Zenshinza Theatre Company

Two Kabuki Classics
Saturday, November 13, 2010, 8pm

PROGRAM

Chatsubo (“The Tea Chest”)
Written by Okamura Shiko

INTERMISSION

Narukami (“The Thunder God”)
Written by Tsuuchi Hanjuro, Yasuda Abun and Nakada Mansuke

Cal Performances’ 2010–2011 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.
**Chatsubo**

*The Tea Chest*

Written by Okamura Shiko.  
First performed at the Imperial Theatre, Tokyo, in 1921.

**Choreographer** Bando Mitsunojo  
**Assistant to the Choreographer** Katsumi Yoshiyuki

**CAST**

*Kumataka Taro, a country bumpkin* Fujikawa Yanosuke  
*Magoroku, a wily thief* Nakajima Hiroyuki  
*Mokudai, a magistrate* Masuki Hiroshi  
**Onstage Assistants** Fujii Isaku, Niimura Sojiro, Motomura Yuuki

**Nagauta Musical Ensemble**

*Chanters* Kineya Sanotaka, Kineya Sayo, Kineya Katsurokuza  
*Shamisen* Kineya Sasuke, Kineya Gosakichio, Kineya Sawajyuro

**Narimono Percussion Ensemble**

Senba Motoaki  
Mochizuki Tainosuke  
Kawashima Yuusuke  
Sumita Chouyu  
Takei Makoto

**INTERMISSION**

*Chatsubo*

*Chatsubo* is a farcical dance piece based on the *kyogen* comedy of the same name adapted for the kabuki stage by Okamura Shiko with choreography by Bando Mitsunojo.

A country bumpkin is sent to the capital to buy some tea for his master. On his way home he meets a friend who plies him with too much drink. Inebriated, he passes out in the middle of the road.

A wily thief who is down on his luck is intent on stealing the tea chest that is strapped to the servant’s back. He slips his arm through one of the straps and pretends to be asleep. When the servant awakens, a ruckus ensues.

A magistrate, who is passing by, steps in to settle the dispute. He takes the tea chest and questions the two to determine its rightful owner.

As the country bumpkin recounts what brought him to the city, the thief listens in. When it comes time for him to testify, he gives the exact same account. The magistrate then asks the servant to describe the chest’s contents, and as he does, he gets carried away in song and dance. The thief follows suit with a similar performance.

In an effort to find a resolution, the magistrate then orders the two to testify at the same time. What follows is the play’s comical rendition of “follow the leader,” followed by the play’s surprise ending, which reveals all the characters’ true colors. An ensemble of musicians stationed behind the actors provides accompaniment for the musical play.
**Narukami**

*(The Thunder God)*

Written by Tsuuchi Hanjuro, Yasuda Abun and Nakada Mansuke.
First performed at the Onishi Shihai, Osaka, in 1742.

**CAST**

*Narukami*  
Arashi Keishi  
Princess Taema  
Kawarasaki Kunitaro  
Hakuunbo (White Cloud)  
Yamazaki Tatsusaburo  
Kokuunbo (Black Cloud)  
Yamazaki Ryuunosuke  
Acolyte 1  
Matano Samon  
Acolyte 2  
Watarai Motoyuki  
Acolyte 3  
Ishida Saroshi  
Acolyte 4  
Ikushima Kigorou  
Acolyte 5  
Kamitaki Keitaro  
Acolyte 6  
Fujii Isaku  
Acolyte 7  
Niimura Sojiro  
Acolyte 8  
Motomura Yuuki  

*Onstage Assistant*  
Kamei Yoshikatsu

*Oozatsuma Musical Ensemble*  
Chanters: Kineya Sanotaka, Kineya Katsurokuza  
Shamisen: Kineya Sasuke, Kineya Gosakichio

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**SYNOPSIS**

Angered by the Emperor’s refusal to dedicate a temple to him, Narukami, a priest with supernatural powers, has trapped the dragon god of rain in a pool at the foot of a waterfall. The result is a drought causing much suffering and disaster throughout the land, prompting the Emperor to send the beautiful Princess Taema to seduce Narukami, so that the spell will be broken and rain will fall again.

The play opens with Narukami at his mountain hermitage deep in meditation near the waterfall and pool in which the dragon king is imprisoned. In a comic banter, two of Narukami’s disciples, White Cloud and Black Cloud, discuss the situation over rice wine and octopus, both delicacies forbidden the Buddhist clergy.

Princess Taema arrives and asks to become Narukami’s disciple. Enraptured by her alluring manner, he is wooed by her. What follows is perhaps the most famous seduction scene in kabuki.

Princess Taema tells the holy man that she is a recent widow, intent on renouncing the world, and has come to the waterfall to wash away her carnal memories and seek salvation. She describes how she met her late husband and the intimate details of their first night.

