

Jonathan Slaff & Associates

Press Representative - 55 Perry Street, #1M - New York, NY 10014
Tel. (212) 924-0496 - Fax (877) 534-4061 - js@jsnyc.com - www.jsnyc.com

"AGES OF ENCHANTMENT: JPA Cultural Repertoires 2017," a celebration of traditional Japanese performing and folk arts.

Traditional Kimono, Nichibu Dance, Bon Odori, Kagura and Bunraku at Peter Norton Symphony
Space October 28

WHERE AND WHEN:

Saturday, October 28, 2017 at 6:30 PM

Peter Norton Symphony Space

2537 Broadway (at 95th Street), NYC

Tickets: www.symphonyspace.org

Phone sales (212-864-5400) and window sales Tues-Sun 1 PM - 6 PM

\$40 general admission (day of show) \$30 (advance sale)

Students (high school & college) \$25 (day of show), \$18 (advance sale)

Student ID required for box office purchases only.

Child/Senior \$25 (day of show), \$18 (advance sale)

Symphony Space Members \$25 Groups (15 or more) \$25

Runs 2 1/2 hours with intermission.

Press coverage, including reviews, is invited.

Photos are available at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/KHjtPHDYZLKOg57U2>

NEW YORK, September 26 -- The enchanting dance styles of *Iwami Kagura* and *Nihon Buyo*, a world-acclaimed *Bunraku* puppet troupe and a fashion show of wedding kimonos will be featured in "**Ages Of Enchantment: JPA Cultural Repertoires 2017**," a showcase of Japanese performing arts and culture, **October 28, 2017** at **Peter Norton Symphony Space**, 2537 Broadway (at 95th Street). The event is presented by **Japan Performing Arts Inc. (JPA)**, a cultural organization founded and led by choreographer **Yuko Hamada**, who curates the evening.

It's meant to be a splendid introduction or re-introduction to high folk arts of Japan's Osaka, Akita and Shimane prefectures. Detailed explanations together with photo and video projections will be offered before each live performance in order to promote better understanding of these unique features of Japanese culture. The evening was inspired by the success of a similar evening that was offered by Japan Performing Arts, Inc. in 2015 at Manhattan Movement and Arts Center. The program will be presented at Symphony Space to bring it to a wider audience. Nevertheless, audience members are advised to buy tickets early, since space will actually be limited: 300 of the more than 750 seats will be offered free to New York City public schools, community organizations, and charities.

Performances will showcase five classic Japanese arts disciplines:

(1) Bunraku Puppet Theater, an Osaka Tradition

Bunraku, a centuries-old style of Japanese puppet theater, is very popular in Osaka. It has been designated by UNESCO as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. *Bunraku* makes its return to New York after its debut in the city 25 years ago. *Bunraku* is typically performed with puppets on a wide stage, accompanied by highly-expressive chanting by a *tayū*, an oral storyteller, *ningyoshi* or puppeteers and musician playing a *shimase*, a three-string instrument. In this special performance, only three puppeteers -- Kanichi Yoshida, Montake Kiritake and Tamahiko Yoshida – will perform.

Usually, the *Bunraku* performers do not interact with audiences, but before their segment, they will discuss *Bunraku*'s 400-year-old techniques. They will explain how they work together. (The first puppeteer operates the body and right hand of the puppet, the second one operates the left hand, and the third member moves the legs).

(2) Iwami Kagura dance from Shimane

Popular in the Shimane Prefecture, *Kagura* features 50 episodes from the Japanese mythology. Originally *Kagura* was a theatrical dance ritual of the Shinto religion held in November for celebrating the harvest, but it later became theatrical entertainment for the general public.

This show will present a chapter known as *Orochi*, the story of a legendary, divine figure who defeats giant monster serpents. In the tale's climax, 17-meter long serpents made of a specialty paper and bamboo appear onstage, the most prominent feature of *Iwami Kagura*. *Orochi* will be accompanied by live music played by a six-member ensemble to capture the authenticity and spirit of *Kagura* when it is performed in Shimane. The musicians are **Riley Sumala, Patrick Cole, Yuki Takeuchi, Miki Kosugi, Yuki Dellipaoli and Ryo Shiba** (all from the New York area). Featured will be performer **Masatsugu Sakai**, originally from Shimane prefecture, who plays the god Susano, a hero of fighter. The three serpents will be played by **Takashi Hosoi, Sho Miya and Aoi Kadonishi**, who practiced to handle them for a year.

(3) Bon Odori dance from Akita

Bon Odori has roots in Buddhist religious ritual and is performed in every corner of Japan during the summer, around the national holidays during the August 13-18 period, often with audience participation. However, *Nishimonai Bon Odori* is a special one, prominent among Japan's Cultural Intangible Heritage of folk performing arts. Every summer, around 100,000 tourists come to the Akita Prefecture to see its costumes and unique dances performed over three days. People sometimes pay for preferred seating, otherwise, it is always free.

