

Noh Charity Performance

Prayers from Kyoto for Reconstruction of Japan's Disaster-affected Regions

Thursday, August 20 2026

Part 1 at 10:30 am

Noh "Takasago"

Kyogen "Neongyoku"

Noh "Izutsu"

Part 2 at 6:30 pm

Noh "Kamo"

Kyogen "FuneFuna"

Noh "Tenko"



"Izutsu"



Venue: ROHM Theatre Kyoto , Southhall

13 , Okazaki Saishoji-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto City

Access: <https://rohmtheatrekyoto.jp/english/access/>

Admission tickets are ¥2,000 each for Part 1 and Part 2

(* Open seating; no refunds)

Kyoto Kanze Nohplay Theatre : Box office or telephone reservations 075-771-6114

ROHM Theatre Kyoto Ticket Counter : Box office or telephone reservations 075-746-3201

Kyoto Concert Hall Ticket Counter : Box office or telephone reservations 075-711-3231

Online purchase/reservation (WEB) <https://www.s2.e-get.jp/kyoto/pt>



Organized by: Kyoto-based volunteer Noh performers

Co-organized by: The City of Kyoto , ROHM Theatre Kyoto(Kyoto City Music Arts and Culture Promotion Foundation)

The Japan Foundation Kyoto Office

Collaboration: Showa Printing Co.,Ltd. Kyotobutaibijutsuseisakusyo Co.,Ltd.

<Part 1 Commentary and Storylines>

Half Noh: Takasago

Tomonari, the chief Shinto priest of Aso Shrine in Kumamoto Prefecture in Kyushu, is on his way to see the sights in Kyoto when he stops at the bay of Takasago. While he is gazing at the scenery of the bay, he notices an elderly couple sweeping up the fallen needles of a pine tree. Tomonari asks them why the pines of Takasago and Sumiyoshi are known as “Aioi no Matsu” — entwined twin male and female pines. The couple explains that even though Takasago and Sumiyoshi are far apart, the pines are actually a closely knit couple. The old man and woman allude to a historical fact as they explain the auspicious meaning of pine trees, revealing that they are the divinities of Takasago and Sumiyoshi. Telling Tomonari that they will be waiting for him at Sumiyoshi, the couple sets off on the open sea in a boat.

When Tomonari and his entourage arrive in Sumiyoshi, the deity Sumiyoshi Myojin appears, shining in the moonlight reflected from snow remaining on the ground. He sings auspicious songs celebrating long life and performs a dance for them.

In the play, the pine needles symbolize the leaves of Japanese poetry collections. Takasago represents the works of the ancient Nara Period (710 – 794), when the Manyōshū, the oldest collection of Japanese poetry, was written. Sumiyoshi symbolizes the more modern era of the Kokinshū poetry collection (published around 905), suggesting that Japanese poetry has flourished throughout the ages. In the song, the evergreen needles of the pine represent long life, while the periods during which Japanese poetry effloresced are compared to peaceful periods in Japanese history.

Today, the second half of this drama, featuring the appearance of Sumiyoshi Myojin and his dance, will be performed.

Kyogen: Neon-gyoku (Sleeping Melody)

On his way home after a drinking party, the master happens to hear a masterful voice chanting as he passes his young servant Taro Kaja's home. The next day, he orders Taro to chant for him. Taro lies, saying he can't chant unless he has had some sake. Desperately wanting to hear Taro sing, the master gives Taro some sake. But Taro then insists that he cannot produce a sound unless he has his head on his wife's lap. The master offers Taro his own lap to put his head on. Taro reluctantly starts to sing, but then pretends that he can sing when he is asleep but cannot produce a sound when he is awake. However, as Taro Kaja gets more drunk, he stays quiet while lying on his master's lap, but once he sits up, he starts singing. Eventually, he begins to dance while singing. This piece is a heart-warming scene depicting the relationship between a stern yet affectionate master and his clumsy servant.

