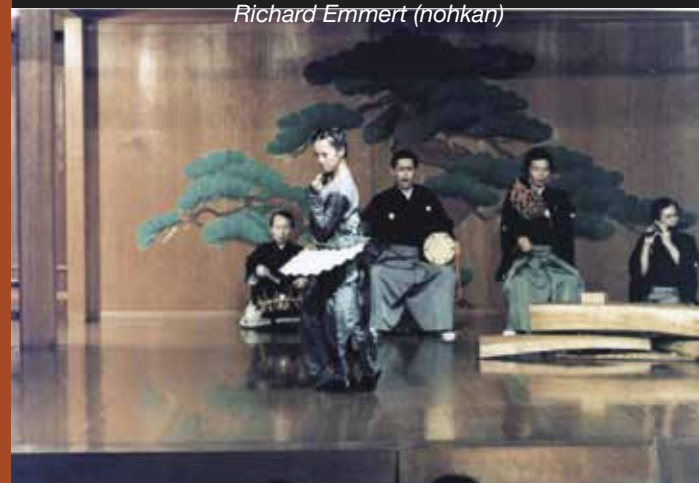
Over the next years, I composed music for and directed and performed in several English noh.

During the 1980s, there were two others in Japan who made productions which can be considered English noh, or at least noh-influenced English plays. First, Kuniyoshi Munakata Ueda, a Shakespeare specialist at Nihon University, began using noh with Shakespeare, notably *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Although the plays sometimes lacked a clear sense of the relationship between poetic text and drum rhythms that give noh its vitality and intensity, they did include chant and movement in noh style and used noh musicians. Second, my good friend and now fellow member of Theatre Nohgaku, David Crandall, wrote and directed two plays, *Crazy Jane* and *Linden Tree*, both which had a strong noh structural feel in terms of text and movement but employed his own musical composition for a Western instrumental ensemble.

St. Francis. Earham College, Indiana. April 1970. Richard Emmert (Shite). Waki and seated chorus members at right.



At the Hawk's Well. Noho Production, Umewaka Noh Theatre, Tokyo. May 1982. Gentaro Mishima (taiko), Richard Emmert (nohkan)



Drifting Fires. Tsukuba EXPO, August 1985. Umewaka Naohiko (Shite)



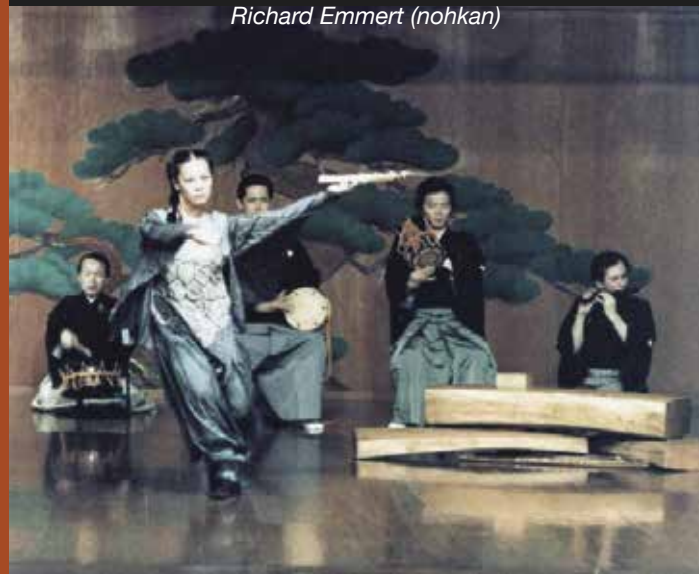
At the Hawk's Well. Theatre Nohgaku Production. Hampden Sydney College, September 2002. Akira Matsui (Shite), Mitsuo Kama (Kotsuzumi)



Drifting Fires. Tsukuba EXPO, August 1985. Chorus (centre: Akira Matsui, Richard Emmert)



At the Hawk's Well. Noho Production, Umewaka Noh Theatre, Tokyo. May 1982. Gentaro Mishima (taiko), Richard Emmert (nohkan)



