



# 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!**

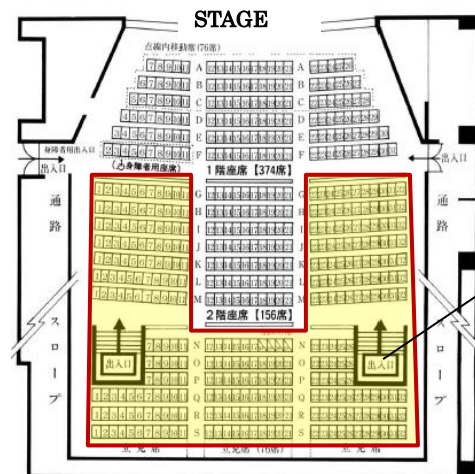
## Post Kagura photos

you take and make Kagura more popular



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

※No Flash



Photography Zone

# 【Kamikawado Kagura Troupe】

Kitahiroshima-town, Hiroshima-pref

## Story line of the first program “Yamatotakeru-no-mikoto”

### ◆Curtain up 7pm

Prince Yamatooguna-no-Mikoto, the second son of the 12<sup>th</sup> Emperor Keiko was dispatched by his father to go to the land of Kumaso and vanquish Kawakami-takeru, the head of Kumaso which had been powerful in Kyushu and kept rebelling against imperial reign. When he was there, a drinking party to celebrate the completion of new mansion of the Kawakami family was going on. Prince succeeded in attacking his enemy by cross-dressing as a maid attendant. When he was dying, Kawakami-takeru said “ I had not believed there would be more powerful man than myself. You, Yamatooguna-no-Mikoto is much more powerful than myself. Please use one phrase Takeru from my name and name yourself Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto from now on with this he passed away.

Prince accepted this and named himself Yamatotakeru, meaning *The Brave of Yamato*.

**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.

