

Sat 14 May 2016  
Hall One 7.30pm

## JOHAKYU

from classical  
to contemporary

**Yoshimasa Kanze**  
*shite* main role actor

**Masaki Umano**  
*shite* main role actor

**Yukihiro Isso**  
*nohkan* flute

**Mitsuhiro Kakiyama**  
*otsuzumi*  
hip drum

**Tatsushi Narita**  
*kotsuzumi*  
shoulder drum

**Kiyoshi  
Yoshitani**  
*taiko*  
stick  
drum

**Richard Emmert**  
noh specialist

**Nick Morrish Rarity**  
composer of *Fukinsei*

**Andrew Thomas**  
composer of  
*Ever Deeper Flood*



**Mary Reid**  
harp

**Lore Lixenberg**  
mezzo-soprano

**Clarice Morrish  
Rarity**  
viola

## INTRODUCTION

Japanese classical noh theatre has a traditional repertory of some 240 plays which can take anywhere from 40 minutes to over two hours to perform in their entirety. These plays usually feature two to five or more characters, a chorus of six to eight, two or three stage attendants and either three or four musicians.

Our programme this evening features a small ensemble performing parts of instrumental and dance sections from several of the more popular plays in the classical repertory, as well as several new pieces written for the *hayashi* instrumental ensemble. These include one piece each by UK composers, Andrew Thomas and Nick Morrish-Rarity, who are for the first time writing music that includes noh performers. The two pieces being premiered this evening have been created as the result of an intensive, year-long Sound and Music Portfolio residency, in partnership with mu:arts and Noh Training Project UK, Royal Holloway, University of London.

*Johakyu* refers to a concept describing how the performance aspects of movement and music, the structural aspects of a play's text and rhythms, as well as the order of a full programme of plays should all maintain a build up from a quiet intensity to a lively completion.

Notes for each of the pieces follow in their order of performance.

## THE PROGRAMME & NOTES

### PART I

**Kagura** (Shrine Dance Music)

This is a *hayashi* instrumental piece featured as the central dance in a number of noh plays, particularly those that feature a shrine maiden or goddess, such as in the plays *Miwa*, *Tatsuta* and *Makiginu*. One of its prominent musical features is the constant repeating "pu-po" pattern in the *kotsuzumi* shoulder drum where the slightly lower "pu" stroke followed by the slightly higher "po" stroke create a strong pulse throughout the piece. Midway, the flute changes to a repeating four-phrase pattern as the tempo increases.

**Ranbyoshi Kyu-no-mai** (Dance Music from Dojoji)

This is an arrangement based on the well-known play *Dojoji* (The Dojo Temple) that deals with the legend of the jealous spirit of a woman wronged by a priest of the temple. Featured here is the powerful drum calls of first the *otsuzumi* then *kotsuzumi* in the *ranbyoshi* 'confused steps' dance, followed by the very quick *kyu-no-mai* dance. In the dance section, the *nohkan* flute plays a four-phrase repeating pattern, with each phrase being eight beats long.

**Fukinsei** ('Asymmetrical', A new piece for *hayashi* ensemble by Nick Morrish Rarity)

This piece explores precision of movement and emphasis on attuning to one's body (so important in traditional noh) in an abstracted musical context. The music is at times distilled and emphatic, with dynamic contrasts creating a sense of movement and motion. In doing so, I have hoped to create a journey through a sonic terrain that is in equal part familiar and strange. (Nick Morrish Rarity)

Dance: **Masaki Umano**

**Sokuryutekiha** (A New Piece for Hayashi Ensemble by Isso Yukihiro)

Composed and revised from 1987-1989, this piece suggests the entrance of an evil or vengeful spirit that dances wildly. While classical noh features instrumental rhythms based on eight-beat phrases, here Isso varies the rhythmic structure which gives the piece a unique liveliness and power.

### PART II

**Takasago** (Dance and Music from the play Takasago)

*Takasago* is a highly auspicious play that deals with the legend of the twin pines of the Sumiyoshi and Takasago shrines. This section is the second half of the play in which the young vigorous god of the Sumiyoshi shrine appears and dances. Both the god and the accompanying chorus sing in the dynamic *tsuyogin* chant style which is matched with the drums at the beginning, then breaks into a free-rhythmic section with the god's entrance, moves into the very quick *kami-mai* instrumental 'god dance', and ends with a matched chant style. The pine tree, as the central image of the play, stands for constancy and is thus a symbol of eternal peace, a long benevolent reign of the emperor, as well as conjugal fidelity between husband and wife.