Sumida River. Kinue Oshima (shite) and Emmert (waki). Theatre Nohgaku production. University of the Incarnate World, San Antonio, Texas. November 2015



ALLAN MARETT

Emeritus
Professor,
University
of Sydney.
Collaborated
on two noh
plays with Rick
Emmert:
Eliza (1989
Australia,
1990 Japan),
Oppenheimer
(2015 Australia)

Rick Emmert and I have known each other for more than half of our respective 70 years (I also turned 70 this year), as collaborators in the creation and performance of two noh plays, *Eliza* (1989) and *Oppenheimer* (2015) and as, most importantly, as friends: in 2009 we walked the Shikoku Henrō pilgrimage together, in 2016 visited Kōya-san together to mark the end of my second cycle of the Henrō and, in 2018, at the ceremony marking my transmission (inka) as a Zen teacher in the Diamond Sangha tradition, I was honoured to have Rick perform part of *Eliza*. Each of these has been a moment of profound connection that rest upon decades of friendship and collaboration.

Rick and I dimly remember meeting for the first time at the annual meeting of the *Tōyō Ongaku Gakkai* at *Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku* in November 1976, where he was a graduate student. If our memory is correct, we have known each other for 43 years, which is nearer to two-thirds of our respective 70 years. But a much more significant encounter occurred when I attended the Nōhō Theatre's production of Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* in Tokyo in 1982. I was deeply touched and as a result invited Rick, together with noh master Akira Matsui, to the University of Sydney to direct a project that would culminate in a student production of *At the Hawk's Well* along with a performance, in Japanese, of the traditional noh, Kiyotsune.

Working with Rick on a project is, as many other authors could now attest, to experience his generosity, his deep knowledge of the noh tradition, and his probing questions about matters of form and content. *Oppenheimer* is an exploration of karma that rests upon a parallel drawn between an old Zen koan (*Mumonkan Case 2*, Hyakujo's Fox) and Robert Oppenheimer's development of the atomic bomb. It is complex—some would say too complex to be a 'proper' noh play—but Rick never doubted me. Over the years of its development he relentlessly probed me until he was satisfied that he understood the play. This showed great patience, great faith and amazing generosity.

Whenever I go to Tokyo I nearly always stay with Rick, whether we have a project on or not. In the midst of his busy university life and his many projects, Rick always has time to talk—over the kitchen table, over a beer in a bar in the evening or on the road—about our lives, our families, our vocations, our joys and our sorrows. It's been a remarkable journey and a remarkable friendship that we've shared.

Allan Marett & Rick
on a pilgrimage in
Shikoku.



Right: *Eliza*. Richard
Emmert (Maeshite).
Akira Matsui (Koken)
Umewaka Noh
Theater, Tokyo.
May 1990.





*Eliza. Richard Emmert (Nochishite).
Umewaka Noh Theatre. May 1990*



*Oppenheimer. John Oglevee (nochishite),
Akira Matsui (tsure). University of Sydney
Conservatory Stage, October 2015.*



Oppenheimer backstage. Chim Kham Yoke
(masked ai role), Emmert, Akira Matsui, Hideta
Kitazawa (maskmaker).



ERIK EHN

Poet and author of
*Crazy Horse/Moon
of the Scarlet
Plums*, 2001, 2005

*whistle, drum
hospitable embrace, shoulder of the sun
(emmert, welcomer)
hum and volute,
wind wounded flute suture,
the hospitality of waiting, patience: a house;
what was (the dead, the ghost), patient for the present to turn,
the seed pressed to learn:
forgiveness is time letting go of the present so that there may be the not-thing bliss.
host holds open ma's coat;
shite the emblem or switch, triggers give-away –
the vacuum at the end of the play, all done*

*suriashi slide, spiral from somber,
count back from tenshin to pun (one or two)...
buckeye shimai
brushes the strokes of jo-ha-kyu
across the floor,
pivot and: nana-ju
is this the feel of seventy? show a few.
this age fits inside the light entire
as word in word does in joke: precise.
say once, mean twice;
calembour –
laugh ignition,
full-groaned.*

