



HIROSHIMA KAGURA PERFORMANCE

~ Hiroshima Prefectural Citizen's Culture Center ~



Japan's Kagura

Kagura is a ceremony that conveys a feeling of gratitude for the bounty of nature. The ancestors of the Japanese people believed that everything that happened in the world was because of the gods. Therefore, in fall, harvested crops were offered in a holy place, preparations for festivals were completed, and the ceremony conveying gratitude to the gods came to be called "Kagura".

So, at the same time that Shinto Shrines were built around the country, Kagura spread as well, was continued by the Shinto priesthood and the local people, and has been preserved and passed on as a present day Japanese folk art in various places and forms.

The special characteristics of Hiroshima Kagura

The Kagura you will see today is called "Geihoku Kagura"(Northern Hiroshima) and has been preserved and passed along in Hiroshima Prefecture through approximately 150 groups. Furthermore, numerous competitions have been held and at present, it is the type of Kagura gathering the most attention.

Though the performers have to study and work, they attend practice two to three times a week and perform at festivals and events on the weekends.

Things to watch for

Please look carefully at the costumes with various embroideries on them.

The heavier ones can weigh up to 20 kg.

You will be able to take a close look after the performance during the commemorative photo session.

The Kagura musical accompaniment is performed by four Japanese instruments. However, there is no sheet music of the sounds. This is to ensure that every group's "sound" and "rhythm" are heard by the ears, remembered by the body and passed on.

Photo Session

With players and costumes on stage from 8:45p.m.



Join Us!

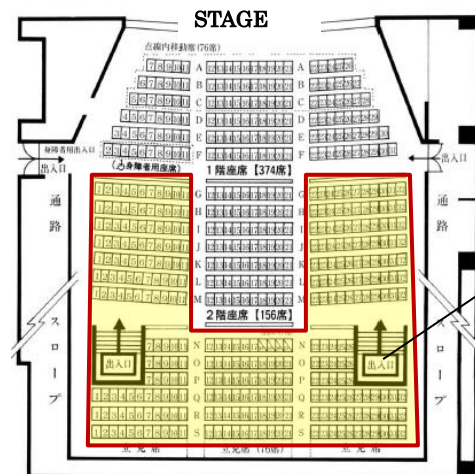
Post Kagura photos

you take and make Kagura more popular



※Only those who are seated at yellow zone can take photos

※No Flash



【Shimogouchi Kagura Troupe】

Saeki-ward, Hiroshima-city

Story line of the first program “Momiji-gari”

◆Curtain up 7pm

In Mt.Togakushi of Shinano (current Nagano Prefecture), a lady being accompanied by the maids is holding the feast which is a party (called Momijigari) to view the scarlet-tinged leaves. Taira no Koremochi who had come to the deer hunting happen to pass. Koremochi doubts the ladies, and makes the attendant ask her name. She doesn't answer the attendant's question. And the attendant reports to the master, "They are women of high position in the palace, and are incognito". Koremochi gets off of the horse so as not to obstruct women's feasts and changes the course. The woman feels admiration for the man's consideration and detains Koremochi. She invites him to the feast. The sake is recommended by her and piled up. Koremochi gradually gets drunk. He drowns at last while he is watching woman's beautiful dance. She shows her true nature of the demon, and casts a spell to him and disappears, saying that "You must not wake up" when she makes sure that Koremochi fell asleep. He had a dream about a god of Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine. The god says, "These women are the ogres of this mountain, so wake up before they will take you away to eat". When Koremochi waked up, women disappeared. The ogree of about 3meters height stands in the presence, a horn dyed to the vermillion. And the ogree attacks Koremochi with glaring eyes. Koremochi prays for Hatiman Daibosatsu to the mind, pulls out the sword, fights violently, and finally defeats the ogree. The power of the Koremoti was terrific.



Intermission: 7:40pm~8pm

Story line of the second program “Yamata-no-Orochi”

◆Curtain up 8pm

Once upon a time, in the Province of Izumo, there was an old couple with the names Ashinazuchi and Tenazuchi. They had eight daughters. A monstrous serpent appeared from nowhere and swallowed one of their daughters. They lost seven daughters the same way. Finally there was only one daughter left. The old couple and their daughter with the name Kushiinada-hime were lamenting their fate.



Then a god, Susanoh-no-mikoto descended from the high heavens. He heard the tragic story. The god told the old couple to prepare poisonous sake (rice wine) and had their daughter stand behind the barrels. The monster appeared and drank up all the sake, thinking that the daughter's image reflecting on the sake was the daughter herself. The monster soon drank itself senseless. The courageous god attacked the monster and vanquished it. When the god cut the belly of the monster, appeared a sword.



He named the sword Amenomurakumo-no-tsurugi and offered it to his elder sister, Amaterasu Ohmikami. He married the daughter he saved, and they lived happily ever after in Izumo.

