



music dance theater

2010-2011  
SEASON

## *SchoolTime* Study Guide



### **Zenshinza Theatre Company**

Friday, November 12, 2010 at 11 a.m.

Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley



# Welcome to *SchoolTime*

Your class will attend the *SchoolTime* performance of **Zenshinza Theatre Company** on **Friday, November 12, at 11 am.**

Experience Kabuki, an enthralling Japanese theatrical tradition presented by its most skilled practitioners! Among Japan's oldest theater troupes, Zenshinza Theatre Company is a cherished artistic institution. The 68-member company stages a wide variety of lavish and colorful productions ranging from traditional kabuki to period dramas and historical plays about Japanese Buddhism. In the comedy *Chatsubo* ("The Tea Chest"), performed in Japanese with English subtitles, a country bumpkin encounters many challenges when he comes to the big city.

## Using This Study Guide

These materials are designed to engage your students and enrich their Cal Performances field trip. Before attending the performance, we encourage you to:

- **Copy** the Student Resource Sheet on pages 2 & 3 and give it to your students several days before the show.
- **Discuss** the information on pages 4-5 About the Performance & Artists with your students.
- **Read** About the Art Form on page 6, and The History of Kabuki on page 11.
- **Engage** your students in two or more activities on pages 13-15.
- **Reflect** with your students by asking them guiding questions, found at the top of each section on pages 2, 4, 6, & 11.
- **Immerse** students further into the subject matter and art form by using the Resource and Glossary sections on pages 15 & 16.

## At the performance:

Your class can actively participate by:

- **Observing** how the performers tell a story and express ideas and emotions through their movements and voices
- **Listening** for how songs, musical accompaniment and sound effects enhance the performance
- **Thinking** about the culture and history expressed through the story
- **Marveling** at the skill of the performers and musicians
- **Reflecting** on the sounds and sights you experience in the theater

We look forward to seeing you at *SchoolTime*!

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# 1 Theater Etiquette

**Be prepared and arrive early.** Ideally you should arrive at the theater 30 to 45 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time and parking, and plan to be in your seats at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.

**Be aware and remain quiet.** The theater is a “live” space—you can hear the performers easily, but they can also hear you, and you can hear other audience members, too! Even the smallest sounds, like rustling papers and whispering, can be heard throughout the theater, so it’s best to stay quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance without distractions. The international sign for “Quiet Please” is to silently raise your index finger to your lips.

**Show appreciation by applauding.** Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation. Performers return their appreciation for your attention by bowing to the audience at the end of the show. It is always appropriate to applaud at the end of a performance, and it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain comes down or the house lights come up.

**Participate by responding to the action onstage.** Sometimes during a performance, you may respond by laughing, crying or sighing. By all means, feel free to do so! Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form. For instance, an audience attending a string quartet performance will sit very quietly, while the audience at a gospel concert may be inspired to participate by clapping and shouting.

**Concentrate to help the performers.** These artists use concentration to focus their energy while on stage. If the audience is focused while watching the performance, they feel supported and are able to do their best work. They can feel that you are with them!

**Please note:** *Backpacks and lunches are not permitted in the theater. Bags will be provided for lobby storage in the event that you bring these with you. There is absolutely no food or drink permitted in the seating areas. Recording devices of any kind, including cameras, cannot be used during performances. Please remember to turn off your cell phone.*





# 2

## Student Resource Sheet

Zenshinza Theatre Company

### Questions to Think About During the Performance

- What are the types of Kabuki theater?
- What kinds of character roles are in Kabuki productions?
- What do Kabuki musicians do during a performance?
- How do costumes and makeup figure in Kabuki?

### What You'll See

You will attend a *SchoolTime* performance by Zenshinza Theatre Company of Japan. The company will perform *Chatsubo* (The Tea Chest), a musical comedy piece from their Kabuki production about a servant who comes from the country to the city, and what happens when a thief tries to trick him to steal his tea chest. Live music accompanies the performance.

