

Kafka's The Metamorphosis, robot style

October 8 2014, by Katie Forster



French actress Irene Jacob (2nd R), actors Jerome Kircher (R) and Thierry Vy Huu (L) perform with android Repliee S1 during a rehearsal of "La Metamorphose version Androide" in Yokohama, suburban Tokyo, October 7, 2014

Franz Kafka's seminal work *The Metamorphosis* is famous for its themes of alienation, absurdity and now androids, as a robot takes centre stage in a new theatrical adaptation.

Acclaimed Japanese director Oriza Hirata worked with leading roboticist Hiroshi Ishiguro to create the star of the show, a tall gangly [robot](#) with a metal skeleton and white human-like face and hands.

"Even though people react when they see a robot, you can tell people are not moved by it," Hirata told AFP.

"I wanted to create a situation in which a robot could move an audience."

In Kafka's 1915 novella, travelling salesman Gregor Samsa wakes up one morning inexplicably transformed into a repulsive insect, causing his family to hide him away in shame and disgust.

Hirata's production swaps the big bug for a cold silver frame and an automated voice, testing the dramatic timing of four French actors chosen to play his family.

The company—robot included—worked on the play for a month in the remote town of Kinosaki in western Japan.

The show, titled "La Metamorphose version Androïde", will now open for a short run in Yokohama on Thursday and then travel to Europe to kick off the "Autumn Festival Normandy" next month in France.

Award winning actress Irene Jacob praised the acting skills of her on-stage android son.

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