

# Hamlet

by William Shakespeare



KOREA

15 – 18 September 2010  
Space Theatre

#### About the show

Shakespeare's Hamlet has been brought to life through the performance by the Yohangza Theatre Company directed by YANG Jung-Ung.

Introducing the shamanic rite of gut, tradition is given modern expression with Yohangza's production in which main characters are brimming with revenge and intrigue, tension and confusion, in an unfolding drama of tragedy. The rancor of a dead king is liberated through the shaman ritual of **jinogigut**, drowned Ophelia's spirit is brought out of the water through a **sumanggut**, and the tragically cut-short life of Hamlet, himself, is liberated through a **sanjinogigut** in the final scene. These three rituals weave together the processes of placating restless spirits with the theatrical offering of shamanism.

#### The meaning of gut

According to shamanist culture, a gut is a practice that gives expression to a shaman's way of thinking and outlook on the Gods, the spirit world, the universe and the hereafter. A shaman's performance is made up of a diverse range of dancing, song, acrobatics and skits, but amongst these forms the easiest to grasp is the expression of language in the shaman's chanting. Three types of gut appear:

“To be or not to be, that is the question.”

죽느냐, 사느냐, 그것이 문제이다.

#### Jinogigut

The jinogigut consists of appeasing the death of a spirit and praying for its deliverance into the Heavenly Way. In Yohangza Theatre Company's Hamlet, the soul of Hamlet's father is appeased through a jinogigut in the first scene, where the female shaman listens to the father's possessed soul speak of how it died. After experiencing this jinogigut, Hamlet plans to avenge his father's death, and so the tragedy of Hamlet begins.

#### Sumanggut

The ritual of sumanggut enables drowned people's spirits to be redeemed and sent off to the next world. In the play, Ophelia is deeply shocked and saddened by her father's death and is swept away into madness, finally drowning herself. In the middle of the sumanggut ceremony, where Ophelia's spirit is lifted and soothed, both Laertes and Hamlet cry out in sorrow and become furious with one another. Finally, the two men confront each other in a scene that ascends into a climatic ending.

#### Sanjinogigut

As in Buddhism where one is encouraged to contemplate the blessed fortunes of a lifetime, a jinogi ritual is offered to oneself before death. At the end of the play Hamlet is wounded by the sword on which Laertes has smeared poison, and gradually dies as the poison spreads through his body. In a world filled with betrayal, intrigue and madness, Hamlet has endured silently a resentment that must be appeased through the sanjinogigut in order for him to die at peace as the curtain descends on the stage.

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### About the company

Director and writer YANG Jung-Ung formed the Yohangza Theatre Company in 1997. From 2009 it has been involved in a new partnership with CJ Culture Foundation for promoting cultural activities to underprivileged groups in society, as well as playing an active role in supporting the creative production and promotion of Korean performing arts overseas.

The company creates a unique world in which Asian performance traditions are given universal expression on the international stage, and where a play that once centred on dialogue is replaced with actors using their physical bodies to convey images and sensory mise-en-scene.

### Awards

- 2009 Best Production, Best stageing and the Best Director of Korea Theatre Award for **Peer Gynt**
- 2006 Winner of the grand prize and visitors' prize at the 10<sup>th</sup> Gdansk International Shakespeare Festival in Poland for **Midsummer Night's Dream**.
- 2005 Seoul Play Festival Grand Prize for **Back To The Heaven**, PAF Creative Production Award for **Chairs**, and **Back To The Heaven**
- 2003 Grand Prize for KARMA at the 15<sup>th</sup> Cairo International Experimental Play Festival
- 2002 First Milyang Summer Public Performance Festival Grand Prize, Popularity Prize for **Midsummer Night's Dream**

### Key artist biographies

#### The Director:

Jung-Ung Yang, founder of the Yohangza Theatre Company, started to gain recognition in the theatre world as a representative stylist of self-restrained language and images in his productions with the release of *Chairs* (2001). In works such as *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Karma*, *Hwan*, and *Peer Gynt* the harmonization of physical acting, light, and sound into aesthetic images is pursued using direction, which extends the possibilities of the language of globalization of ancient traditions.

### Cast list

Director: **Jung-Ung YANG**  
 Producer: **Kyu CHOI**  
 Stage Designer: **Il-Jin IM**  
 Lighting Designer: **Kook-Koon YEO**  
 Sound Designer: **Bum-Hun LEE**  
 Stage Assistant: **Eun-Kyu LEE**  
 Make-Up: **Yun-Hui JUN**  
 Stage Manager: **Hyo-Jung CHO**

### Performers

Hamlet: **Jung-Yong JEON**  
 Claudius: **Hae-Kyun CHEONG**  
 Gertrude: **Eun-Hee KIM**  
 Polonius: **Jin-Gon KIM**  
 Horatio: **Sang-Bo KIM**  
 Ophelia: **Seung-Hae NAM**  
 Laertes and Rosencrantz: **Woo-Keun JUNG**  
 Guildenstern and Clown: **Kwang-Won DO**  
 Shaman 1: **Eun-Jeong LEE**  
 Shaman 2: **Ji-Youn KIM**  
 Shaman 3: **Hye-Kyung YANG**  
 Shaman 4: **Joo-Yeon CHOI**  
 Chorus: **Ki-Jung LEE, Su-Yeon JEONG**



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