Nishimonai Bon Odori, now 700 years old, is preserved only by the villagers of Nishimonai. When outsiders participate, they must train specially for it. This is only the fifth time that *Nishimonai Bon Odori* has been presented in the USA.

After getting permission to teach authentic *Bon Odori* dancing, Yuko Hamada made several visits over a four-year period to the Akita Prefecture to study this dance style.

The dancers are **Nozomi Ariake**, who is originally from Akita prefecture, **Sayaka Wada, Kawazu Noriko, Hitomi Ozaki, Akiko Matsumoto, Ayako Yoshimoto**.

(4) Kimono Show

The Kimono (which literally means "a thing to wear" in English), a traditional Japanese garment, has a 1,200-year of history. This segment of the show will be both educational and entertaining as it will showcase an array of one traditional bridal and eight formal kimonos along with a presentation about their history. At the midpoint of the show, the five female dancers, **Sayaka Wada, Yuka Notsuka, Ayaka Taniguchi, Ayaka Yoshimoto and Aya Ikeda**, will demonstrate how to wear their Kimonos while dancing. The number's choreographer is **Sayaka Wada**.

The experts appearing in this event have been trained and certified in the intricate art of the kimono. They are **Emi Kikuchi** (who will be dressing a wedding kimono on a model for the show), **Yukari Mizuchi** (a coordinator for color and materials of Kimonos the models' hair designs) and **Saori Morris**.

There will be seven designers preparing kimono hair styles (they will also be styling the hair of the Nihon Nuyo dancers): **Yukari Mizuchi, Toshitsugu Kubota, Saori Morris, Yukie Nammori, Tomomi Iwata, Mika Saijo and Satoshi Ikeda**

(5) Nihon Buyo (or Nichibu)

The second part of the show features *Nihon Buyo*, one of the major traditional Japanese dances which has branched out into about 200 schools. *Nihon Buyo* was inspired by the movements in Kabuki and Noh and became established as a dance genre over the past 400 years. To better illustrate the uniqueness of these movements, a Western Ballet dance will be performed to contrast it with *Nihon Buyo*.

"The movements of traditional dance in any country is a way of expressing its cultural values," according to Yuko Hamada. "For instance, with Western movements such as ballet, the energy that spirals inside of the body must move outward while in traditional Japanese movements, the energy tends to go inward." JPA's *Nichibu* show will be performed dancers with **Takashi Hosoi, Sho Miya, Tsubasa Nishioka** in Hakama costumes, and **Motoko Tadano, Noriko Kawazu, Anami Midori, Hitomi Ozaki, Akiko Matsumoto** wearing white make-up, Japanese traditional hair styles and dragging kimono, **geisha style**.

Masters of ceremony for the evening are **Ryo Shiba, Pablo Ito, Shio Muramatsu and Natsumi Bellali**.

About Japan Performing Arts Inc.

Founded by Yuko Hamada, Japan Performing Arts, Inc. (JPA) launched as a free lecture series along with stage projects, beginning with an instructive presentation of Japanese arts, The JPA Cultural Repertoire, in 2015 at Manhattan Movement and Arts Center.

About Yuko Hamada

Yuko Hamada, born in Osaka, is a *Nichibu* (or *Nihon Buyo*) dance choreographer and dancer. She was formerly a member of Takarazuka Revue Company, a nationally well-known all-female theater in Japan. She graduated from the dramatic writing program of Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. She wrote, directed and produced three Off-off Broadway plays and has received considerable media coverage for her unique presentation of Japanese theater arts. Since the establishment of Japan Performing Arts, Inc., her pursuit of Japanese theater presentation has been ever evolving with wider range of venues including the United Nations Headquarters, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Brooklyn Botanic Garden. In 2015, she established Kagura Preservation Society of New York to introduce the Chugoku region's performing arts; the organization had its debut performance in NYC during the first JPA Cultural Repertoires in 2015.

Ms. Hamada explains that her love of dance, kimono design and puppetry from her native land have inspired her commitment to bring U.S. residents a deeper understanding of Japan's contributions to the arts. She notes that finding young people to carry the tradition of its older and ancient art forms is becoming increasingly difficult, especially in rural areas as populations decline in rural areas, and stresses the importance of expanding the fan base of Japan's rich cultural heritage to other countries. "These are Japanese traditions that have been passed down for at least 400 years," Hamada said. "People with everyday jobs -- regular local farmers, fishers, office workers -- have sacrificed a lot of time and money to pass down these cultural traditions and we should not to let them fade away from this world."

Ticket info

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