Dance: **Yoshimasa Kanze** Chant: **Masaki Umano**

**Tama no Dan** (The Song of 'The Jewel Dance' from the play Ama)

The play *Ama* tells of Minister Fusasaki who discovers when his mother's spirit appears to him, that in life she had been a lowly pearl diver. The spirit reenacts how she retrieved a stolen jewel from the dragon king's palace under the sea which later enabled Fusasaki to become an important minister, but it cost her own life. In *Tama no Dan* sung here, the spirit tells how she retrieved the jewel, first by leaping into the sea and finding the magnificent dragon palace (sung in melodic *yowagin* style), how she grasped the jewel and escaped the guards chasing her, but then cut herself open with a dagger to hide the jewel in her breast which scared the guards away (sung in the dynamic *tsuyogin* style), and how she was at last pulled to the surface by those on the shore (again in *yowagin* style). The chant is accompanied by *nohkan* flute.

Chant: **Masaki Umano**

**Ever Deeper Flood** (A new piece for *hayashi* ensemble by Andrew Thomas)

This piece aims to operate on three different levels (text, live/electronic music and movement) in the re-telling, or re-imagining, of the traditional noh drama *Aya no tsuzumi* (The Damask Drum) with which I have long been fascinated. My piece uses two texts (one by Japanese poet Mitsuhiro Kaneko and the other by American poet J.L. Williams) that I felt created an alternative interpretation of the noh play's dramatic structure. The piece concludes with a quotation from the play (in Japanese) in which the protagonist resolves to never declare his love again. Electronics are used in the piece to outline the narrative through imagery found in the original play and follows the pattern of: bells - waves - ripples/disturbances in a still pond. The electronics (derived from recordings of Richard Emmert performing dance patterns and drum calls) are also used to create an ambiguity between the live, seen, dancer and the heard dancer on the tape that begins and closes the work. (Andrew Thomas)

Dance: **Yoshimasa Kanze**

**Shinzan** ('Deep in the Mountains', a New Piece for Hayashi Ensemble by Isso Yukihiro)

Composed and revised from 2007-2010, *Shinzan* depicts the depths of Japan's rugged mountains, a world of the gods where no human can go. A piece meant to suggest a fantastic world from another dimension, it ends with a return to the typical four-phrase repeating pattern in the flute found in a number of classical noh pieces.

Dance: **Masaki Umano**

[Programme notes by Richard Emmert]

[Photos provided by Yoshimasa Kanze]

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## PERFORMERS

### Yoshimasa Kanze (*shite* main role actor)

A prominent actor of the Kanze school (one of the five schools of main role actors), Yoshimasa was born in 1970 in Tokyo, the eldest son of Yoshiyuki Kanze, the third-generation master of the Yurai Kanze school of noh. Yoshimasa first performed on stage at the age of two, performed in his first full noh at the age of five, and as an adult has performed the main roles in numerous plays including *Sagi*, *Midare*, *Shakkyo* and *Sotoba Komachi*. Yoshimasa teaches in both Hosei University and Kogakkan University, as well as at the Practice Performing Arts School in Singapore. A graduate of Keio University, he has been designated an Important Intangible Cultural Asset by the Japanese government.

### Masaki Umamo (*shite* main role actor)

Born in 1965 in Kyoto, Masaki Umamo is a prominent actor of the Tessenkai group of the Kanze school. Umamo first performed on stage at the age of three and performed his first noh at the age of seven. He has performed the lead *shite* role in numerous plays including *Midare*, *Shakkyo*, *Dojoji* and *Mochizuki*. A graduate of Tokyo University of Arts, he has performed with the Tessenkai in Germany, Ireland, United States, France, Poland and Greece. Umamo has been designated an Important Intangible Cultural Asset by the Japanese government.

### Yukihiro Isso (*nohkan* flute)

Yukihiro is the eldest son of the late Yukimasa Isso, a prominent *nohkan* performer of the post-war era. Yukihiro debuted at the age of nine and has since performed in most of the plays in the classical repertory. Yukihiro also plays a variety of Japanese and Western flutes, and has a well-deserved reputation for improvisation having performed with the likes of Cecil Taylor, Peter Brötzmann, John Zorn, as well as numerous Japanese musicians from non-noh genres. In addition, he has composed new pieces for the noh *hayashi* ensemble, several of which will be performed in the Kings Place performances. Yukihiro has been designated an Important Intangible Cultural Asset by the Japanese government. (<http://issoyukihiro.com/>)

### Mitsuhiro Kakahara (*otsuzumi* hip drum)

Born in 1972, Mitsuhiro studied the *otsuzumi* from his father, Takashi Kakahara, a prominent post-war noh performer of the Takayasu school of drumming. Mitsuhiro first performed on stage at the age of seven. Today, he performs regularly in the Tokyo area and is passionate about training the younger generation of noh performers. Mitsuhiro is a graduate of Tokyo University of Arts and has been designated an Important Intangible Cultural Asset by the Japanese government.

