

BASIL TWIST

Director, Scenographer, Puppetry

A native of San Francisco, Basil Twist is a third generation puppeteer now living in New York. He is the sole American to graduate from the École Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mezieres, France. Basil's showmanship was spotlighted in New York by "The Jim Henson International Festival of Puppetry" with his award winning "The Araneidae Show." Coupled with the critically & popularly praised and multiple award-winning "Symphonie Fantastique," Twist was revealed as a singular artist of unlimited imagination.

Highlights of Twist's subsequent work have included "Petrushka" (commissioned by Lincoln Center) and "Dogugaeshi" (The Japan Society), "Behind the Lid" (Silver Whale Gallery) with Lee Nagrin and "Arias with a Twist" (HERE) co-created with nightlife icon Joey Arias. "Symphonie" and these productions have toured throughout the world.

Twist is currently represented on Broadway with "Charlie and The Chocolate Factory". Other credits include: "Oh, Hello! On Broadway," the puppetry in "The Addams Family" for which he won a Drama Desk Award, and staging of the puppetry for the beloved "Pee-Wee Herman Show."

Twist is a frequent collaborator with Lee Breuer and Mabou Mines. From "Peter and Wendy" to "Red Beads" to his debut at the Comedie Francaise as designer and co-director with Breuer of "A Streetcar named Desire."

Basil's work is deeply musical in nature. He has conceived and directed two successful operas, Ottorini Respighi's "La Bella Dormente Nel Bosco" with the Gotham Chamber Opera at the Lincoln Center and Spoleto USA Festivals, and Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel for the Houston and Atlanta Operas. "Master Peters Puppet Show" with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has adapted his "Petrushka to concert hall staging with full orchestra for the Fort Worth and Phoenix Symphonies.

In dance most recently, he created the sets and puppetry for the world premiere of "Dorothy and The Prince of Oz" for The Tulsa Ballet and collaborated on a new "Nutcracker" with Christopher Wheeldon for The Joffrey Ballet. Also with Wheeldon, "Cinderella" at the Dutch National Ballet & San Francisco Ballet, and "A Winter's Tale" for the Royal Ballet. He created "Darkness and Light" with Pilobolus and created the title role in "Wonderboy" with The Joe Goode Dance Company. In drama; Twist created the unforgettable siblings in Paula Vogel's play "The Long Christmas Ride Home" at Trinity Repertory and The Vineyard Theatre (including directing and designing the West Coast Premiere at The Magic Theatre), the play within the play for Oskar Eustis' "Hamlet" at Shakespeare in the Park and Des Macnuff's "Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots" at the La Jolla Playhouse.

Basil has taught at leading Universities such as Stanford, Duke, New York University and Brown and as a guest lecturer of the US State Dept in Russia. He has received an Obie, Drama Desk Award, five UNIMA Awards, two Bessie Awards, New York Innovative Theatre Award, Henry Hewes Award, Guggenheim, USA Artists fellowship and a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award. In 2012 Washington D.C. hosted a retrospective of his work, Twist Fest D.C. His site-specific commission "Seafoam Sleepwalk" for the La Jolla Playhouse premiered in the Pacific Ocean in San Diego in 2013 as a part of their WOW Festival.

Twist's "Rite of Spring" – a ballet without dancers, made its world premiere in 2013, commissioned by Carolina Performing Arts and appeared in NYC in October of 2014 as a part of Lincoln Center's White Light Festival.

"Sisters Follies" was created for Abrons Arts Center 100th Anniversary where it made its world premiere in October of 2015. Mr. Twist was honored with a MacArthur Fellowship. He lives in NYC, where he guides The Dream Music Puppetry Program at HERE.