

L'Observatoire International, top; KPF, above  
E.D. screen projecting soft-focus  
waterfront warehouses.

# criticism

To those in the know there was something poignant about the pas de deux that Ms. Volochkova and Evgeny Ivanchenko danced from "The Phantom Ball," a 1995 ballet by Dmitri Briantsev. Mr. Briantsev, the 57-year-old director of Moscow's second major ballet company, the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Ballet, has not been seen since he left his hotel in Prague in July. The Czech police are investigating his disappearance.

The Russian Nights Festival, a celebration of Russian culture that ended yesterday, went strangely unheralded in New York but included more than a worthwhile poetry readings, concerts and presentations of early Soviet films.

Saturday's gala was both a classical variety show and a thinly disguised showcase for Ms. Volochkova, who appeared six times on the program. All the other artists, except accompanists and the Kremlin Chamber Orchestra, which opened and closed the evening, performed once.

Ms. Volochkova, looking big-boned and svelte, did battle with a floor that was obviously more tired than moving grand pianos in and out than to dancing on toe. She tripped three times but never fell.

Americans have seen her to better

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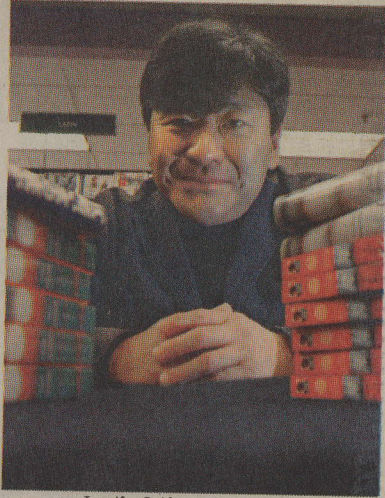
# Bringing Out the Horror Of What He Knows Best

By RANDY KENNEDY

Koji Suzuki does not look like a rock star. He is a short, slim man, 47, with slightly graying hair that flops over his eyebrows. The other day, sipping hot tea in a French restaurant in the Flatiron district, he wore a mock turtleneck shirt and a dark seersucker jacket and looked like a diffident literature professor or a lonely tourist trying to blend into the crowd.

But in Tokyo, where he lives with his wife and two daughters, Mr. Suzuki often generates rock-star level adulation when he makes public appearances or even when he ventures into the neighborhood near his apartment overlooking Tokyo Bay. "I was out recently doing push-ups in the park," Mr. Suzuki said, through a translator, smiling, "and I could hear these people talking, looking at me, saying, 'It's Koji Suzuki!'"

This is because over the last decade Mr. Suzuki has written a series of horror novels and short stories that have earned him the title — one that alternately annoys and flatters him — of the Stephen King of Japan. He has sold more than 10 million copies of his books in his native country. But much more so than Carrie or Cujo or Christine, Mr. Suzuki's most frightening creation — Sadako, a demonic, hermaphroditic girl at the center of his 1989 book "The Ring" and its sequels — has pervaded Jap-



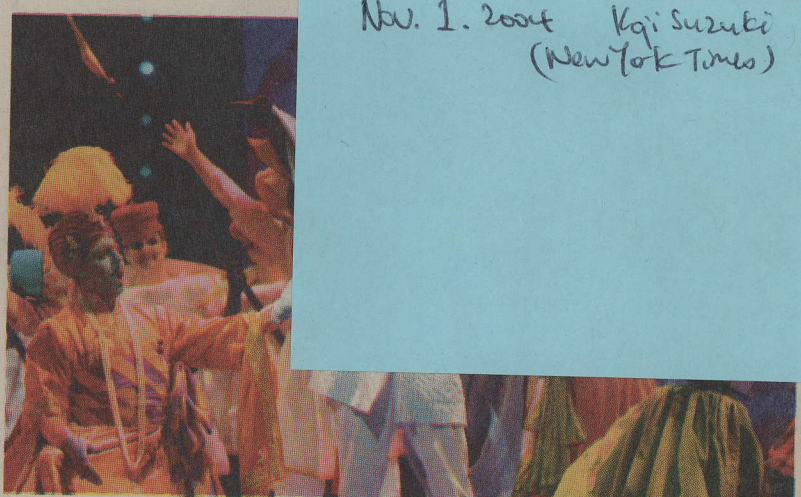
Jennifer S. Altman for The New York Times

Koji Suzuki's horror novels have pervaded Japanese pop culture.

anese popular culture, becoming a boogeyman used to scare children and, for adults, a metaphor for everything corrupt, cruel and frightening about modern society.

Beginning with the 1998 film adaptation of "The Ring," by the director Hideo Nakata — which became the highest-earning horror film in Japanese history — Mr. Suzuki has also become a virtual one-man scary-movie plot machine. He is credited as one of the creators of a new, scarier, psychological horror genre known as J-horror, with less splatter

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Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

**TALE OF TALES** Heather Buck, center, in the title role of "Haroun and the Sea of Stories," which had its world premiere yesterday at the New York City Opera. Anthony Tommasini's review appears in the Metro Report.

Nov. 1, 2004 Koji Suzuki  
(New York Times)