### About the Artists

The oldest and largest repertory theater company in Japan, Zenshinza was founded in 1931 by two of the greatest kabuki actors of the early 20th century, Kawarasaki Chojuro and Nakamura Kan'emon. Zenshinza was one of the first troupes to produce professional Western dramas in Japan, and its actors were the first to appear in motion pictures before the Second World War. Through programs ranging from traditional kabuki to historical dramas, the company performs for more than 250,000 people throughout Japan every year.

### About the Art Form

Kabuki is a form of traditional Japanese theater that mixes song, dance and drama. In Japanese, the word "kabuki" is written with three characters that mean "song," "dance," and either "artist," "art," or "skill." A major difference between kabuki and Western theater is that kabuki actors do not try to hide that they are performing. Everything – actors, costumes, dialogue – is larger than life. Kabuki plays often focus on the demands of duty – an important aspect of Japanese culture. Kabuki was traditionally passed on through family lines, fathers trained their sons and generations were raised in the theater.



### Types of Kabuki Theater

There are two major categories of kabuki theater:

**Jidaimono:** History plays about feuds, battles, loyalties and betrayals that feature a melodramatic style of acting called *aragoto* ("rough business"), and *kumadori* face makeup – white makeup with heavy lines.

**Sewamono:** Domestic plays about love affairs and family tragedies, which feature a more natural style of acting called *wagoto* "soft style" and more naturalistic makeup.



### **Kinds of Roles**

In kabuki, all roles are performed by men. Actors who play female roles are called *onnagata*. Onstage they portray young girls and women by emphasizing feminine movements and gestures and speaking in high-pitched (falsetto) voices.

*Wagoto* describes male characters like romantic leads. Their movement is fluid and not as broad as the *aragoto* characters. *Aragoto* refers to super heroes and villains in kabuki plays. *Aragoto* actors wear heavily padded costumes and brightly colored makeup and perform in a broad and overblown style.

### **Other Elements of a Kabuki Production**

**Dance**— An important part of a kabuki play, dance heightens key or dramatic moments. Kabuki dances resemble lively folk dances with fast, energetic and rhythmic movements and jumps.

**Stage**— Traditionally, the main acting square called the *hon butai*, was located slightly off-center to the right of the audience and usually had a thatched roof supported by a pillar at each corner.

**Makeup**— a kabuki character's makeup shows his or her position in society. Commoners wear natural browns, lovers and upper class characters wear white makeup and soldiers and criminals are often painted with shades of red.

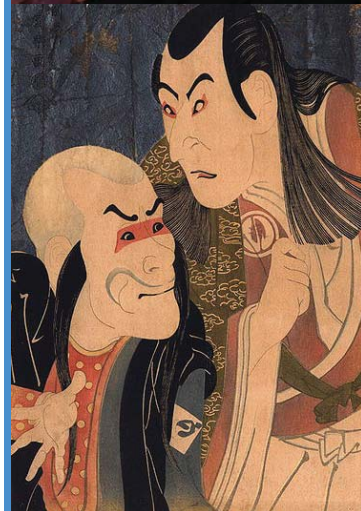
**Costume**— Also a strong indicator of a character's role in society, some kabuki costumes became standard for specific roles so audiences recognize characters when they step onto the stage. Costumes consist of multiple parts and are often changed on stage in an action known as the *hiki-nuki* or "pulling off" which expresses a character's sudden change of emotion or situation. Every kabuki performer uses a wig, and wig changes also show mood or character shifts.

**Sound & Music**— Sound effects are made by musicians who are either onstage or hidden from the audience in a small room with a window, called a *geza*. They play drums, bells, gongs, flutes, shamisen (a three-stringed lute-like instrument) and sing to create a wide range of moods and sounds.

### **The History of Kabuki**

Kabuki began as an entertainment for the common people. Before Japan's Tokugawa era (1600-1868), a stately, serene form of performance called *noh* entertained Japanese aristocrats. Women were the first kabuki performers and kabuki became so popular that many theaters opened between 1615 and 1623. These theaters presented racy, violent and sensational styles of acting. Embarrassed by kabuki, the ruling classes outlawed it in 1652. Theaters later reopened with all of the roles (including the female roles) performed by adult men, a custom that continues to this day.

