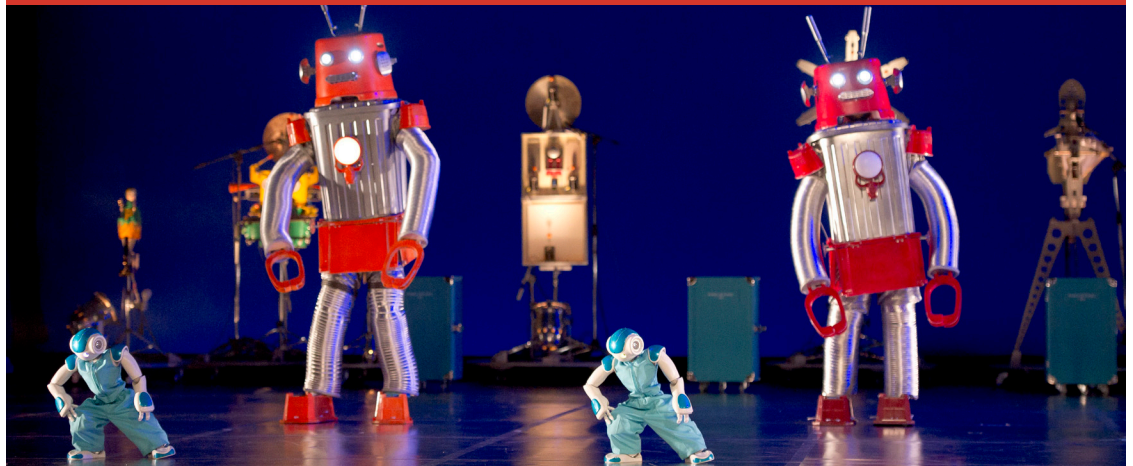




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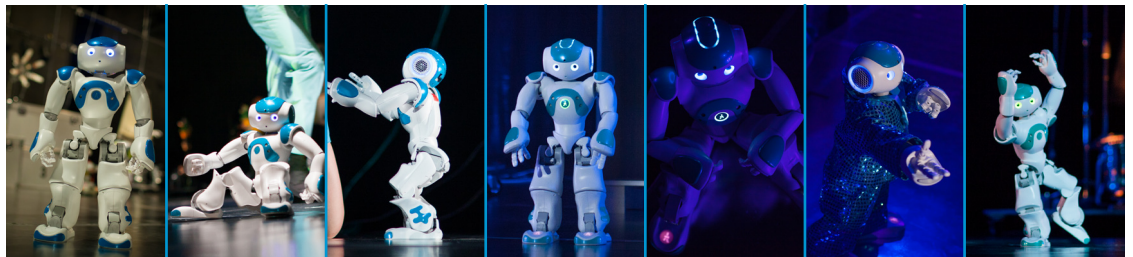
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FROM PARIS WITH ROBOTS BLANCA LI'S "ROBOT" MAKES U.S. DEBUT AT BAM HOWARD GILMAN OPERA HOUSE, JUNE 9-14

The music, dance, visual arts extravaganza features seven dancing robots along with eight human dancers

If teaching a human to dance isn't difficult enough, try a robot. Then try seven of them, each with a distinct personality and temperament, unique learning curve and different coordination issues. But as performers in Blanca Li's "ROBOT," all seven share a single passion: the determination to dance.

Meet Pierre, Jean, Alex, Lou, Dominique, Sacha and Ange, who, along with their spectacular eight human dancers counterparts, are the stars of Blanca Li's hit show, "ROBOT," which arrives from Paris to take over BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House stage, June 9-14, where all 15 performers will make their American debuts.



Pierre

Jean

Alex

Lou

Dominique

Sacha

Ange

The brain child of choreographer/filmmaker/dancer/director Blanca Li whose credits include creating music videos for Daft Punk, fashion videos for Beyoncé, dances for films by Pedro Almodovar, runway shows for Jean-Paul Gaultier, commissions from the Paris Opera Ballet and Metropolitan Opera in New York, countless television videos, "ROBOT" is a magical, hope-filled world where gender is malleable, humans and robots fall in and out of love, learn to walk and then to sing and dance, to care for each other, and poke fun at life's topsy turvy-ness.



© Laurent Philippe

The dancing in “ROBOT” is accompanied by a 10-member mechanical orchestra whose instruments double as witty and riveting art installations created by the award-winning Japanese designer team Maywa Denki. Influenced by kinetic art and techno-pop, Maywa Denki’s back-to-the-future musical objects, created from resin, aluminum and feathers, are complex electro-mechanical devices, which play music only when activated by humans. Sorry, robots.

Embedded in the funny, exuberant and deeply touching 90-minute show are profound questions about what it is to be human; to be a robot; what our future holds for us as we grow more and more dependent on inanimate objects to run our lives. Will there be a time when man and robot become interchangeable?

