Artist Partner Program presents

HUANG YI & KUKA

Friday, September 25, 2015 . 8PM | Saturday, September 26, 2015 . 8PM
Robert & Arlene Kogod Theatre

Huang Yi Studio +
Huang Yi
Hu Chien
Lin Jou-Wen

This performance will last approximately one hour with no intermission. Join the artists for a conversation with the audience following the performance. Video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.
PROGRAM NOTES

As a child, Huang Yi longed for a robot companion. As an adult, he created a robot with which he could dance.

Acclaimed Taiwanese choreographer and dancer Huang Yi and his robot companion KUKA bring razor-sharp precision and stunning artistry to The Clarice. Harmoniously weaving together the art of dance and the science of mechanical engineering, Huang Yi & KUKA is a poetic work that flawlessly intertwines modern dance and visual arts with the realm of robotics.

Huang Yi & KUKA reveals humanity through a series of vignettes between live dancers and KUKA, a robot conceptualized and programmed by Huang. “Dancing face to face with a robot is like looking at my own face in a mirror ... I think I have found the key to spin human emotions into robots,” Huang asserts.

Huang Yi & KUKA are joined on stage by dancers Hu Chien and Lin Jou-Wen, with support from Technical Director Yen-Ku Ou and Technical Specialist Hao-Ting Cheng.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I was born into a wealthy family. When I was 10, my parents went bankrupt due to investment losses. My family of four moved from a luxurious house to a 40-square-foot room. As a child who was constantly moving from one tiny room to another and seeing my parents go through suicide attempts, I grew up knowing that I had to be a perfect child. I detached all my emotion — passion, anger and sadness — to be that perfect child, and to be like a robot: obedient, friendly, outstanding, considerate, never rebellious, perhaps no personality.

As a child, my favorite cartoon was Doraemon, a Japanese animation character and a cat robot who is always there to solve problems for his owner. Apparently I have had something with robots since I was little. Is it because they represent a character that is loyal? Or is it because of their destiny of being selfless? Thankfully, my parents let me choose to be a professional on stage, which became the best outlet for my compressed emotion. And I wanted to find a way to dance with a robot.

I did my research on the most advanced industrial robots, and KUKA stood out for stability, with the fluid design like the shape of a human. In 2010, I called KUKA company in Taiwan. When I told them my idea, they said, “According to the regulation, when the robot is moving, human beings cannot enter the area of its action. If you can find a way, I will lend you a KUKA.”

I have found a way, and now, thanks to Quanta Arts Foundation in Taiwan, I have a KUKA.

For me, Huang Yi & KUKA is a process of beautifying the sorrow and sadness from when I grew up. It is the expression of loneliness, self-doubt, self-realization and self-comfort. I was trying to make a beautiful illusion just to assure others that everything was fine. I wanted to remind us of our simplest hope from the very beginning, that we are all just grown-up kids, but still kids.

—Huang Yi
HUANG YI & KUKA: ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Taiwanese dancer, choreographer, inventor and videographer Huang Yi’s pioneering work is steeped in his fascination with the partnership between humans and robots. He interweaves continuous movement with mechanical and multimedia elements to create a form of dance that corresponds with the flow of data, effectively making the performer a dancing instrument. Named by Dance Magazine as one of the “25 to Watch,” Huang was immersed in the arts at a young age, spending much of his childhood in his parents’ studio watching them teach tango and learning to paint alongside his father. Huang is currently Artist-in-Residence of the National Theater & Concert Hall, the National Performing Arts Center, Taiwan, R.O.C. and is widely considered one of Asia’s most prolific choreographers.

Huang’s groundbreaking and award-winning work, Huang Yi & KUKA, in which he performs alongside a robot he conceptualized and programmed, opened the 2013 Ars Electronica Festival (Austria), the internationally renowned unique platform for digital art and media culture. Works choreographed by and featuring Huang have received high praise at venues internationally, including Joyce Theater; Engien-Les-Bains Centre des Arts (France); Tasdance and Dancenorth (Australia); Cloud Gate 2 (Taipei); the Indonesian Dance Festival (Jakarta); New York Live Arts; and the American Dance Festival (North Carolina). Huang’s collaboration with Cloud Gate 2 continues to tour internationally, to much acclaim. He has received awards for his work at the Digital Arts Center Taipei (2010 & 2012); and the 3rd Cross Connection Ballet International Choreography Competition in Copenhagen (2010), among many others across Europe and Asia.

Taiwan native Hu Chien received his MFA in performance and choreography from the School of Dance of Taipei National University of the Arts. Recent performances include Huang Yi’s Special Order, Double Yellow Lines, Second Skin, Sand and Whisper. He was the leading actor for the micro film Immortelle by Dutch director David Verbeek (nominated for the Spectrum Shots section at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and Taiwan’s Shortcuts series at the 2013 Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival). Hu was a member of Cloud Gate 2 from 2012-2013 and has danced with Huang Yi Studio + since 2010.

Taiwanese dancer Lin Jou-Wen received her BFA in dance from the Taipei National University of the Arts. Recent performances include Huang Yi’s Special Order, Light, Symphony Project and Spin 2010; Tong Yang-Tze’s Sao at TIFA 2014; leading actress in the micro film Immortelle by Dutch director David Verbeek (nominated for the Spectrum Shots section at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and Taiwan’s Shortcuts series at the 2013 Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival); and movement design for Process of Death (first-prize winner of the digital performance competition at the 2nd Taipei Digital Art Festival); among others. Lin was a recipient of the American Dance Festival Scholarship in 2009. She was a member of Cloud Gate 2 from 2010-2014 and has danced with Huang Yi Studio + since January 2014.

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Worldwide Representation and Booking for Huang Yi
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THE CLARICE AND THE COMMUNITY

The Clarice is building the future of the arts by training, mentoring and presenting the next generation of artists and creative innovators. As artists develop their craft as performers, they must become instigators of meaningful dialogue, creative research and audience connection. These skills are developed through engagement activities both on and off campus. Engagement at The Clarice is characterized by facilitated audience interactions with artists, scholars, and community leaders that are focused on process and research rather than product and performance. The Clarice supports artists in their quest for a connection with audiences through its engagement work.

HUANG YI & KUKA ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

- Huang Yi and technical director Yen-Ku led TDPS students in a dance composition class.
- Maryland Robotics Center, home of 19 robotics labs, hosted Huang as robotics students demonstrated their own projects.
- College of Arts and Humanities Associate Dean Sheri Parks interviewed Huang Yi for the Worldwise Arts & Humanities Dean’s Lecture Series.
- A Creative Dialogue Artist Talk and a short performance by Huang Yi were held, plus a Q&A with Professor S.K. Gupta of Maryland Robotics Center.
- A student matinee performance and talk-back with Huang Yi and KUKA brought 130 area K-12 students to The Clarice.