



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!

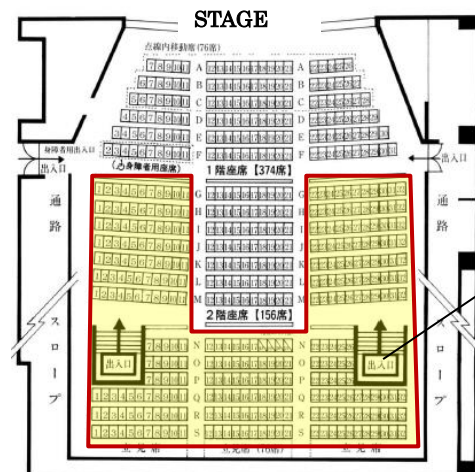
Post Kagura photos

you take and make Kagura more popular



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

※No Flash



Photography Zone

【Suzuhari Kagura Troupe】

Asakita ward Hiroshima-city

Story line of the first program “Tsuchigumo”

◆Curtain up 7pm

Minamoto no Raiko, the head of the samurai is ill in bed suffering from ague. Urabe no Noritake and Sakata no Kintoki come to see him. Raiko tells them he is OK because he sent his maid Kocho to the doctor for medicine and that she should be back soon. They leave. Kocho comes back, and gives Raiko the medicine she got from the doctor. Raiko takes the liquid medicine. The medicine does no good, in fact Raiko collapses. Kocho is really a Tsuchigumo which bears a grudge against Raiko and tries to kill him. Late at night Kocho asks after him, thinks it is the time, throws off its mask and attacks Raiko. Raiko with a famous sword named “Higekirimaru”, slashes at the Tsuchigumo. The wounded demon flees away. Urabe no Noritake and Sakata no Kintoki hear the turmoil and trace the bloodstain to Mt. Katsuragi, spot the demon. They defeat the Tsuchigumo after a fierce battle.

Intermission: 7:40pm~8pm

Story line of the second program “Masuya-Oren”

◆Curtain up 8pm

The tragic tale of an unappreciated woman and the revenge that drove her mad...

Synopsis

Tonight’s kagura performance centers around a woman named Oren, who might not have been exceptionally beautiful, but she was certainly exceptional kind and loving. At the behest of her parents, she married the son of a landlord in Sekishu (present day Shimane). Even though they were complete strangers before marrying, Oren was determined to be a good wife for the sake of her husband and her household, taking good care of them all.

But her happiness did not last long, as men in any era are often the selfish ones... Without regard for Oren’s feelings, her husband found himself a young mistress in the neighboring village, and was hardly ever at home.

Oren tried to make herself believe that her husband’s behavior was just a fling, a temporary thing, and that he would come back to her someday. But her sadness only turned into a deep hatred, and her sanity slipped away.

Night after night, Oren went to a nearby shrine to curse her husband by nailing a doll representing him to a tree in the middle of the night (*ushi-no-koku mairi*). When at last the curse was complete, Oren became a powerful demon to extract her revenge on the husband who did her wrong.

