

Display

Musical Instruments

The following musical instruments accompany a typical Noh performance: wooden flute (fu-eh), shoulder drum (ko-tsuzumi), hip drum (o-tsuzumi), and stick drum (taiko).

There are usually three or four musicians in the ensemble, each playing a different instrument.



Noh Flute



Hip Drum



Shoulder Drum



Stick Drum

The Masks of Noh

Noh masks are very important symbolic properties of Noh as a masked drama. There are about 60 types of Noh masks.

The masks are sculpted in a way to ingeniously combine the reality and the imaginary for producing a form of beauty. A great effort is exerted to make each one conform to the actual performance.



Ko-omote



Fukai



Mikazuki



Shikami



Shoujou



Hannya

Fan

All actors who enter the stage carry a fan. There are two types of fans: Shizume-ogi, which are like ordinary fans; and Chuukei, which are made so that the outer tip is partly open, even when the fan is closed. There are various decorations painted upon the fans.



Kami-ougi



Shura-ougi



Kazura-ougi



Kyoujo-ougi



Oni-ougi

Costumes

The costumes of Noh visually express the spirit and substance of a Noh play.

Woven mainly of silk, many costumes are made of a very thick material. They are made with sophisticated intricate detail and often come in various designs.



Karaori



Atsuta



Kariginu



Chouken

Experience Japanese Culture

Noh Presentation by Tsurukameza



Date: Wednesday February 21, 2018

Place: Ta Prohm Hotel Siem Reap



NPO法人 能楽普及集団

鶴亀座

Tokyo NPO TSURUKAMEZA

Demonstration

An introduction to the world of Noh

Noh, Japan's traditional performing arts, was developed in the 14th century.

Noh is a kind of symbolic drama, colored with the graceful aesthetic effect of quiet elegance that is expressed through the word Yugen (elegant, refined, and elusive beauty).

Its subjects are taken from history or classical literature, and it is structured around songs and dances. Its most obvious characteristic is that the main actor performs while wearing a mask of exceptional beauty.

The themes used in Noh are more concerned with very personalized human activities. Noh has developed into a highly stylized and refined performing art that takes place upon a very simple stage.

A Noh composition is based on the following four elements: song, dance, music, and drama.

Each song, dance, and music can be performed individually if necessary.

Chant

About two-hundred Noh-choral books have been published. These books have been popular all over the country. A Noh chant is basically a story telling which is sung by a choir without a defined melody.



Dance

The main actor (**Shite**) dances portions of a song, accompanied only by the choir.

Shite is dressed in the formal crested kimono (**Montsuki**) and a long pleated culotte-like Japanese trouser (**Hakama**).



Maibayashi

An actor performs several parts of a song without wearing the full Noh costume and mask, but the actor is still dressed in the Montsuki and Hakama. Musicians and the choir accompany the actor.



Programs

1. Singing **Shikainami**
2. Greeting from the Chairman Mr. Tanaka
3. Description of Noh
4. Live Noh Performance
 - Dancing (solo) **Genjo** and **Hashi-Benkei**
 - Chanting and Dancing **Kiyotsune**
 - Maibayashi Performance (with ensemble) **Yoshino Tennin**
5. Noh Trial
 - Ko-tsuzumi (shoulder drum), O-tsuzumi (hip drum)
 - Fu-eh (flute), Noh masks
6. Live Noh Performance
 - Maibayashi Performance
 - (put on costume and mask with ensemble) **Hagoromo**
 - Chanting and Dancing **Tsuchigumo**
7. Talk-Back Session: Questions and Answers about Noh
8. Closing **Shojo**



Story

Genjo

The famous lute player Moronaga (Minister in 10 century) is about to sail for China for further training on the instrument in that country, when stops for a night at Suma bay (Hyogo county) to view the moon.

He plays a piece on a lute for the old couple in whose house he is lodging, and is surprised to find them so appreciative of the music that when a shower of rain patters down on the roof they hasten to spread rush mats there to deaden the sound.

He therefor asks them to play a piece, and when they play on the lute and Japanese harp their performance is so skillful that he abandons altogether his plan of going to study in China. At this, the old couple reveal that they are in fact the Emperor Murakami and his consort, the Lady Nashitsubo, and that the Emperor had played the melody on the famous lute called Genjo in the hope that after hearing it Moronaga would give up his journey abroad. They then vanish, but the Emperor reappears shortly afterwards and summons a dragon-god from the sea. He retrieves from him another famous lute, Shishi-maru, which had been seized by the dragon-god.

He presents to Moronaga it. Mononaga gets back to home with Shishi-maru

Hashi-Benkei

When Benkei (priest) announces his intention of going to a shrine at Gojo (Kyoto) in the early hours of the morning, his retainer tries to dissuade him, saying that a young and very agile swordsman has made the Gojo district very dangerous by night. For a moment Benkei is inclined to listen to the warning, but then he brushes it aside and resolves to go out and face the youth that night.

Ushiwakamaru (later known as samurai Yoshitsune) waits on the bridge with a length of silk over his head and shoulders, so that Benkei takes him for a woman and passes by. Ushiwakamaru then throws off the silk and challenges him.

The two engage in a fierce fight, but finally Benkei is defeated. After they declare themselves, Benkei vows to be Ushiwakamaru's faithful retainer.

Kiyotsune

After Taira no Kiyotsune (commander of samurai in 12 century) has drowned himself at Yanagiga-ura bay (between Fukuoka and Oita county) following his defeat there.

His retainer Awazu no Saburo returns to the capital with a lock of Kiyotsune's hair which he left as a memento for his wife. She receives this and grieves over her husband's untimely death. But she gave back a memento because he does not keep his promise to her having a reunion with him after battle. The ghost of Kiyotsune appears and tells of the battle in which the Taira were defeated.

Finally he gained the salvation of soul by praying to the Buddha.

Yoshino Tennin

Some people on their way to view the cherry blossom which the cherry trees are in full blossom at Yoshino (Nara county) meet a beautiful woman who joints them to enjoy the flowers.

Before leaving she tells them that she is a goddess and that she will return later and perform an ancient dance for them. This she does, and after praising the beauties of spring.

She is playing among the flowers and vanishes on a cloud of blossom.

Hagoromo

Some fishermen are walking through the pinewoods on Mio Bay when one of them finds a beautiful robe hanging from the branch of a pine tree.

He is about to take it home when an angel comes to claim it, explaining that it is a feather robe from Heaven.

This makes the fisherman determined to keep it as a national treasure, but the angel tells him that without it she can never again return to Heaven.

He is so moved by her distress that he agrees to return it if she will dance for him. He at first refuses to give it back before she dances for fear that she will fly away as soon as the robe becomes hers again. In reply, the angel tells him that only humans practice such behaviors. He shamefacedly gives up the robe.

Overjoyed now, the angel puts the robe on and dances. Then, as she gives unlimited blessings on the land, the angel returns to Heaven among the mists and clouds.

Tsuchigumo

After the serving woman has brought the sick Minamoto no Raiko some medicine, a spider comes to him in the guise of a priest. But when it begins to enmesh Raiko in the thread of a web, he realizes that it is some evil creature

and manages to slash it with his sword. At this it vanishes but Hitori-musha, alarmed by his master's cries, hurries to the scene and after hearing what has taken place, determines to hunt out the creature. He and his men track it down by following the trail of blood to a cave and there they destroy the spider that has been the cause of Raiko's illness.