

CULTURAL NEWS August 2015

Appreciating Japanese traditions



Japanese language opera "Kaguya-Hime" to premier in the U.S.

Opera "Kaguya-Hime" (Princess from the Moon) will be performed at Aratani Theatre in Los Angeles on Saturday, Aug. 22, at 7 pm as the U.S. premiere.

The opera with soloists, chorus, and orchestra from Japan and Los Angeles
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Kaguya-Hime L.A. Chorus takes a major role in Opera "Kaguya-Hime" at Aratani Theatre as the U.S. premiere. (Photo by Yuka Amax)

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Your guide for Japan



Opera "Kaguya-Hime" stage shown was held at Wako City in Saitama Prefecture in 2006. (Courtesy of Hideaki Hirai)

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will be conducted by acclaimed Tokyo-based Maestro Hideaki Hirai who wrote the music and libretto of the opera.

"Kaguya-Hime" is the tale of a young princess who descends to the earth. An old bamboo-cutter and his wife find the princess in a piece of golden shining bamboo and raise her as their daughter. Merely in three months, she grows up to be the most beautiful woman in the country, attracting many marriage proposals from nobles, including the Mikado or Emperor of Japan. The princess rejects these proposals, knowing in her heart that she must one day return to the moon.

"Kaguya-Hime" or original name "Tale of Teketori" (Tale of the Bamboo Cutter) is considered as Japan's oldest extant prose narrative traced back to the 10th century.

The first piece of the opera "Kaguya-Hime" was born in 1992 when Hirai studied conducting at the Eastman School of Music in the University of Rochester in New York. All libretto was written in Japanese, and the world

premiere of "Kaguya-Hime" with 27 piece music was performed in 2003. Since then, "Kaguya-Hime" has been performed in Salzburg, Anif, Prague in Europe, and Canberra in Australia as well as many cities in Japan.

Currently "Kaguya-Hime" which consists of 37 pieces music, has already become one of the most favorite and frequently performed Japanese operas.

On Aug. 22 at Aratani Theatre, "Kaguya-Hime" will perform in two acts in Japanese language with English subtitles.

Tickets are \$75, \$40, \$35, \$30. \$75 tickets include post-concert reception and gift. \$50 discount tickets is available for a pair of parent and child. For tickets and information, contact Tanano at (310) 625-4222, or Tokoyama at (310) 977-5875, or email LADaiku@aol.com. Tickets are also available at www.eventbrite.com.

The event is presented by Opera "Kaguya-Hime" L.A. Committee and the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, and sponsored by Robert Crowder Foundation.