By the end of the 17th century, kabuki took on a more rigid and formal dramatic style. Stories highlighted piety and loyalty, as well as other values of Japanese society. Kabuki survived the challenges of a changing Japanese society and the devastation of World War II and today is known worldwide thanks to international tours by famous troupes like Zenshinza Theatre Company.



# 3 About the Artists & Program

Zenshinza Theatre Company

## Guiding Questions:

- ♦ What does Zenshinza mean?
- ♦ What kind of theater has influenced the Zenshinza Theatre Company?
- ♦ Who funded Zenshinza and was special about them?



## About the Artists

**Zenshinza** is Japan's oldest and largest repertory theater company. "Zenshinza," which 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 Kan'emon.

The company was established after a 1928 tour by kabuki actors to the Soviet Union, marking the first time this centuries-old theater form was seen outside of Japan. Soviet directors Stanislavski and Meyerhold had a strong influence on the Japanese actors and their desire for more realistic acting styles, while traditional kabuki techniques,

such as the static *mie* poses taken by an actor during a climactic moment in the drama, influenced Eisenstein's filming of "Ivan the Terrible" in the Soviet Union.

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 the Second World War. 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.



## About the Program

### *Chatsubo (The Tea Chest)*

A farical dance piece based on the kyogen comedy of the same name adapted for the kabuki stage by Okamura Shiko and choreographer Bando Mitsunoyyo. First performed at Tokyo's Imperial Theater in 1921.

### *Synopsis*

A servant from the country ("country bumpkin") is sent to the city to buy some tea for his master. On his way home he meets a friend who gives him too much liquor to drink and he passes out drunk 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 tells 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 a surprise ending that reveals all the characters' true colors. An ensemble of musicians stationed behind the actors provide accompaniment for the musical play.

### *Cast*

***Kumataka Taro*** – A Country Bumpkin  
Fujikawa Yanosuke

***Magoroku***– A Wily Thief  
Nakajima Hiroyuki

***Mokudai***– A Magistrate  
Masuki Hiroshi

### **On-stage Assistants:**

Fujii Isaku, Niimura Sojiro, Motomura Yuuki

### **Assistant to the choreographer:**

Katsumi Yoshiyuki

### **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



# 4

## About the Art Form

Kabuki

### Guiding Questions:

- ♦ How do stage effects heighten the drama in kabuki theater?
- ♦ What is an *onnagata*?
- ♦ Name three things that express character in kabuki theater



Kabuki is a form of traditional Japanese theater that mixes song, dance, and drama. In Japanese, the word “kabuki” is written with three characters that mean “song,” “dance,” and either “artist,” “art,” or “skill.” The word comes from the Japanese “kabuku,” meaning “to incline,” “tilt” or “lean to the side.” This “tilting” is both literal and symbolic: originally, kabuki subject matter was often racy and “leaned” away from the normal, proper standards of society.

Kabuki plays are frequently concerned with the demands of duty. In Japanese culture, especially during kabuki’s heyday, duty was seen as life’s driving force. Kabuki plays also address struggles for power and the pursuit of love and money.

Two main categories of kabuki theater grew out of these pursuits. The ***jidaimono***, or history plays are characterized by plots of feuds, battles, loyalties and betrayals. These feature a large, melodramatic style of acting called ***aragoto*** (“rough business”) and feature the ***kumadori*** makeup style, which uses white makeup with heavy lines.

***Sewamono***, or domestic plays, deal with love affairs. These plays feature a more natural style of acting called ***wagoto*** (“soft style”) and more naturalistic makeup. Domestic plays often include scenes of great pain: separation of families, suicides, murders of innocent children, and the like.



19th  
Century  
Kabuki  
Actor



Onnagata  
Kabuki  
Actor



Aragoto  
Kabuki  
Actor

## Kabuki Acting: Traditions & Techniques

### *Generations of Kabuki Actors*

Many spectators came, and still come, to the kabuki theater in order to see their favorite actors. Kabuki acting was traditionally passed along through family lines, so generations were raised in the theater. Fathers trained their sons, and if they had no biological son, they would often adopt one.