*score
ranges across the unlikely, threads nuance,
there is no balance without the diverse
and there you are so alive
in the comity, complex.
heat the inside,
share us tea,
tuning our sensibilities to
kitchen-table hayashi.
we've slept on every floor of yours,
poured life given to giving, playing, singing
a yeats ladder to wizened reason,
zeami out the other side of death and
st. francis overtime.*

*trust skill
trust sea
trust such a teacher
nohgaku.
syllable, seed, sign, story,
energy's journey:
where-as-who.
love what you
don't know.
don't know where you are but be certain you are there.
mentor, brother, father, family-full,
trans-pacific push, pull...
love – is the yes of noh*



Moon of the Scarlet Plums, Eitaro Okura (okawa), Emmert (nohkan), Masashi Nomura (nochishite). Theatre of Yugen production, University of San Francisco, September 2005.



GREG GIOVANNI

Author of the English noh *Pine Barrens*

Go into Kinokuniya Book Store, find a book in English on *nohgaku*, turn to the index; you will find Emmert, Richard—in every book printed after a certain date. You can discover the same myriad of citations in the noh books printed in Japanese, just one shelf over. This massive constellation of reference points illuminates his enormity of knowledge, but not Richard’s dazzling wealth of kindness, humor, and generosity.

I was lucky enough to enjoy this wealth firsthand when Richard scored and directed my noh *Pine Barrens*. Kindness he displayed to a writer who produces in fits and starts (more ‘fits’ than anything). Rick’s generosity of time and talent were evident during the year or so of feedback, rewrites, and workshops. I believe we made the best fifth-category English-language noh possible.

Humor is what the researchers will overlook, but, to my mind, Rick-sensei cannot be separated from his infectious pun making, and his willingness to deliver and receive a jest. I consider this to be a noble quality in a greatly accomplished man. Richard Emmert is certainly accomplished, erudite and noble.

Richard Emmert as the Jersey Devil from Greg Giovanni’s Pine Barrens (this page and two previous pages), a story of the devil said to roam the pine barrens of New Jersey. Photography courtesy of Theatre Nohgaku



DAPHNE MARLATT

Poet and Author of the English noh *The Gull*

Working with Rick on *The Gull* was one of the most expansive and deepening experiences of my writing life: his intensive knowledge of the structures and musical patterns of traditional noh, his openness in teaching, his generosity in Tokyo when I visited him there, his enthusiasm for bridging two cultures. He took me down to Wakayama to meet the remarkable noh master *Akira Matsui* who would later perform the *shite* role in *The Gull* and it was a treat to watch them talking and laughing together.

Rick combines openness and meticulousness in a very engaging way. I remember a certain moment, a high light for me, when we were in a compositional retreat for the production. We were sitting outside in a sunny garden on one of our Canadian West Coast islands going over my rough draft of Act I and his music, checking to see how my written lines would work with the chant patterns of utai. This was when I learned the difference between poetry to be read and poetry to be sung. And then there was also the constraint of syllabic count. We were fiddling with a particularly difficult passage when he said, look, you can’t fit the stress patterns of English exactly into the syllabic patterns of noh so don’t worry about an extra syllable here or there – it’s more about how the lines will speak to an audience. A very freeing moment. This was when I knew Rick was the perfect musician-teacher to introduce writers in the West to the rhythmic musical/poetic depths of noh.

The Gull: Vancouver. May 2006. Hayashi from left: Hitoshi Sakurai, Mitsuo Kama, Naoko Takahashi, Narumi Takizawa.



