

Nō theatre performance by Hashioka-kai (Hashioka Noh Group)

Starring

Kyūtarō Hashioka IX

Programme

Yoshino Tennin

Takasago

Cast

Shite (leading part): Kyūtarō Hashioka IX

Waki (supporting part): Masaru Hara

Musicians and chorus

Fue (flute): Hirohito Narita

Kotsuzumi (small hand drum): Hiromi Koga

Ōtsuzumi (large hand drum): Teruyuki Uchida

Taiko (large drum): Munehisa Tokuda

Kōken / Jiutai (stage hand / chorus singer): Masakazu Umewaka

Kōken / Jiutai (stage hand / chorus singer): Nobuaki Hashioka

Kōken / Jiutai (stage hand / chorus singer): Gasho Yamanaka

Kōken / Jiutai (stage hand / chorus singer): Tomomasa Emoto

Kōken / Jiutai (stage hand / chorus singer): Kazunori Saito



Event celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology
Sponsored by ANA Holdings Inc.

Kyūtarō Hashioka IX was born in 1958 as the eldest son of Kyuma Hashioka, a member of the eighth generation of the Hashioka family, whose skills were officially recognised as Important Intangible Cultural Property. Kyūtarō Hashioka made his stage debut at the age of three. Since playing a leading role in *Kikujidō* (*The Chrysanthemum Boy*) at the age of eight in seven European countries, he has successfully performed *nō* in 30 cities in 10 countries, excelling in demanding plays such as *Sagi* (*The Heron*) or *Dōjōji* (*Dōjōji Temple*). After participating in a public performance on the occasion of HM the Emperor of Japan's visit to Brazil in 1997, he headed a group of performers sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan Foundation in the spring of 1998 to demonstrate the art of *nō* in five Brazilian cities. In May 2004, he performed the *nō* play *Takasago* in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on the invitation of Sookmyung Women's University. This was for the first time *Takasago* had been performed in Seoul in the post-World War II era, breaking an absence of 65 years. In June 2006, he gave the first *nō* performance in New Zealand, in the cities of Wellington, Auckland and Palmerston North; and in 2013 he performed in Vienna. All performances met with great public acclaim. While protecting traditional *nō*, Kyūtarō Hashioka actively supports new productions of *nō*, participates in stage activities of other performing art genres and strongly promotes the introduction of *nō* in schools of all levels. In 2009–2010, he served as member of the Chiba Prefecture Expert Committee on Education Improvement.

Yoshino Tennin

Synopsis

Every spring, people from the capital go on walks to see the cherry blossoms in various places. Among the cherry blossoms, the Senbonzakura of Arashiyama is the most beautiful, but it is said that these are seeds that were transplanted from Mount Yoshino, so this year they are going to see the flowers of Yoshino. The mountain is covered in flowers from the base to the top. As they go deeper into the mountain, an elegant woman appears. The people of the capital are suspicious and ask her, and she answers that she lives in the area and spends her days with the flowers as her friends. She enjoys the flowers together with the people of the capital. When they are suspicious that she does not want to leave, she reveals that she is actually a heavenly being who descended from heavens because of the beauty of the flowers. If they stay here tonight and practise faith, she will show them the five-segment dance of the past, she says, and disappears.

Just then, a villager from Yoshino arrives, and people of the capital listen to his stories of the cherry blossoms of Yoshino and the five-segment dance. When a man from the capital tells him about the woman, he recommends that he stay and see the strange sight, and then goes home. Eventually, at night, music can be heard mysteriously in the sky, and in a truly tranquil mood, a heavenly being descends from heaven. Then, fluttering his light sleeves in the spring breeze, he plays with the cherry blossoms, performs a most beautiful dance, and once again disappears on a cloud of flowers.

Takasago

Synopsis

During the Engi period (901–923), under the reign of Emperor Daigo, Tomonari, a Shintō priest of Aso Shrine in Kyūshū, stops at a scenic beach, Takasago-no-ura, in Harima Province (present Hyōgo Prefecture) on his way to sightseeing in Kyoto with his retinue. While Tomonari is waiting for a villager, an immaculate old couple appears. Tomonari asks the couple who are sweeping up the needles under a pine tree to tell him the tale associated with the pine. The couple explains that the pine is the renowned Takasago Pine, which is paired with the Suminoe Pine growing in distant Sumiyoshi; together they are called Aioi-no-matsu (Paired Pines). They appreciate that Japanese poetry (*waka*) is flourishing in the reign of the current emperor, as it flourished in the ancient age of the *Manyōshū* (Anthology of Myriad Leaves), and compare the present and past with the Takasago Pine and Suminoe Pine. The old man continues that poetry flourishes because everything in this world, including trees and grasses, embraces the heart of poetry. He then explains that pine trees, evergreens which grow for one thousand years, are especially blessed and tells the historical story of the pine. Finally, the old couple reveals that they are the incarnation of Takasago Pine and Sumiyoshi Pine, the paired trees called Aioi-no-matsu. They promise to see Tomonari at Sumiyoshi again and board a boat from the shore washed by the evening tide. The boat follows the wind and eventually disappears beyond the horizon. Tomonari and his retinue depart from Takasago Bay determined to follow the old couple and embark for Sumiyoshi when the moon rises. When they arrive at the beach in Sumiyoshi, the masculine Sumiyoshi Deity appears before the group. Under the moonlight, the deity dances airily and divinely to expel demons, celebrate the longevity of the emperor and people and the peace of this world.