Some families have an acting tradition that covers many centuries. One of the earliest kabuki actors took the name **Ichikawa Danjuro**, and over three centuries later, Ichikawa Danjuro the Twelfth is still acting in the same manner as his forefathers.

**Onnagata** is the term used to describe a male actor who plays a female role: in traditional kabuki, all roles are performed by men. Becoming an *onnagata* involves a long training period, and was often a way of life that continued outside of the theater. Although *Onnagata* often have androgynous features, they cannot always rely on their physical beauty. By emphasizing and stylizing feminine movements and gestures, they can create a larger-than-life femininity.

*Onnagata* speak in falsetto and stand with their knees and back slightly bent to look smaller. Fingers are kept together and movements are elegant and tightly controlled. They take tiny steps with their knees pressed together and their toes pointed inward. Male audience members were known to fall in love with their favorite *onnagata*, which could lead to some major quarrels. Remember that an *onnagata* might perform the same role for many years, so it wasn't uncommon for a man in his sixties to convince the audience that he was a beautiful young maiden.

**Wagoto** describes male characters (such as romantic leads) performed with a feminine acting style close to that of the *onnagata* roles. *Wagoto* characters have a more narrow stance than the *aragoto* characters (see below) and their movement is more fluid.

**Aragoto** translates as "rough business" and refers to super heroes and villains in kabuki plays. Actors playing the *aragoto* role wear heavily padded costumes and brightly colored face makeup. They are performed with a broad and bombastic style which was popularized in Tokyo.



### **An Actor's Techniques**

A major difference between kabuki and much of Western theater is that kabuki actors make less of an attempt to hide the “performance” aspect of the work. They make it clear that this is performance. Everything—actors, costumes, dialogue—is larger than life. Kabuki theater generally favors formalized beauty over realism.

**Mie**, the highlight of an *aragoto* kabuki performance, is one example. This is a dramatic pose adopted by the main (usually male) character during intense moments. (The proper phrase for this action is *mie o kiru*, or to “cut a mie”). Announced by the beating of wooden clappers, the actor freezes in a statuesque pose and crosses one or both eyes. Often this is preceded by a head roll. This one physical gesture holds actor and audience in a breathless trance. After a few seconds, the actor relaxes and the play continues. A *mie* can be cut in various positions, depending on the character and the moment. An *aragoto* character may perform a **roppo** exit, which combines several of these poses in rapid succession, before leaving the stage.

Kabuki acting styles evoke the history of kabuki as a dance. In contrast to *noh* dances, which are deliberate and stately, most kabuki dances resemble lively folk dances, featuring rapid, energetic vertical movements and jumps. Western dancers often defy gravity, but kabuki dancers focus on the earth and stamp their feet to emphasize rhythmic movement.

Dance is generally integral to the play: for example, **michiyuki**, or travel dances, show tragic lovers journeying to their destiny, where they will carry out their suicide pact.

### **Elements of Production**

#### **Scenery**

The early kabuki stage was modeled on the *noh* theater. The main acting square, called the **hon butai**, was located slightly off-center to the right of the audience. It generally had a thatched roof supported by a pillar at each corner.

The **hanamichi**, or “flower path” is a raised passageway leading from the left side of the stage, through the audience, to the back of the theater. It is used as both a conduit and a performance space. One of its







principal functions is to highlight entrances and exits. Actors often stop to pose, speak, or dance at a point known as the **shichi-san**, (seven-three) so called because it is 7/10 the length of the *hanamichi* from the stage to the back of the theater. A trap door with a lifting device was later added to this spot, so characters with supernatural powers could appear or disappear.

The revolving stage was first seen on the kabuki stage. Called the **mawari butai**, it is used to change location or to change the audience's point of view within the same location, with an effect similar to the fade-out and fade-in of film technique.

