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The Sixth Annual Sistine Kabuki With a Modern Twist of Technology

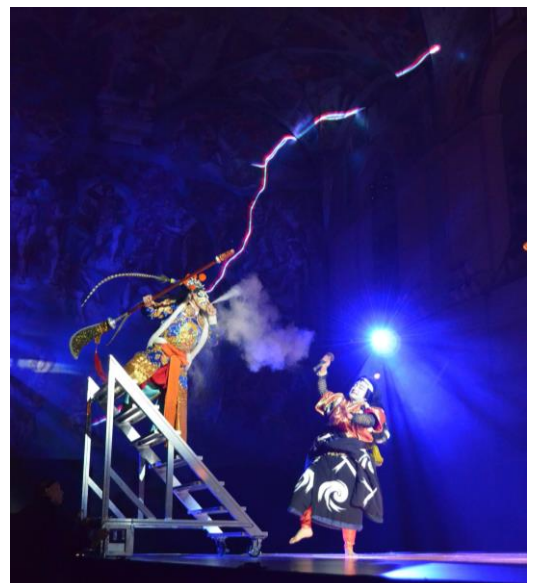


Impressive stage effects incorporated the use of LED lighting in various colors

[The Otsuka Museum of Art](#) hosted the sixth Sistine Kabuki production – Yuriwaka Daijin: Ulysses – for 3 days, beginning on February 20, with two performances each day. As has been the case in past years, tickets sold out almost as soon as they went on sale. The performances were attended by 2800 persons from across Japan.

Incorporating Technology in Kabuki

The stage for this year's production was set up in the style of an arena, with elevated walkways leading off in all four directions. The stage was lit in various colors using blue light LED technology, made famous recently as the invention that received the Nobel Prize in physics last year. This year's performance was notable for the singing and dancing elements, which are not usually seen in kabuki, and for the use of slang words in the spoken dialogue, which drew cheers from the audience.





The audience cheered at the appearance of a motorcycle on stage in the final scene.

"Sistine Kabuki" productions are based on the themes of Japanese-Western collaboration and the creation of innovative kabuki theater. The current production – Yuriwaka Daijin: Ulysses – is a completely new work, a fusion of Greek mythology and traditional kabuki theater based on the tale of Yuriwaka Daijin, which is considered an ancient Japanese retelling of the Odyssey, the epic poem attributed to Homer.

Kazuo Mizuguchi returned as producer and director, and Kanjuuro Fujima returned as choreographer, and they collaborated with the Chinese opera performer Zhang Chunxiang to create a kabuki performance with musical accompaniment that incorporated both kabuki movements and Chinese opera-style percussion instruments. The presence of Yuuga Yamato, a former star of the Takarazuka Review theater troupe in Japan, playing two roles, one Eastern and one Western, was also a topic of great interest.

The protagonist, Yuriwaka Daijin, was played by Ainosuke Kataoka, making his fourth appearance in a row in Sistine Kabuki performances, and the roles of Princess Tachibana and the goddess Calypso were both played by Yuuga Yamato, making her first appearance. The roles of Takahime (the Spirit of the Hawk) and Hidetora's older sister Matsugae were both played by Kichiya Kamimura, who has appeared in Sistine Kabuki performances since their inception, and the role of Hidetora Ichiro was played by Tanenosuke Nakamura.

After the first performance, Ainosuke Kataoka said "I have sung in Sistine Kabuki productions before, but this year I was nervous singing because of Ms. Yamato's presence," and Yuuga Yamato said that "I had thought that only men appeared in kabuki, and I had played male roles before when I was with Takarazuka, but I was really grateful for the opportunity to appear in a kabuki production."