### Tatsushi Narita (*kotsuzumi* shoulder drum)

Born in 1964 in Kobe, Tatsushi studied *kotsuzumi* under Living National Treasure Hiroaki Sowa of the Ko school of drumming. Based mainly in Osaka, he has performed almost all of the important noh repertory. Tatsushi is passionate about promoting kotsuzumi to new audiences and has adopted innovative approaches to teaching and performing the kotsuzumi. He has frequently performed overseas, notably at the Metropolitan Museum, NY, the Athens Festival in Greece, and at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. He has been designated an Important Intangible Cultural Asset by the Japanese government.

### Kiyoshi Yoshitani (*taiko* stick drum)

Kiyoshi started performing *taiko* at the age of 11 as an apprentice to Soemon Komparu, the 22nd head of the Komparu school of drumming. Since 1995, Kiyoshi has performed professionally throughout Japan.

Based in Fukuoka, he has taught noh to and collaborated with various musicians in Okinawa in southern Japan. He has frequently performed abroad, first performing in New York at the age of 20, and most recently in Sydney, Australia in a performance of English noh. He has been designated an Important Intangible Cultural Asset by the Japanese government.

### Richard Emmert (noh teacher-performer, founder of Theatre Nohgaku)

Richard is a professor of Asian performance at Musashino University in Tokyo, a certified Kita school noh instructor, and the founder and director of Theatre Nohgaku, a company dedicated to performing noh in English. Richard directs the on-going Noh Training Project Tokyo and a summer intensive Noh Training Project UK at Royal Holloway, University of London. He has authored a series of books on noh for Tokyo's National Noh Theatre. Richard has directed noh projects throughout the world, has composed, directed, and performed in numerous English language noh plays, and has led performance tours of Theatre Nohgaku in the United States, Europe and Asia. (<http://www.theatrenohgaku.org/>) (<http://nohtrainingprojectuk.org/>)

### Nick Morrish Rarity (composer of Fukinsei)

Nick is a doctoral candidate at the Royal College of Music where he is supervised by Jonathan Cole and Gilbert Nuono. Earlier he studied composition with Robert Saxton at the University of Oxford and as a TCL scholar at Trinity Laban where he won the Elias Fawcett Prize. In 2013, he premiered his violin concerto, *Psyche*, and a piece for the LCO's *Inspired by Digital Scheme*. Recent commissions include a chamber opera, *A Sign in Space*, and *Abandonment & Ruin* for BSO's *Kokoro*.

### Andrew Thomas (composer of 'Ever Deeper Flood')

Andrew studied under composers including Jonathan Harvey, Edwin Roxburgh and Richard Causton, and completed his PhD in 2014. Recent commissions have included music for the London Sinfonietta, CHROMA and the London Chamber Orchestra. Andrew recently completed a short opera for Aldeburgh Music, a piano trio for Britten Sinfonia, and is currently working on a commission for the Hermes Experiment to be premiered in November 2016.

### Mary Reid (harp)

Mary freelances as a chamber musician, soloist, orchestral harpist, and in community outreach work. Current projects include Opera North's Ring Cycle tour, recitals through Live Music Now!, and performing with the newly formed London Harp Quartet.

### Lore Lixenberg (mezzo soprano)

Lore is a mezzo-soprano and director who works in many different disciplines. Current projects include 'Infinito Nero' (Sciarrino) at the Warsaw Autumn, her SINGTERVIEWS, PRET A CHANTER-the cafe where everyone must sing or leave and 'Vocalising Nancarrow' a CD and live performances of Nancarrow piano rolls she transcribed for her voice.

### Clarice Morrish Rarity (viola)

Clarice is currently doing her Masters degree at the Royal College of Music. She has recently performed works by Cage, Boulez, Berio, Finissey, Glass and Xenakis, amongst many others and collaborated with some of the most exciting young composers in the UK. In 2016 she has performed with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group at Wigmore Hall and Birmingham Festival, playing as a guest performer with Ensemble XY, Filthy Lucre and performing at Wilderness Festival. She also works regularly in the studio, and has played on many films and television projects, including Cannes-nominated short film, *Alan Dimension*.

## NOH REIMAGINED

### The contemporary art of classical Japanese theatre



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from classical to contemporary

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