Kabuki uses many different curtains. One of the most important is a large pale blue curtain called the **asagimaku**, used for an effect called the **furiotoshi**, or "shake down to reveal." At the sound of two wooden clappers, the *asagimaku* drops to reveal whatever is behind it. The curtain is then swept away by stage assistants, and the effect is much like a quick cut in a movie. This *furiotoshi* creates a sudden revelation to the audience, and suggests that a powerful scene is about to take place.

### Stage Effects

The kabuki theater is known for its use of stage effects, emphasizing spectacle and the drama inherent in transformation.

Stephen Leiter suggests that this stems from a widespread belief in supernatural powers: "The theatre became a Pirandellian mindgame in which nothing could be trusted to be what it appeared." He notes that Japanese special effects were developed independently of similar European techniques due to Japan's policy of isolation. Kabuki included "an abundance of startling effects: legless ghosts; people metamorphosed into skeletons; realistic rain fell in torrents; swords pierced characters' necks; sets changed in the twinkling of an eye..."

### Makeup

A kabuki character's makeup indicates his or her position in society. Commoners wear natural browns. Females, young male lovers and upper class characters are done up in white (because aristocrats don't work in the fields and are therefore not exposed to the sun). Soldiers and crooks are often painted with shades of red.

**Kumadori**, literally "shadow painting," is associated with *aragoto* "rough style" acting. It deliberately enhances the facial muscles and thus the expressiveness of the face. The wide variety of *kumadori* patterns may extend to arms and legs. Traditionally, red *kumadori* is associated with virtue and strength, vigor, righteousness, and passion. Blue, on the other hand, is for villains, as it is associated with fear and evil.

### Costume

Kabuki costume also indicates a character's societal role. Costumes have become standardized for specific roles so an experienced audience member instantly recognizes a character when the actor steps onto stage. Costumes, especially for heroic characters, are complicated and heavy (sometimes up to 60 pounds), with exaggerated features. Costumes consist of multiple parts and are often changed on stage in an action known as the *hiki-nuki* or "pulling off," which expresses a character's sudden emotional or situational change. Pieces of the costume are put together so that a stage assistant (whose position on stage is accepted as a convention) can pull on a string and cause the top layers to fall away. The *hiki-nuki* is often the highlight of a kabuki performance.

Every kabuki performer uses a wig. Another indicator of a character's status, wigs are extremely heavy and ornate. Wig changes can also show mood or character shifts. For example, if a kabuki play features a priest whose wig is neatly combed, he might change into a wig with its hair standing on end when he realizes he has been betrayed.

### Sound & Music

The sonic world of kabuki is unlike anything in Western culture. Some scholars categorize it as a form of opera, except the actors don't really sing. There are drums, plucked stringed instruments, and singers who wail in falsetto. These sounds come from various parts of the stage throughout the performance. Specific sounds signal the beginning and end of a performance. At the opening curtain, a stage assistant, who is generally visible off to the side of the stage, strikes the clappers with increasing speed. Once the curtain is fully opened, a final "clack" signals the actors to begin. Other wooden clappers are used to emphasize actions on stage, such as running, fighting, or the *mie*.

Other sound effects are made by musicians who are either onstage or concealed from the audience in a small room with a window, called a *geza*. This group uses a variety of instruments: drums, bells, gongs, flutes, shamisen (which is a three-stringed lute-like instrument) all to create a wide range of moods and sounds.



# 5 The History of Kabuki

## Guiding Questions:

- ♦ How did kabuki theater begin?
- ♦ Why are there only male actors performing all the roles in kabuki?
- ♦ In what ways has kabuki changed from its beginnings?



Kabuki originated as an entertainment for the common people. Before Japan's Tokugawa era (1600-1868), a stately, serene form of performance called **noh** entertained Japanese aristocrats. This changed when Tokugawa Ieyasu took control as Japan's shogun and unified the country. In the peaceful, booming economy, the lower classes first had the means to spend on entertainment.