The Gull. Pangaea Arts Production, Vancouver.
May 2006. Akira Matsui (maeshite left, and
nochishite, right)





*It was wonderful how **Blue Moon Over Memphis** displayed a freedom as English-language noh while still respecting the formality of traditional noh, which could be seen in how the English chant fit extremely well with the noh rhythms, and then the music of the dance suddenly transformed into the melody of Blue Moon. But actually I was most moved by how the performers had genuinely learned noh conventions, from playing the hayashi instruments to putting on costumes. They demonstrated a respect for orthodox noh, even when they gave free rein to their expression, so there was not at all a sense of being “a bad imitation of noh,” but rather it seemed to truly represent “a new style of noh.”*

— Yamanaka Reiko Professor/Director, Nogami Memorial Noh Theatre Research Institute Hosei University, Tokyo

**DEBORAH
BREVOORT**

Playwright/
Author of English
noh **Blue Moon
Over Memphis**

One of my fondest memories was working with you on **Blue Moon Over Memphis** over Skype, you in Tokyo, me in New York. We were usually in our pyjamas, one of us getting ready to go to bed, the other getting up. You would chant your compositions to me as I worked on the script.

One time, the sound of your chanting carried out of my office and into our living room. Chuck, not knowing what I was doing, charged into my office thinking something was wrong with me. When he saw that I was fine, and sitting at the computer, he said “what the hell is going on in here?” Not wanting to interrupt your chanting, I whispered “noh drama” to which he said “ohh!”— understanding that these strange-to-western-ears sounds did not mean that I was in some kind of physical distress.

Rick, I appreciate how you have supported me, and the Elvis project, from the very beginning—commissioning the Japanese translation, publishing it in the Noh Research Archives, and then working with me to take my Americanized noh and translate it back into its original Japanese form. And then, after developing the script in many Skype sessions, and on those few stolen days in July when you were in the US, you dedicated the resources of Theatre Nohgaku to developing the production and building those beautiful costumes and masks.

It’s been rewarding and fun. And it’s been a joy. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Happiest of Birthdays, dear friend. May you have many more!

*Left: **Blue Moon Over Memphis**. Earlham College. March 2017. John Oglevee (nochishite (Elvis))*



Blue Moon Over Memphis. Earlham College. March 2017. John Oglevee (maeshite (Elvis). Richard Emmert tying the mask for John Oglevee (shite)

**ASHLEY
THORPE**

Author of *Emily*,
2018

I first met Rick at the Japanese Embassy in London in 2009. He was touring *Pagoda* and I was eager to meet him after a noh stage had just been donated to the University of Reading. My main recollection of our first encounter was his enthusiasm for noh, his openness, and his willingness to laugh at my bad jokes.

Since that time, I am grateful to be able to say that Rick has become my teacher, my colleague, and my friend.

Rick is an international ambassador for noh in the fullest and truest sense. He has dedicated his life to understanding the form in all its aspects: music, movement, literature, and the ways of contemporary professional practice. Yet, this passion for noh is matched only by his love for sharing his knowledge, and encouraging others to come to discover what noh has to offer. The Kita school is the youngest of the five schools of principal actors, and has the smallest number of professional actors. Yet, through Rick's endeavours, there are probably more students of the Kita school living internationally than any other!

Since 2011, I have had the honour and pleasure of hosting Rick in the UK for the Noh Training Project UK, first at the University of Reading, and now at Royal Holloway. His enthusiasm is infectious, and I have watched time and again how participants struggling with the complexity of encountering noh for the first time have been pulled through by Rick's supportive approach. Indeed, it is down to his encouragement that I wrote my own noh in English, *Emily*, which was composed by Rick, and performed in London in 2018 and 2019. The text was largely written in his house in Tōkyō during a generous three-month stay, and I have fond memories of sliding my laptop across his kitchen table for supportive thoughts on how the text was developing, and chatting about noh musical structure over coffee shop lattes and pastries. He even managed to continue smiling at my bad jokes at the end of my three-month stay. For this, there must surely be some kind of Special Endurance Award.

Rick's influence is far-reaching, brought about by his deep knowledge of noh (he is genuinely a "noh-all"), and his passion for teaching. Rick is a teacher, a composer, a dancer, a scholar, and a global ambassador for noh. Most important of all, however, he is that rare and special thing: an enabler.