Noh: Izutsu (The Well Curb)

On his way to Hatsuse from Nara, an itinerant monk stops at the Ariwara Temple. A woman appears, bringing water from a well to offer at a tumulus. When the monk asks whose tomb it is, the woman tells him it's the resting place of Ariwara no Narihira, the famous Heian Period courtier and poet. The woman goes on to tell the story of Narihira and his wife, Ki no Arisune's daughter: how they would play near the well when they were children, how they had a long exchange of poems before becoming husband and wife, and how a poem she composed helped them overcome a marital crisis. She then identifies herself as Arisune's daughter and disappears in the shadow of the well.

As the monk naps, Arisune's daughter appears to him in a dream, dressed in Narihira's clothing. The apparition of Arisune's daughter performs a dance in memory of her husband. Then, looking down into the well where they fell in love, she sees her own reflection in the well's water, dressed in Narihira's garb, and thinks longingly of the past when the two were together. As dawn breaks, Arisune's daughter disappears and the monk awakes from his dream.

The origin of this play is passage 23 of The Tales of Ise, in which Narihira and Ki no Arisune's daughter exchange poems about how much they've grown since they played at the well and recorded how tall they were on the curb of the well. It depicts the single-minded longing of Arisune's daughter for Narihira and the past they had together.

<Part 2 Commentary and Storylines>

Half Noh: Kamo

A Shinto priest from Harima Province in what is now Hyogo Prefecture visits Kamo Shrine in Kyoto with his servants. By the river, they find an altar in which an arrow with white feathers is enshrined. The priest asks a woman who appears there the background of the arrow. She tells him that long ago, a woman who found a white-feathered arrow floating down the river and took it home with her became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy. When her son was three years old, he pointed at the arrow, and it was transformed into a thunderbolt and rose up to heaven. Before she disappears, the woman reveals that she is the mother goddess, the deity Mioya, and her child is the thunder deity Wakeikazuchi.

The performance today takes up the story from this point.

That night, the deity Mioya of Shimogamo Shrine appears with empyreal signs and performs a graceful dance. Then the deity Wakeikazuchi of Kamigamo Shrine descends, accompanied by tempestuous thunder and lightning. As he vigorously dances, he brings the blessed rain and drives away evil spirits, promising peace and an abundant harvest before returning to the heavens and the forests. The highlight of this performance is the competing dances of the beautiful deity and the powerful thunder deity. We hope that the deities' dances will bring peace and much happiness to you all.

Kyogen: Funefuna (Boat)

The master and his servant Taro Kaja have left home together, heading for Nishinomiya. On their way, they arrive at a crossing of the Kanzaki River and decide to call a boat from the other side of the river. Taro calls out “Funa-yai” [bout-eh] to the boatman. The master corrects his pronunciation, telling him to say “fune” [boat] instead. Taro retorts that old poems use the word “funa,” setting off a dispute with his master. So how does it all end? Taro and his master each muster quotations from old poetry and noh chant in their debate about whether to call the boat “funa” or “fune.” We hope you enjoy watching their war of words.

Noh: Tenko

During the Later Han Dynasty in China, there was a young boy called Tenko who had a mysterious drum that had come down from the heavens. Hearing about the beautiful sound the drum made, the Emperor ordered Tenko to play it for him, but Tenko refused, so he was drowned by the Emperor's guards in the Rosui River and the drum was brought to the palace. However, no one could get a sound out of it, so the Emperor summoned Tenko's elderly father, Ōhaku, to the palace. This is the point where this Noh play starts.

Resigned to losing his life and drowning in sorrow at the loss of his beloved son, Ōhaku tearfully strikes the drum: it gives off an exquisite sound! Moved by the sound and regretting his past action, the Emperor rewards Ōhaku and promises to hold a Buddhist ceremony to console Tenko's spirit.

When the ceremony begins at night, Tenko's spirit joyfully rises from the depths of the Rosui River. Consoled by the ritual performed in his honor, Tenko's spirit is filled with delight at once again being able to play his drum; he dances in the moonlight in jubilation and then disappears into the waves at dawn.