As legend goes, when the Kyoto's Kamo River shrank to a small stream in the summer, a riverbed near the Gojo Bridge became a place for entertainment. There, a Shinto priestess named Okuni danced for passersby. Her dances are heralded as the birth of kabuki, and while her dance had a religious origin, imitators developed more risqué shows.

Women were the original performers of kabuki. It became so popular that many theaters opened between 1615 and 1623.

These theaters catered to popular tastes and presented irregular, racy, violent, and, at times, sensational and cheap styles of acting. And, kabuki was linked to prostitution, as the performers attracted customers through their singing and dancing.

The ruling classes were embarrassed and outlawed kabuki in 1652. Theaters later reopened with all of the roles (including the female roles) performed by adult men, a custom that continues to this day.

Continuing restrictions included confining actors (considered corruptors of society) to the theater quarters of the city and strict laws that controlled the types of fabrics used for costumes, the realism of sword blades, theater building and subject matter.

The restrictive environment can be given credit for "accelerating or even causing the turn from vaudeville and burlesque



toward dramatic art, from one-act dance pieces to dramatically structured plays of five acts or more. The banning of women also quickened the development of makeup, costuming, and staging” (Donald P. Shively). By the end of the 17th century, the racy, taboo, unsteady form of dance became a more rigid and formal dramatic style. Stories highlighted piety and loyalty, as well as other values of Confucian philosophy then dominant in Japanese society.

Kabuki and other Japanese art forms developed with little international influence for 250 years due to the policy of **sakoku** (isolation). This ended with the landing of British Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853 and the beginning of the Meiji era in 1868.

This caused changes in the form as Japanese society changed rapidly. Actor Ichikawa Danjuro IX—who became famous for adding psychological insight to his interpretations—is credited with saving the form.

The devastation of World War II again threatened kabuki theater. Yet, it flourished during the American occupation when kabuki plays were staged despite censorship.

Today, kabuki is known worldwide, thanks to international tours by famous kabuki troupes. While Japan continues its technological evolution, this cultural treasure remains, continuing to pack houses with both Japanese residents and curious tourists eager for a taste of traditional Japanese culture.

## Japan's Fast Facts

**Capital:** Tokyo

**Population:** 127,463,611 people

**Official Language:** Japanese

**Money:** Japanese yen

**Monarchy:** Japan is the only country in the world with a reigning emperor. Although emperors have no real power, they serve as a symbol of Japan's traditions and unity.

**Area:** 145,883 square miles (roughly the size of Montana)

**Major Rivers:** Biwa, Inawashiro, Kasumigaura

## Japan's Geography

Japan is an archipelago, or string of islands, on the eastern edge of Asia. There are four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. There are also nearly 4,000 smaller islands. Japan's nearest mainland neighbors are the Siberian region of Russia in the north and Korea and China farther south.

Almost four-fifths of Japan is covered with mountains. The Japanese Alps run down the center of the largest island, Honshu. The highest peak is Mount Fuji, a cone-shaped volcano considered sacred by many Japanese. Japan has about 200 volcanoes, 60 of which are active.

Three of the tectonic plates that form the earth's crust meet near Japan. They often move against each other causing the country's dangerous earthquakes. More than a thousand earthquakes hit Japan every year.





# 6

## Learning Activities

### Theater (Grades K-8)

#### *Enlarging the Gesture*

Kabuki is a stylized (not naturalistic) form of theater. Instead of subtle, realistic gestures, the movements of Kabuki performers are very broad and paint a clear picture of who each character is and what they want. In this activity (reminiscent of the game “Telephone”), students’ gradually exaggerate a realistic gesture.

Have students stand in a circle, or in a line. The first person starts by making a small gesture. The next person replicates the gesture but makes it a bit bigger, the person after that makes the gesture bigger still, and so on around the circle or down the line until the last person makes the most extreme version of the gesture.

Variation: Add sound in the same way. Make sure students keep the original gesture/sound in mind, that they don’t parody it, or make up a new gesture. The gesture should grow organically.