Ashley Thorpe performs a *shimai* on the Kita Noh Stage, Noh Training Project Tokyo, July 2017.



Right: *Emily*. Ashley Thorpe (*nochishite*), Emmert (*hyoshiban* playing both *okawa* and *kotsuzumi* parts), Handa Noh Stage, Royal Holloway University of London, May 2018.



Pagoda. Kinue
Oshima (nochishite).
Southbank Centre,
London, December
2009.



“**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 Dec 2009

“It is no mean feat to develop noh and to write for such an ancient form in another language, but it is incredibly effective. All in all, a very special evening which may have won over a new audience and was certain to delight the converted.”

Ballet.co.uk 3 Dec 2009

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

NISHINO Haruo, TOKYO SHIMBUN, 3 July 2011

JANNETTE CHEONG

Poet/Author
of **Pagoda**,
**Opposites-
InVerse**, and
**Between the
Stones**

I first thought of creating a tribute for Rick in 2011, just after the **Pagoda** Asia Tour. At this point in my noh journey, after nine performances in Europe and five performances in Asia I had fallen for noh ‘lock, stock and barrel’. In my enthusiasm I suggested there should be a festival of English noh but soon realised that there would be insufficient performers to perform a number of English noh during the same period! This tribute book is the best I could do for someone who had opened up a whole new world not only for myself, but for so many others around the world for the past 40 years or so. Rick is like a contemporary Zeami for English noh. No one has composed for noh as often as Rick. No one has brought together people from around the world to perform, produce, write and train for noh as much as Rick, and no one has made so many friends who regard his skills and talents as extraordinary and his humility, humanity and humour as unparalleled in the international world of noh. And, of course, very few will leave a legacy like Rick

When you create something together with another person you learn about each other’s strengths and weaknesses. The quality of your relationship is tested by the challenges you can bring and the learning you can take with you - thanks to the mutual trust and respect shared. I could not have wished for a better noh partner. Thank you, Rick, for helping me write my noh trilogy - for believing in my stories and for helping me tell them in a performing art form that is such a joy to create.

*Kinue Oshima as the nochishite (Meilin) from Jannette Cheong’s **Pagoda** (this page and the next two pages). Photography courtesy of Clive Barda*



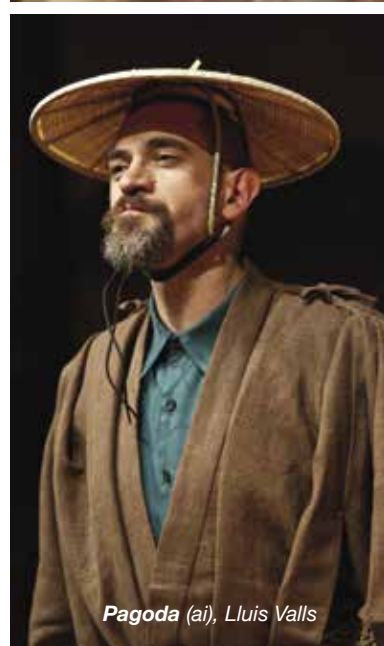
Pagoda (tsure) Elizabeth Dowd



Pagoda (chorus) from left, Ryoji Terada, Matt Dubroff, David Surtasky, Tom O'Connor, and back row, David Crandall, Emmert and John Oglevee.



Pagoda (waki), Jubilith Moore



Pagoda (ai), Lluís Valls



Pagoda (nochitsure), Teruhisa Oshima



Pagoda. Kinue Oshima (maeshite). Southbank Centre, London, December 2009.



Pagoda. Entire cast and crew, Maison de la Culture, Paris, December 2009.

Tradition and change in noh

Written by Richard Emmert for the *Noh time like the present programme... A Tribute to Akira Matsui, performed at LSO St Lukes, London (2017)*

Many people seem to believe that noh is a monolithic tradition that hasn't changed in its 650-year history. Noh, indeed, has a long history and its strict traditions have been passed down largely through families, from father to son, generation after generation. Many noh families can still trace their ancestors back to the 14th and 15th centuries and further.