Her description of her past love causes Narukami to faint, and she revives him with water carried to his mouth by her own lips. Taema suddenly complains of abdominal pains and asks the priest to massage her chest, after which Narukami becomes suspicious of her motives, but his hesitation is soon overcome as he is seduced by Taema’s beauty and asks her to marry him.

Persuaded by Taema to drink, they exchange marriage cups. Narukami becomes intoxicated and leads her to his hermitage, but while he sleeps, Taema cuts the sacred rope in front of the waterfall and the spell is broken.

Discovering the treachery, Narukami transforms into a terrible Thunder God vowing to pursue Taema in revenge for her deception.
Zenshinza Theatre Company

Honen and Shinran
Sunday, November 14, 2010, 3pm

Written by Tajima Sakae in Commemoration of the 800th Memorial Anniversary of Honen Shonin and the 750th Memorial Anniversary of Shinran Shonin.

Honen and Shinran

CAST

Honen
Tsuda Keichi
Honen (The Young Honen)
Nakajima Hiroyuki
Seishimaru (The Child Honen)
Suzuki Akiko
Uruma no Tokikuni
Kawarasaki Kunitaro
Seishimaru’s mother
Nishikawa Kazuko
Tochinosuke
Osagawa Genjiro
Okoso
Hirasawa Ai
Akashi no Sadaakira
Masuki Hiroshi
Shinku
Kamei Yoshikatsu
Shoku
Motomura Yuuki
Benchu
Anegawa Shinnosuke
Genchi
Niimura Sojiro
Ryosenbo
Hayashi Hirokazu
Saiamidabutsu
Watarai Motoyuki
Kumagai Renseibo
Yamazaki Ryuunosuke
Jyoshinbo
Ishida Satoshi
Saikobo
Ikushima Kigoro
Moemon
Yamazaki Tatsusaburo
Otoro
Tanaka Setsuko
Gonkaku
Matsunami Kihachiro
Gijyo
Matano Samon
Kanso
Hamana Miki
Kotoji
Hirasawa Ai
Kujyo Kanezane
Kawarasaki Kunitaro
Kenshin Hoin
Murata Kichijiro
Shinran
Arashi Keishi
Eshin-ni
Imamura Ayami
Kotake
Ebayashi Chise
Shoshin
Takahashi Yuiichiro
Shinbutsu
Fujii Isaku
Junshin
Yamazaki Tatsusaburo
Renni
Kamitaki Keitaro
Kakuzen
Odagawa Genjiro
Yayoe
Nishikawa Kazuko
Gotoku
Masuki Hiroshi
Kesa
Takayanagi Ikuko
Toyoo
Harigai Rieko
Matsu
Kurogochi Masako
Harimabo Bennens
Takei Shigeru
Yamabushi Myorinbo
Kamei Yoshikatsu
Yamabushi Gyojo
Oda Tomoki
Ogozen
Kuroda Lila

PROGRAM

Prologue

Act I

INTERMISSION

Acts II & III
### SYNOPSIS

#### Honen and Shinran

At the end of the eleventh century in Japan, a new military class based in the provinces increasingly defied the control of the central government, culminating in an intense period of civil war. It was during these “final days of the Law” that two of the most important figures in Japanese religious history, Honen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1263), developed a new faith-based practice which became the largest Buddhist sect in Japan today.

This practice is based upon the idea that absolutely anyone can reach “Jodo,” the Pure Land or paradise, simply by intoning the words, “Namu Amida Butsu” (“Nothing but Amida Buddha” or “I truly believe in Amida Buddha”).

The story begins with the young Honen questioning the meaning of life and the events that led him to take monastic vows. As a child Honen witnesses his father’s murder and is instructed to “forgive the enemy and seek a path to freedom.” He retreats to Mt. Hiei for 30 years of study and develops a supreme devotion to learning, reading the 5,000 volumes of the Kurodani library five times over.

Honen is reading a commentary on the Contemplation Sutra by Chinese master Shan-tao when he learns of his mother’s death. Reading the commentary throughout the night, he is awakened to the realization of universal salvation, and decides to leave the confines of the monastery to begin a lay ministry at Yoshimizu within the capital. His teachings spread throughout Japan.

Not far away at the Rokkaku-do Temple, a young priest, Shinran, “submerged in the ocean of lust and troubled by desires of fame” is on a 100-day seclusion. On the 95th day, a dream directs him to Yoshimizu to seek out Honen as his master. There, along with Honen, he encounters murderers, prostitutes and many common folk seeking salvation. Shinran asks his master if it is a sin to love, and is told to live his life as it best suits him, and even to marry if he cannot live as a single man.