### Theater & Literacy (Grades 1-12)

#### *Character Gestures*

- Get suggestions of several “character types” (based on what they do) and write them on the board, for example: teacher, mother, child, soldier, celebrity, judge, nurse, etc.
- Ask students to come up with gestures for each character that represents in some way what they do. (e.g., a mother might hold her baby, a celebrity might blow kisses to the crowd.)
- Have students create a catchphrase for their character, something the character might say often.
- Experiment with the exaggeration of the gesture asking students to try the gesture at “1” at “10” and various numbers in between.
- In small groups, have students choose one character type to pretend to be and have them interact with the other characters, using these gestures and catchphrases for their character, while others watch.

Additions: Students can come up with characters’ desires, emotional moods or qualities and rework their gesture accordingly. (For example, how would you portray a celebrity who is hungry for constant attention waving to fans?)

- In addition to gestures, students can create tableaux (frozen pictures) of their characters, alone or with others, in various situations. (e.g., sad soldier saying goodbye to family.) They can then write short scenarios, skits or stories based on these tableaux.
- Ask students to draw a symbol for their gesture and name it.

## Music/Sound (Grades 2-6)

### *Expressing Emotions through Sound*

Kabuki musicians play throughout performances, adding sound effects and musical accompaniment to heighten suspense or create a mood or atmosphere.

- Have students experiment with simple instruments (rhythm sticks, sand blocks, cymbals, maracas, etc.) to explore pitch (how high or low a note is) and timbre (the quality of a sound). Discuss how different pitch and timbre communicate different emotional qualities.
- Using their bodies (clapping, body tapping) or rhythm sticks ask students to experiment with using volume and tempo to express emotions. As a class, compile a list of different emotions. Have students clap or play their rhythm sticks “sadly” and so on. Students can explore alone, in pairs or groups. (Option: Students could come up with different adverbs and play their rhythms in the manner of the adverbs.)
- Using their voices, ask students to experiment with pitch, volume and tempo to create different emotional soundscapes. After these explorations, discuss which volume, tempo, pitch and playing or vocal technique worked best to express each emotion.

## Visual Art (Grades 2-8)

### *Kabuki Masks*

#### Supplies:

- paper plates
- markers, crayons, colored pencils or paints
- popsicle or craft sticks
- glue or tape
- scissors

Helpful website: <http://www.creative-arts.net/kabuki/Breakdown/Make-up.htm>



#### Directions:

Look at examples of facial make-up in kabuki. (See website above.)

- Think of a character from a book, play or story that your class has read. If that character was in a kabuki performance, what colors would be used for their facial make-up? (Refer to the guide on the next page to see which qualities the colors symbolize.)

- With a pencil, draw the outline of your character's face on a paper plate. Then, draw outlines for the character's eyes.
- Cut out the eyes and around the outline of your character's face. (Teachers, you may want to pre-cut younger students' masks.)
- Design the patterns on your mask and color them in with the appropriate "character" colors.
- After you have finished drawing, glue or tape a popsicle stick to the bottom of your mask as a handle.

### **Color symbolism in Kabuki facial make-up:**

*beni* (deep red) anger, indignation, forcefulness, stubbornness  
*beni* (red) activeness, eagerness, passion,  
*vigour usuaka* (pink or pale red) cheerfulness, youthfulness, happiness  
*asagi* (light blue) calmness, coolness, composure  
*ai* (indigo) melancholy, gloominess  
*midori* (very light green) tranquillity  
*murasaki* (purple) nobility, loftiness  
*taisha* (brown or burnt sienna) selfishness, egotism, dejection  
*usuzumii* (grey on chin) dreariness, cheerlessness  
*sumi* (black) fear, terror, fright, gloom

## **Additional Resources**

### **Video & Audio clips on the web:**

youtube.com [search kabuki theatre]

### **Japanese Culture and History:**

<http://web-japan.org/kidswweb/>

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e641.html>

### **Japanese Literature:**

- The Bee and the Dream: A Japanese Tale. Retold by Jan Freeman Long, illustrated by Kaoru Ono. 1996.
- Japanese Children's Favorite Stories. Edited by Florence Sakade, illustrated by Yoshisuke Kurosaki. 1958.

