

Kei Haga

Dancing can reveal all the mystery that music conceals.
-- Charles Baudelaire

It is impossible to imagine Kei Haga's life taking a different direction than what it has.



Kei Haga 芳賀啓

To be born into Kei's family was to be immersed in a world of music, dance, art and education. Within the family home existed a tremendous amount of love and support for each member to pursue his or her artistic dream. Due to this nurturing environment, each family member has achieved great levels of success.

From his early childhood, Kei was been exposed to the ballet, through his mother, Nozomi, who for twenty years has been the owner and head instructor of Haga Ballet Academy in Okegawa, Japan.

Trained as a dancer, Nozomi pursued her artistic passion and went on to dedicate her life to teaching students from age 5 to 40. She often brought her sons to the studio. Kei comments that his childhood was filled with classical music and ballet. When asked if he took dance lessons, he laughs, "No, that was my brother's job. He started taking lessons when he was 9 or 10."

Kei's father was a successful scientist in the field of nuclear energy. His position and participation in organizations regulating safety internationally provided him with numerous opportunities to travel the world. His travels and subsequent involvement with international diplomacy would play a major role in both of his sons' lives.



Kei's father enjoyed the time he had spent in Canada. He pulled his 16-year-old son aside and recommended that he attend high school there. Kei liked the idea, as his brother had moved to Vancouver at age 12 to attend dance school. Both excited and frightened, the young Kei packed his bags to move half a world away. He lived with a host family for the first year, but after that Kei found roommates to share apartments with.

During these years, Kei was asked to paint some murals for his high school. It was through this simple student project that his previously undiscovered talent was revealed. Kei comments to this

day, with a sense of surprise and wonder, “It was really cool, I was just painting these murals for the school, and everybody kept coming up to me and telling me how great they were. I was just having fun.”

It wasn't just his fellow students who noticed the murals. Kei's art teacher took note of the special talent that the transplanted high school student possessed and encouraged him to pursue a career in the arts.

At age 19, with the guidance and support of his teacher, Kei decided to pursue a life in art and, at the same time, come to the United States to study and live, both because he loved the US and felt that art is more respected in the States than Canada or Japan.

He began his studies at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, CA in 1999. Immersing himself in his new life, his artwork was strongly influenced by Klimt, Dali, and of course, because of his fascination with dance, Degas. Contemporary artists Bernie Fuchs and Robert Heindel also played an important role in the development of Kei's own personal style and their influence can be seen throughout his paintings.



His ongoing obsession with ballet continues to be fueled by his brother. Previously a dancer with the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago, he now dances with the famous K Ballet in Yokohama City, Japan.

Most practice sessions or rehearsals are closed, even to close family members or associates. Because Kei's family is very supportive of his art, he has gained access to many studios in the US, Canada and Japan. This has allowed him to share the private world of ballet practice and rehearsals. It is a representation of artists portraying another's craft and effort to achieve perfection through dance and precise control of

their bodies.

Kei's father's role in this artistic family since retirement has been to coordinate many International Youth Ballet events. His love and enthusiasm has brought about numerous exchanges between Japanese, Canadian and United States troupes. And his past experience in diplomacy has spurred the involvement and acknowledgement of high ranking officials such as the Prime Minister of Japan, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Ambassador of Canada to Japan and many more.

Kei's nights and days are still reminiscent of his childhood and are filled with music, dance and art. His profound love for his family remains as strong as his need to constantly create. His art has been enjoyed in many major galleries in Japan, in the form of murals in many international locations, and as program covers for ballet performances through out the world.

“I like to capture the moments, motions and passion of those dancers in the studio,” Kei comments about his challenges in painting the dancers, “My use of color is meant for creating a different mood. Sometimes extremely intense, sometimes tranquil, depending on the inspiration I receive from the dancers in rehearsal.”

Capturing a leap, a group of dancers moving in unison under dimmed lights, the completion of a difficult pose, the beauty of the fabrics, are the moments that captivate and challenge Kei every time he paints.

Exhibitions

Metropolitan Museum of Art of Tokyo, “Gensoten” Award Recipient	2005
Louis Aronow Galleries, Sausalito and San Francisco, CA	2005
Bev’s Fine Art, Raleigh, NC	2004
Hallmark Gallery, La Jolla, CA	2004
Gallery Yubido, Tokyo, Japan	2001 – 2004
Sogou Gallery, Yokohama, Japan	2002
Fairy Gallery, Tokyo, Japan	2002
Japan-Canada Youth Ballet Gala, Kawaguchi, Japan	2001
National Ballet of Canada Seasonal Art Exhibits	2001 – 2003
New York Society of Illustrators	2001
Academy of Art College, San Francisco, CA	2000
Art Matters, California College of Arts and Crafts, San Francisco, CA	1999
San Francisco Society of Illustrators, San Francisco, CA	1999

Murals

Disney Land, Hong Kong, China
 Disney World, Orlando, FL
 Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines
 Cesar’s Palace, Las Vegas, NV
 Harrods, London

Partial Listing of Ballet Programs

Millennium Ballet Illusion In Ibaraki	2001 – 2004
Rie Tnaka Ballet Studio 25 th Anniversary	2002
Japan-Canada Youth Ballet, “The Nutcracker”	2002
Japan-Canada Youth Ballet Gala Performance	2001
Studio Dance Sonnet	2001
Yoko Hashimoto ecole de Ballet	2001
Rondo Ballet Studio	2001
Shakujii Ballet Academy	2001

Education

Academy of Art University, San Francisco, CA BFA	2000
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