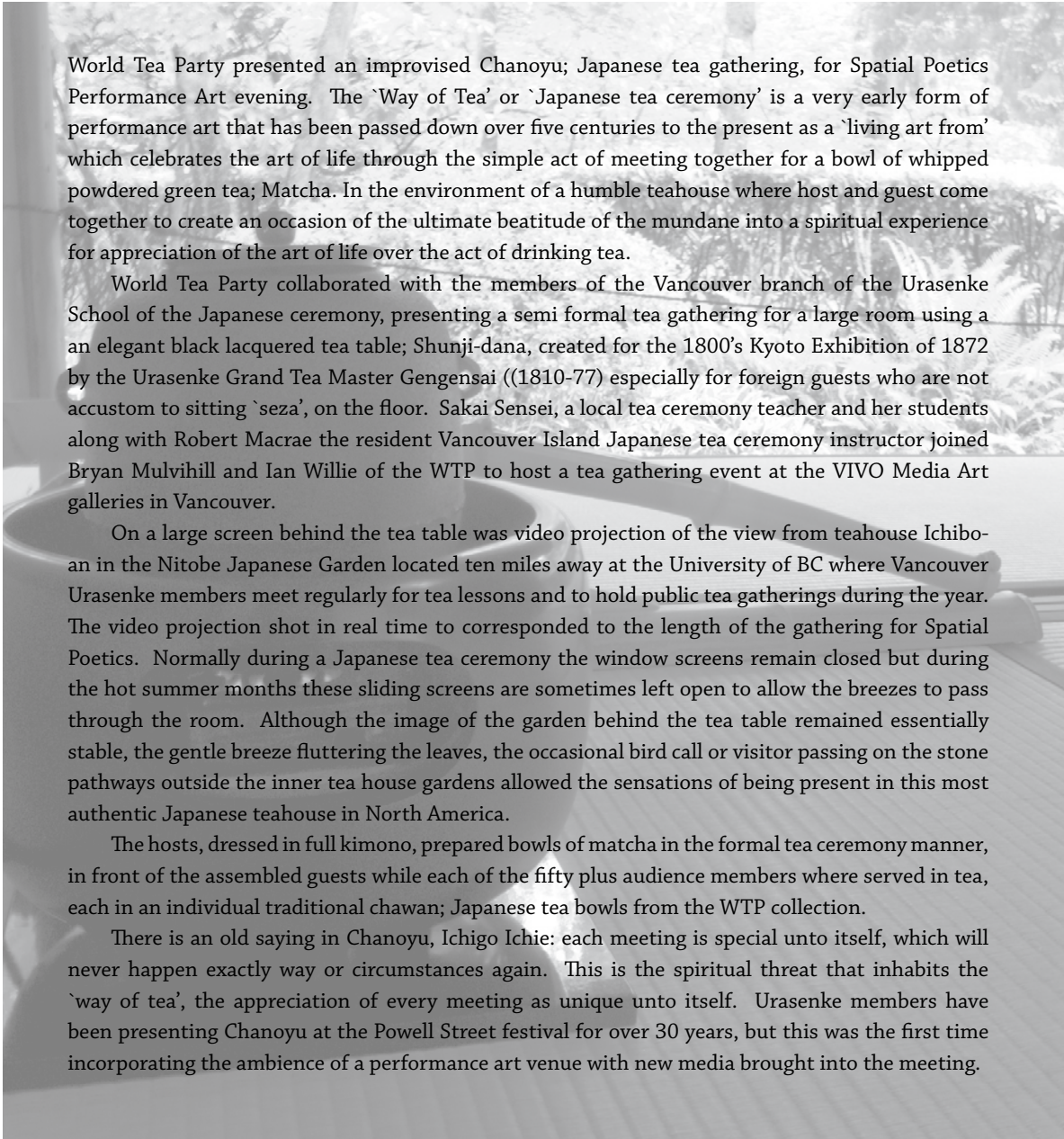


>> WORLD TEA PARTY

World Tea Party, 2006



World Tea Party presented an improvised Chanoyu; Japanese tea gathering, for Spatial Poetics Performance Art evening. The 'Way of Tea' or 'Japanese tea ceremony' is a very early form of performance art that has been passed down over five centuries to the present as a 'living art from' which celebrates the art of life through the simple act of meeting together for a bowl of whipped powdered green tea; Matcha. In the environment of a humble teahouse where host and guest come together to create an occasion of the ultimate beatitude of the mundane into a spiritual experience for appreciation of the art of life over the act of drinking tea.

World Tea Party collaborated with the members of the Vancouver branch of the Urasenke School of the Japanese ceremony, presenting a semi formal tea gathering for a large room using an elegant black lacquered tea table; Shunji-dana, created for the 1800's Kyoto Exhibition of 1872 by the Urasenke Grand Tea Master Gengensai ((1810-77) especially for foreign guests who are not accustomed to sitting 'seza', on the floor. Sakai Sensei, a local tea ceremony teacher and her students along with Robert Macrae the resident Vancouver Island Japanese tea ceremony instructor joined Bryan Mulvihill and Ian Willie of the WTP to host a tea gathering event at the VIVO Media Art galleries in Vancouver.

On a large screen behind the tea table was video projection of the view from teahouse Ichibonan in the Nitobe Japanese Garden located ten miles away at the University of BC where Vancouver Urasenke members meet regularly for tea lessons and to hold public tea gatherings during the year. The video projection shot in real time corresponded to the length of the gathering for Spatial Poetics. Normally during a Japanese tea ceremony the window screens remain closed but during the hot summer months these sliding screens are sometimes left open to allow the breezes to pass through the room. Although the image of the garden behind the tea table remained essentially stable, the gentle breeze fluttering the leaves, the occasional bird call or visitor passing on the stone pathways outside the inner tea house gardens allowed the sensations of being present in this most authentic Japanese teahouse in North America.

The hosts, dressed in full kimono, prepared bowls of matcha in the formal tea ceremony manner, in front of the assembled guests while each of the fifty plus audience members were served in tea, each in an individual traditional chawan; Japanese tea bowls from the WTP collection.

There is an old saying in Chanoyu, Ichigo Ichie: each meeting is special unto itself, which will never happen exactly way or circumstances again. This is the spiritual threat that inhabits the 'way of tea', the appreciation of every meeting as unique unto itself. Urasenke members have been presenting Chanoyu at the Powell Street festival for over 30 years, but this was the first time incorporating the ambience of a performance art venue with new media brought into the meeting.

View from Nitobe Japanese Teahouse Projected at Spatial Poetics
photo from Video by Bryan Mulvihill Japanese Kama; kettle at Nitobe Teahouse



Black Lacquer tea table used at Spatial Poetics Japanese World Tea Party event.

Photo bryan mulvihill