As the number of Honen’s followers multiply, there is growing resentment among the clerics on Mt. Hiei. An official petition to ban his ministry is followed by religious persecution. Honen’s message of social equality threatens authority and his group is forced to disband. Four monks are beheaded, and eight others, including the 75-year-old Honen and Shinran, are exiled to remote parts of Japan.

Declaring himself “neither monk nor layperson,” Shinran, joined by his wife and family, lives among the poor, farming and directing earthwork projects. His understanding of the teachings grows and matures, and his conviction that salvation lies in the daily lives of the common people strengthens. Shinran gratefully accepts as a great opportunity what most would consider a tragic misfortune.

Shinran spends five years in the north of Japan before he receives a pardon. Upon hearing news of his master Honen’s death, he decides not to return to Kyoto, but instead to travel to the Kantou (present-day Tokyo) area, where the number of his followers increase and his fame and teachings spread throughout Japan.

#### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Zenshinza is the oldest and largest repertory theater company in Japan. Zenshinza, whose name literally translates as the “progressive theater,” was founded in 1931 by two of the greatest kabuki actors of the early 20th century, Kawarasaki Chojuro and Nakamura Kanemon.

Zenshinza’s establishment followed in the wake of kabuki’s 1928 tour of the Soviet Union, marking the first time this centuries-old theater form was seen outside of Japan. Directors Stanislawski and Meyerhold exerted a strong influence on the Japanese actors and their desire for more realistic acting styles. Conversely, traditional kabuki techniques, such as the static mie poses taken by an actor during a climactic moment in the drama, influenced Sergei Eisenstein’s film, Ivan the Terrible.

Zenshinza was among the first troupes to mount full-scale, professional productions of Western dramas in Japan, and its actors were the first to appear in motion pictures before World War II. Through programs ranging from traditional kabuki to historical dramas at its home theater in Kichijo-ji, Tokyo, productions at the National Theater of Japan and its extensive touring schedule, Zenshinza reaches more than 250,000 people annually throughout Japan.

This is the company’s U.S. debut tour.
Zenshinza Theatre Company

ACTORS IN RANK ORDER

Principals
Arashi Keishi
Tsuda Keiichi
Fujikawa Yanosuke
Imamura Ayami
Kawarasaki Kunitaro

Supporting Actors
Murata Kichijiro
Yamazaki Ryuunosuke
Osagawa Genjiro

Company
Takei Shigeru
Tanaka Setsuko
Yamazaki Tatsusaburo
Masuki Hiroshi
Nishikawa Kazuko
Anegawa Shinnosuke
Matsunami Kihachiro
Ebayashi Chise
Hamana Miki
Nakajima Hiroyuki
Takahashi Yuuichiro
Takayanagi Ikuko
Kuroguchi Masako
Matano Samon
Kamei Yoshikatsu
Watarai Motoyuki
Ishida Satoshi
Ikushima Kigoro
Kamitaki Keitaro

Ikuzawa Hiroyuki
Niimura Sojiro
Harigai Rieko
Motomura Yuuki
Hirasawa Ai
Hayashi Hirokazu
Oda Tomoki
Suzuki Akiko
Kuroda Lila

Production Credits

Artistic Director Hashimoto Eiji
Technical Director Nakahashi Koji
Production Assistants Ono Fumitaka, Sato Takuto,
Yokoyama Asahi, Hazekawa Koichi
Master Carpenters Demizu Hiromi, Ohkubo Yukihiro
Prop Masters Kumasaka Masakazu, Takigasaki Futoshi
Lighting Designers Matsumoto Yumi, Moriwaki Seiji
Lighting Planner Suzuki Hiroko
Master Electrician Aizawa Daisuke
Follow Spot Operator Iihama Yuji
Sound Engineer Kawana Aki
Wig Masters Yajima Shigeru, Sakai Yasuhiro
Costumers Ishikawa Takeshi, Katou Noboru,
Yoshimura Emi
Nagauta Chanters Kineya Sanotaka, Kineya Sayo,
Kineya Katsurokuza
Shamisen Kineya Satsuke, Kineya Gosakichio,
Kineya Sawajuro
Narimono Percussion Senba Motoaki, Mochizuki Tainosuke,
Kawashima Yuusuke, Sumita Chouyu,
Takei Makoto
Company Managers Morishita Miki, Terada Hiroko

U.S. Tour Production
Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, Los Angeles
Executive Director Chris Aihara
Tour Director Robert Hori
Tour Manager Erika Sugiyama
Company Manager Yoko Ito
Technical Liaisons Yuki Nakamura, Masahiko Sunami
Graphic Designer Koji Takei

U.S. Tour Sponsorship
The 2010 U.S. Tour of Zenshinza Theatre Company is produced by the Japanese American
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