### **Images:**

<http://photojapan.com>

[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) (search kabuki)

[www.images.google.com](http://www.images.google.com) (search kabuki]

### **Local venues featuring Japanese Culture:**

Japanese Tea Garden at Golden Gate Park  
 Tea Garden Dr. off John F. Kennedy Dr., San Francisco

Asian Art Museum  
<http://www.asianart.org/>  
 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco

Japan Society  
<http://www.usajapan.org>

Japanese Cultural & Community Center  
<http://www.jcccnc.org>  
 1840 Sutter Street, San Francisco

Theatre of Yugen  
<http://www.theatreofyugen.org>  
 2840 Mariposa Street, San Francisco

# 7 Glossary

**Aragato:** a melodramatic style of kabuki acting with exaggerated gestures and vocals, typically used when portraying super heroes, villains and supernatural characters

**Aristocrat:** a usually wealthy person of noble blood and part of the upper class

**Comedy:** a type of light and funny play that usually has a happy ending

**Dialogue:** a conversation between two or more characters

**Dispute:** disagreement or argument

**Drama:** a theatrical production that tells a story with characters

**Dynasty:** a series of powerful rulers from the same family

**Falsetto:** a man who sings in an unnaturally high-pitched voice

**Farcical:** a type of comedy wherein the plot and humor hinge on the odd circumstances and ridiculous situations that occur

**Jidaimono:** a type of kabuki drama featuring famous people and moments from history, especially feuds and wars

**Kabuki:** a highly stylized classical Japanese dance-drama known for its elaborate acting style and visual effects

**Kyogen:** a brief comedic play originally performed between Noh plays

**Magistrate:** a judicial official who administers the law

**Mie:** a powerful and emotional pose struck by an actor in kabuki

**Onnagata:** male actors who play female characters in kabuki using very stylized and feminine gestures coupled with falsetto speaking

**Pirandellian:** From the Italian playwright, Luigi Pirandello, who wrote plays depicting art or illusion mixing with reality

**Rendition:** a different type of version or interpretation

**Resolution:** a final outcome

**Sewamono:** a type of kabuki drama that focuses on family and relationship issues among everyday people

**Testify:** to give evidence under oath, usually in court

**Troupe:** a group of actors who work and travel together

**Wagoto:** a “soft style” of kabuki acting that emphasizes realistic speech and gestures; typically used to represent tragic or romantic heroes.



# 8

## California State Standards

### Theater Grades K-12

#### 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

##### Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theater

1.2 Identify the structural elements of plot (exposition, complication, crisis, climax, and resolution) in a script of theatrical experience.

#### 2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

##### Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theater

Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theater, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

#### 3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

##### Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theater

Students analyze the role and development of theater, film/video, and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theater.

### Role and Cultural Significance of Theater

3.2 Interpret how theater and storytelling forms (past and present) of various cultural groups may reflect their beliefs and traditions.

#### 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

##### Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences

Students critique and derive meaning from works of theater, film/video, electronic media, and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

#### 5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What is Learned in Theater, Film/Video, and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject areas and to Careers



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## **About Cal Performances and *SchoolTime***

The mission of Cal Performances is to inspire, nurture and sustain a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts. Cal Performances, the performing arts presenter of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfills this mission by presenting, producing and commissioning outstanding artists, both renowned and emerging, to serve the University and the broader public through performances and education and community programs. Cal Performances celebrates over 100 years on the UC Berkeley Campus.

Our *SchoolTime* program cultivates an early appreciation for and understanding of the performing arts amongst our youngest audiences, with hour-long, daytime performances by the same world-class artists who perform as part of the main season. *SchoolTime* has become an integral part of the academic year for teachers and students throughout the Bay Area.



This Cal Performances *SchoolTime* Study Guide was written, edited and designed by Laura Abrams, Rica Anderson, and Nicole Anthony with material adapted from articles by Bethany Wood and Tim Hamilton of the Department of Drama and Theatre and University Theatre, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Copyright © 2010 Cal Performances