However, researchers have evidence that many aspects of noh have undergone transformations since its development largely into its present structure during the 14th and 15th centuries. These include the length/time of performances (performances of 600 years ago are thought to have been about two-thirds the time they take today), the shape of the stage, the development in quality of the costumes, the change in the structure of the noh flute, and the development of the dynamic singing style (all probably from 450-500 years ago), the use of a theatre building to house the stage (140 years ago), and the appearance of professional female performers (the last 100 years or so) to name several prominent transformations.

Smaller changes also constantly take place. No two performers are alike even from the same family. Noh has considerable freedom of expression while performing within implied parameters. That freedom of interpretation clearly results, not in a static tradition, but in a living and breathing one.

In terms of plays, the present classical repertory numbers around 250. Yet over the last 650 years there have been over 3000 noh plays written and one presumes many of these have been performed. That said, the number of new (*shinsaku*) plays dropped considerably during the Meiji period (1868-1912) and through to the 1980s. With only a few exceptions, new plays, if created at all, tended to be made by only the most prominent noh performers. Similarly, there were revivals (*fukkyoku*) of earlier plays made during this time, but very few.

A catalyst for change in this regard was the opening of the National Noh Theatre (NNT) in 1983. Several years later, the NNT began creating revivals by small teams of scholars and actors. Often these pieces had merely a text or even just parts of texts from hundreds of years ago, so any revival required developing ideas for music, costume and staging—in essence they required the skills to create anew rather than the skills needed to maintain tradition.

In this way, more performers began to understand the importance of creation while maintaining tradition. Particularly, in the 1990s, many noh performers began creating and performing new pieces, and those numbers have continued to grow over the last two decades. That said, performance of traditional pieces still make up probably 99 percent of performances that take place in the noh world during the course of a year.

In addition, a few actors—Akira Matsui being one who stands out prominently—have collaborated with non-noh performers. Akira. Matsui, for example, has collaborated with a variety of

Western and Asian theatre, dance and music practitioners, both classical and modern. It seems that for the most part, these collaborations take place with the noh practitioners maintaining a strict adherence to noh traditional techniques while performing with non-noh performers. Other prominent performers from the noh world who have participated in such collaborations from the 1950s include brothers Hisao and Hideo Kanze, several generations of the Shigeyama kyogen group, and Mansaku Nomura, and his son Mansai Nomura from the 1990s, then Reijiro Tsumura from the 2000s, and musicians Shonosuke Okura from the 1980s and Yukihiro Isso from the 1990s. There certainly are others.

While it is difficult to refer to such collaborations as noh, clearly performers are using their noh skills in new and profound ways. Mr. Matsui has said that what he does in such collaborations is noh, although his non-noh collaborators are doing something else. However one might refer to these collaborations, the important point is that the noh performers in these collaborations are not attempting to be ballet dancers or Western actors or jazz musicians. Instead, they are using their traditional training in new performative circumstances.

There has been interest internationally in noh performance asince 1916 and various attempts to use noh or noh-like elements in English and other non- Japanese plays. There is also interest in this development within Japan as can be seen in the entry entitled “English Noh” in the third edition of the Japanese-language Noh-Kyogen Encyclopedia (*Noh-Kyogen Jiten*), as well as several paragraphs within the even more recent Nohgaku Encyclopedia (Nohgaku Daijiten).

Opposites/InVerse is in that vein of English noh. Jannette Cheong as author, and myself as composer, are collaborating for a second time after working on the strictly English noh **Pagoda**. This time, considering the ballet dancer and the opera singers, **Opposites/InVerse** would be more properly labeled a noh-influenced dance-drama rather than a strict noh. It was Jannette's wish to use opera singers and a contemporary dancer with the idea of creating a true collaboration between Western and noh elements. Of course, it could easily be a more strictly English noh in a future iteration. Hopefully its beauty will be apparent in either.



