

The Japan Foundation, Sydney presents a talk on

Bunraku Puppet Theatre & Hatsune Miku

@ *Noh to Now* lecture series,
Art Gallery NSW



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The Japan Foundation, Sydney proudly presents a talk on Bunraku puppet theatre and virtual pop idol Hatsune Miku by **Dr Yuji Sone**. Titled '**Presence and Composition: Bunraku Puppet Theatre and Virtual Diva Hatsune Miku**', it will be held at the Art Gallery NSW on August 20 from 6pm.

Bunraku puppet theatre is a centuries-old, UNESCO-listed performing arts tradition. Hatsune Miku is a computer-generated pop idol with a strong fan-base in geek culture. What could these two possibly have in common? Seemingly worlds apart, they are united by an approach to performance which is rooted in the appreciation of artifice. They also both rely heavily on their audiences to buy into—and thereby complete—the illusions on stage before them.

This is the fourth talk in a five-part lecture series titled ***Noh to Now: Traditions and Counter-traditions in Japanese Performance***, programmed and presented by The Japan Foundation, Sydney in conjunction with the **Art Gallery NSW's** *Theatre of dreams, theatre of play: nō and kyōgen in Japan* exhibition.

Says **Yuji Sone**, "Hatsune Miku is a computer-generated idol that [performs 'live' in front of real audiences](#), backed by real musicians, and evokes a very real response from her fans. Hatsune Miku supported Lady Gaga on her US tour earlier this year and is fast gaining traction across the globe, but what I want to show is that this theatre of artifice is not new to Japanese culture—Hatsune Miku builds on a tradition that has been part of Japan's performance canon for centuries."

Says Japan Foundation, Sydney director **Nao Endo**, "As shown by the introduction of a [Japanese Traditional and Contemporary Theatre elective](#) in this year's **HSC curriculum**, there is increasing recognition of the value of Japanese performing arts traditions in the Australian community. We are excited to work with the Art Gallery NSW to offer this timely series, which blends authoritative voices and perspectives from both Australia and Japan."



Program

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| Jul 23 | Occupied Bodies: Re-thinking the Atomic Gaze in Ankoku Butoh | You  |
| | Dr. Adam Broinowski, Australian National University | |
| Aug 6 | Noh, and the Aesthetics of Restraint | You  |
| | Professor Naohiko Umewaka (Noh Master),
Shizuoka University of Arts and Culture | |

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|---------------|---|---|
| Aug 13 | Song, Dance, Skill: Introduction to Kabuki
Dr. Shun Ikeda, Australian National University |  |
| Aug 20 | Presence & Composition: Bunraku Puppet Theatre and Virtual Diva Hatsune Miku
Dr Yuji Sone, Macquarie University |  |
| Aug 27 | The Allure of Gender-Bending Musical Theatre
Dr. Leonie Stickland, Murdoch University |  |

Dates: July 23 and August 6, 13, 20 & 27

Time: 6:00 – 7:00pm (Doors open 5.45pm)

Venue: Centenary Auditorium
Art Gallery NSW
Art Gallery Rd, The Domain
Sydney

Admission: Free. No bookings required.

Enquiries: reception@jpf.org.au / 02 8239 0055 (The Japan Foundation, Sydney)

Website: www.jpf.org.au

YouTube Playlists available

 Search 'Noh to Now' on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) to sample the genres in this program.

ABOUT BUNRAKU:

Bunraku is a type of puppet theatre that emerged in Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868) as a popular form of entertainment. It is distinguished from Western puppetry traditions by the fact that the puppeteers remain visible throughout the performances. Bunraku was [listed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) in 2003.

ABOUT HATSUNE MIKU:

[Hatsune Miku](#) is a computer-generated pop idol produced using the computer program 'Vocaloid', developed by Japanese company Crypton Future Media and first released in August 2007. Originally conceived as virtual diva from "the near-future world where songs are lost," Miku has spawned a flood of fan-generated content on Youtube, performed live concerts worldwide and collaborated with big names such as Lady Gaga, Google and Toyota USA.

ABOUT YUJI SONE:



Dr Yuji Sone is a lecturer and performance researcher at Macquarie University. Having trained with experimental theatre company Banyu-Inryoku in Japan, Dr. Sone came to Australia in the late 1980s and has since performed at numerous domestic and international festivals including Experimenta, Sound Watch (NZ), San Francisco Sound Culture and Rootless UK. His performances work in tandem with his academic research, which focuses on contemporary Japanese performance in relation to technology.

ABOUT THE 'NOH TO NOW' LECTURE SERIES:

[Noh to Now: Traditions and Counter-traditions in Japanese Performance](#) is a five-part lecture series featuring local and international experts introducing different genres of Japanese performance. Spanning the centuries from the emergence of **Noh theatre** in the middle ages to the present day, the series explores both canonised and marginal artforms and artists, including *Ankoku Butoh* ('Dance of Darkness'), **Kabuki**, virtual songstress **Hatsune Miku** ([support act for Lady Gaga's recent US tour](#)), and all-female musical theatre troupe **Takarazuka Revue**.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION AT ART GALLERY NSW:

The Art Gallery NSW's [Theatre of dreams, theatre of play: nō and kyōgen in Japan](#) exhibition was organised in cooperation with the Agency for Cultural Affairs in Japan. It features a total of 165 works related to Noh theatre—many from the prestigious National Noh Theatre in Japan—including exquisitely carved masks, richly embroidered Noh robes, and paintings depicting this ancient performing arts tradition. The exhibition is now open and runs until September 14 (closed for conservation purposes July 28-30).

ABOUT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, SYDNEY:

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is the Australian arm of the Japan Foundation, which was established by the Japanese government to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. It runs a diverse range of programs and events, including exhibitions, talk events, grant programs and Japanese language courses for all levels from beginner to advanced. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with a global network of 22 offices in 21 countries. The Australian office was founded in 1977.



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For more information please see www.jpf.org.au or contact:

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