Given its sweeping imagination, it’s no wonder that “ROBOT” has been playing to sold-out houses in more than 60 cities throughout France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy since its world premiere at the Montpellier Dance Festival in Montpellier, France in 2013. It has also been the subject of two French national telecasts, the film of one had been selected for showing at 2015 Dance Film Festival at the Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

BLANCA LI

Blanca Li was born in Granada, Spain, where she was en route to becoming a world class gymnast before abandoning the sport to travel to New York City where she spent five years studying at the Martha Graham Dance Center. Li moved back to Europe to found her own contemporary dance company in Paris, which, in its 22 years, performed in over 1000 venues world-wide. In addition to her commercial film and fashion work, choreographing for her own troupe of dancers, Li has choreographed dances for the Paris Opera Ballet and the Metropolitan Opera in New York. She was director and choreographer for the Berlin Ballet at the Komische Oper in 2001 and 2002, and director of the Centro Andaluz de Danza in Seville from



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2006 until 2010. She has directed five feature films including “The Dance Challenge” (Le Défi) that featured 150 hip hop dancers and was included in the 2004 Tribeca Film Festival, and “Pas à Pas,” a documentary about the process of her creating her stage show, “Corazon Loco.” Most recently, she directed one of the first immersive dance films for Oculus Rift; it was released in March 2015 at EXIT Festival in Créteil, France and available through German-French TV channel ARTE.

MAYWA DENKI

Maywa Denki was created in 1993 as a performance art collective comprised of two brothers, Masamichi (the elder) and Novmichi (younger) Tosa. They began their career as a special art division within Sony Music Entertainment. In 1998, Maywa Denki transferred from SME to Yoshimoto Kogyo Co., Ltd.

Maywa Denki, which is now solely produced by Novmichi Tosa, was named after the company that his father had headed. The costume worn by employees was designed to suggest a typical working uniform of Japanese electric factories, symbolizing small/medium-sized enterprises that had once supported Japan’s economy during its period of high-growth. The company’s unique style is reflected in the words Novmichi uses to describe the eccentric, creative instruments and innovative toys it creates. For example, each piece of Maywa Denki’s work is called “a product” and a live performance or exhibition is termed “a product demonstration.” The products produced have included “NAKI Series,” fish-motif nonsense machines, “Tsukuba Series,” original musical instruments. In addition to Maywa Denki, Novmichi has created the “Edelweiss Series,” flower-motif object art. Although Maywa Denki’s work is known and considered art, its promotion strategies are full of variety: exhibition, live stages, performances, music production, videos, writing, merchandising toys, stationery, and electric devices. Maywa Denki has recently begun to extend its activities overseas, holding exhibitions throughout the world.

“Otamatone” which is part of Maywa Denki’s “Voice Mechanics series,” has garnered many international fans. It was awarded a grand prize at the 2010 Japan Toy Awards. Otamatone DX, also released in the spring of 2012, was formally nominated as a cultural envoy for the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan in 2013, the year of Maywa Denki’s 20th anniversary. That year the company celebrated with a concert at Akasaka Blitz and a retrospective exhibition at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa.

NAO ROBOTS – Aldebaran Robotics

The first in a family of companion robots created by the French company Aldebaran, NAO, two feet high, is small, cute, round and loveable. He has become integral in the daily lives of humans by serving as a receptionist, companion, entertainer; he also is used to assist the elderly, and as a therapy tool for autistic children, among his other tasks. He is intended to be a friendly companion. He moves, recognizes us, hears us and even talks to us. Wanting to amuse, please, understand and love us, his goal is to become our friend.

While readying himself for home use, NAO became a star in the academic world for research and education. He has been used in computer and science classes, from primary school through university in more than 70 countries, where students have learned to program him to walk, catch small

objects and even dance! He then attracted communities of program developers, who recognized him as a powerful and incredibly expressive medium for creating applications.

In 2008, NAO was selected as the successor to Sony AIBO in the standard RoboCup Soccer League, the university competition that organizes robot soccer/football matches. NAO's goal is to play against the human team and win the 2050 World Cup.

In 2010, twenty NAOs danced in the French Pavilion at World Expo in Shanghai, attracting visits by 10 million people, and In 2013, Aldebaran launched the Autism Solution for Kids (ASK NAO) a new approach for teachers working with children with autism through the employment of robots.

In 2013, NAOs joined the performing arts world as professional dancers, starring in Blanca Li's show "ROBOT." Since then, they have been seen in theaters around the world, including Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris, where "ROBOT" performed to sold-out houses.

TIMES AND DATES FOR ROBOT

Tuesday June 9th at 8 pm

Thursday June 11th at 8 pm

Friday June 12th at 8 pm

Saturday June 13th at 2 pm and 8 pm

Sunday June 14th at 1 pm and 5 pm

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets to "ROBOT" range between \$25 and \$75 and are available by calling 718-636-4100 or online at www.BAM.org/robot-blancali.

\$10 students and senior rush discounts are available 90 minutes before the show at the box office.

The BAM box office is located at 30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. This event is presented by Blanca Li Productions. BAM house and ticketing policies may not apply.

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Robots photo credit: Magali Bragard