Opposites/InVerse (Part 2).
Peter Leung (ballet)
and Akira Matsui (noh).
LSO St. Luke's,
London. February
2017.



ARTISTS WHO WORKED WITH RICK & AKIRA ON 'NOH TIME LIKE THE PRESENT...'

HUGH QUARSHIE
Actor

Richard Emmert is a curious man, both in the sense that he is interested in the world around him and that he is in himself interesting.

His curiosity about Japanese culture led him beyond the cultural tourism of Samurai movies, Manga anime and sushi that had satisfied mine and took him to noh. It has been a lifelong journey; and watching him rehearse and perform with Akira Matsui, I sensed that the journey had not ended. He observed and listened with the diligence and deference of a student. He has immersed himself in noh, the better to understand it. The fact that he has done so without foregoing his Western identity, his 'Americanness', his 'Rickness' is what makes him so interesting. And it is what encourages others like me to look at noh as more than a culturally peculiar art form and search for its essence. Noh will not come to the passive spectator with idle curiosity: if we want to understand it, we have to make the effort to go to it. And Rick Emmert, playing his noh flute, will be our eager guide.

LUCIA CAPELLARO

Cellist

Rick is one of those rare people whose enthusiasm for his craft is infectious. He is endlessly positive, talented, and kind; it was a pleasure to get to know him. He is a real inspiration.

PETER LEUNG

Choreographer and Stage Director

Working with Rick is pretty much the same as being friends with Rick, he's enthusiastic and super eager to share his knowledge and wisdom. I am so grateful that we worked together in 2017 in London and later to meet him in Tokyo where I had the best evening with him. What a wonderful human being!

PIRAN LEGG

Baritone opera singer

I learnt so much from working with Rick. The fact that he was brave enough to experiment with an ancient art form that he knows so well and work in tandem with an opera singer such as myself made for a wonderful experience on our project. His humanity and kindness also combine to make him a truly great artist.





Emmert photo by
Magda Rittenhouse.

Rick's Journey without end...

*Casting noh nets far away
my path has widened
Casting noh nets far away
my path has widened
Time will tell my journey's tale
Long after I'm gone*

*You see before you a traveller who did not know the path of life
would bring me to this island far from my home. 50 years have
passed and still I am here - still I am learning. Still I am exploring
through my body and mind - getting to noh - my path no longer
confused.*

*Visitors still come and go
I still come and go
From Ohio where once I laughed
When I listened to
The sound of drummers calls
To Tokyo City
Now my home of many years
Now I call the drums
Lead the juitai in new chants
Direct, perform, compose noh
Somehow this path has chosen me
And I chose the path*

*It is only 50 years, but now I have arrived. At a place Zeami said
would allow me to still nurture the flower in these old bones as I
continue to nurture the flower in others. And from here on - who
knows what the mist will reveal?*

Jannette Cheong,
December 2019



Designed and edited by Jannette Cheong

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Costumed classical noh photos of Richard Emmert by
Abiko.

Other photos by:

Clive Barda pp. 6 (photos 2&4), 10, 11, 36 (photo 1), 72,
116, 118, 119

Jannette Cheong pp.121, 122, 123

Emilio Espinosa, pp. 71 (all), 74, 75 (both)

Kazuhiro Inoue pp. 24, 34, 42 (bottom), 53, 54, 55, 58
(centre & lower left), 59 (centre), 64, 66 (all), 68 (left)

Sohta Kitazawa, pp. 40-41 (all masks), 67

David Surtasky pp. 6-7 (left, centre, right), 8, 12-13 (all),
59 (top & bottom), 83 (both), 85, 96, 97, 104, 105, 106,
110, 112, 113.

Others too numerous to mention.

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*(Top) Emmert lecture-demonstrations London Schools Project, September 2009 photograph by Clive Barda. (Front Cover) Emmert performing the main role (shite) in **Kiyotsune**, December 2002 photograph by Abiko. Kita Noh Theatre, Tokyo. (Back cover) La Universidad de los Andes, Bogota, March 2011. Photograph thanks to Mauricio Martinez.*

