

MAKI CARROUSEL

b. July 7, 1940

d. April 28, 2021

JAPANESE TRANSGENDER ACTOR

Maki Carrousel is a transgender Japanese actor. She has appeared in approximately two dozen television productions and theatrical films since she began her career in 1969.

Assigned male at birth, Carrousel studied ballet as a child. At age 11, she appeared in Los Angeles in the New York City Ballet's 1953 production of "The Nutcracker."

**She is a
groundbreaking
transgender
Japanese actor.**

Carrousel left home at the age of 15 and began working odd jobs at gay bars and nightclubs across Japan—first in Sapporo and later in Osaka at a bar named Carrousel. At 19, she came out as a transgender woman, changing her name to Hirahara Maki and assuming the stage name Maki Carrousel as an homage to her former place of employment.

In the 1960s, Carrousel's ambitions turned to acting. At age 27, she found her first role in the 1969 horror film, "Orgies of Edo." She went on to act on television and in movies and to perform in nightclubs.

In 1973 Carrousel completed her transition, undergoing groundbreaking gender affirmation surgery in Morocco. She was one of the first people in Japan to publicly disclose their gender reassignment at a time when transgender individuals were scorned as freaks. When traveling outside her country, she wore a hat and loose clothing to conceal her body and avoid harassment.

In 2001 Carrousel was arrested for drug possession. Because her official documents listed her gender at birth, she was forced to spend 41 grueling days in a male prison. She published her autobiography in 2022. She was legally recognized as a woman two years later.

Carrousel's filmography includes more than 20 roles. She stars in the film "Voice," released in February 2024.



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