

Film Screening:

KABUKU

Behind the Curtain of Contemporary Kabuki Theatre

Followed by discussion by director Yoshitaro Saito



Date: 1 May 2015, from 6:30pm

Venue: Asia House, Fine Room 1

63 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 7LP

Kabuku is a fascinating documentary offering a behind-the-scenes view of the unique theatrical genre of Japanese kabuki. Focusing on the rehearsal process and lead up to the performance of the contemporary kabuki play *Yoshitsune Senbon Zakura* (*Yoshitsune and the 1,000 Cherry Trees*) – a version of which was also performed at Sadler's Wells in London in 2010 – the documentary follows the preparations by the play's well-known and respected actor, Kamejiro Ichikawa II, now inheritor of the prestigious stage name Ennosuke Ichikawa IV.

The film is an often unseen glimpse into the many backstage preparations involved; including kabuki stage make-up as well as the rarely unveiled traditional but very innovative routines and special effects behind some of the play's spectacular character shifts, exits and entrances. It will also reveal the meticulous, demanding and even daring tasks required by performers and set up by dedicated backstage staff, providing a colourful introduction to contemporary kabuki performances.

The screening will be introduced by **Dr Alan Cummings**, Senior Teaching Fellow in Japanese at the School of Oriental and African Studies and followed by a discussion with the film's director, **Yoshitaro Saito**.

In Japanese with English subtitles

This event is free to attend but booking is essential as places are very limited. To reserve a place, please email your name and the title of the event you would like to attend to event@jpf.org.uk

Biography: Yoshitaro Saito

Yoshitaro Saito was born in Tokyo and studied filmmaking at L'université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France. After working on numerous commercial film works, Saito started filming documentary works for Japanese traditional performing arts such as Kabuki and Rakugo (traditional comic storytelling). Before completing the filming of *Kabuku* (2013), Saito published a DVD in 2006 for the solo Rakugo performance by Master Shinsuke Kokontei who has been actively reviving classic Rakugo from the Edo period and also performing works by Shakespeare with Rakugo style.

Additional Screenings:

The film will also be shown at these selected venues, followed by a discussion by Yoshitaro Saito:

27 April 2015, from 6:00pm

The University of Edinburgh

Screening Room (G.04) at the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, 50 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LH

Book tickets: eventbrite.co.uk/event/16302905429/

30 April 2015, from 6:30pm

Royal Holloway University, London

Caryl Churchill Theatre, Katharine Worth Building, Department of Drama & Theatre Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham Hill, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX

2 May 2015, from 2:00pm

Durham University

Lecture Room 9, Elvet Hill House (adjacent to the Oriental Museum), Elvet Hill, Durham, EH1 3TH

This event is co-organised by IndigoRose Project, and supported by the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation

Image: © Yoshitaro Saito