



MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Awaji Puppet Theater Company Performances
at REDCAT**

Co-presented with City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

Los Angeles - The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) is proud to present the **Awaji Puppet Theater Company** in Los Angeles as part of a grant awarded to the Department by The Japan Foundation. This project includes a five-city tour of the prestigious Japanese company designed to expose a diverse American audience to this unique and important element of Japanese cultural history. The performances in Los Angeles will take place at REDCAT, the Roy and Edna Disney/CALARTS Theater, on February 17 and 18, at 8:30 p.m. A special workshop will be held on February 19, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Peerless in its uncanny integration of intricate three-person puppet manipulation, gorgeous costumes and sets, live shamisen music, and chanted narration, the Awaji Puppet Theater Company traces its roots to the originators of bunraku puppetry some 500 years ago - a legacy for which it has been named "Intangible Folk Asset" by the Japanese government. Awaji now brings to Los Angeles three stunning works from the top shelf of its repertory: *Hidaka-gawa Iriaizakura* (The Cherry Trees Along the Hidaka River), an intense dance piece based on the famous folktale of a lovelorn woman transformed into a serpent; the lighthearted folk dance *Ebisu-Mai* (Dance of the Fisherman God); and *Tsubosaka Reigen-ki* (The Miracle at Tsubosaka Temple), a powerful traditional drama of intrigue and redemption in which a desperate couple commits double suicide but is reanimated through divine intervention.

The presentation of the Awaji Puppet Theater Company in Los Angeles is organized and supported by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and The Japan Foundation through the Performing Arts JAPAN program; and presented in partnership with the Japan Society, New York; the Agency for Cultural Affairs, MEXT; The Jim Henson Foundation; and Awaji Ningyo Shibai Support Group. This presentation is part of DCA's 2009 initiative to promote international artistic exchange and provide greater cultural communication through performances, classes, and educational opportunities.

The Awaji Puppet Theater Company will also have ten additional performances during March and April, 2009, at Wesleyan University, Cornell University, the University of Massachusetts, the Japan Society in New York, and the Cultural Olympiad in Vancouver, Canada.

REDCAT is located at 631 West 2nd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Tickets to these special performances will be \$30 General admission and \$24 for students with current I.D. For more information about the Awaji Puppet Theater performances, please call REDCAT at 213.237.2800 or visit the website at www.redcat.org.



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About REDCAT:

Although it is housed in the same complex as Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater has its own unique mandate: to provide a Los Angeles home for new, cutting-edge performance and art- a laboratory where artists can push boundaries, experiment with forms, and blend disciplines, cultures, and ideas.

About Japan Foundation:

Established in 1972, the Japan Foundation is Japan's principal agency for international cultural relations under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The mission of the Japan Foundation is to promote international cultural exchange and mutual understanding between Japan and other countries. Through its headquarters in Tokyo and 19 overseas offices in 18 countries worldwide, the Japan Foundation conducts a wide range of programs concerning arts and cultural exchange, Japanese-language education, Japanese studies, and intellectual exchange.

About DCA:

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) generates and supports high quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles residents and visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and assures access to arts and cultural experiences through grant making, marketing, public and community arts programming, arts education, and creating partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in every community in the City of Los Angeles.

DCA grants \$3.4 million annually to over 300 artists and nonprofit arts organizations and awards the Artist-in-Residence (A.I.R.) and City of Los Angeles (C.O.L.A.) Individual Artist Fellowships. The Department provides arts and cultural programming in its numerous Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers, theaters, and historic sites, and manages several arts and education programs for young people. It directs public art projects and manages the City's Arts Development Fee and Percent for Arts Programs, and the Art Collection and Murals Programs. DCA markets the City's cultural events through development and collaboration with strategic partners, design and production of creative promotional materials, and management of the culturela.org website.

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