

## About the Opera Theater Kon-nyaku-za

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The Opera Theater Kon-nyaku-za was founded in Tokyo in 1971, with an aim of creating and promoting new operas sung in Japanese. The start of this opera theater can be traced to student's activities of "Kon-nyaku Exercise Club" at Tokyo University of the Arts from 1965 until 1977, which led by two teachers of physical education, the Late Professor NOGUCHI Michizo and the late professor MIYAGAWA Mutsuko. The name of Kon-nyaku-za is derived from *Konnyaku taisō* (konjac exercise), which is a unique exercise with characteristics of relaxation and reliance on the body's own weight, systematized by M. NOGUCHI. Students of the club, inspired by its flexible motion, called it as *konnyaku taiso*. In 1971, the former members of this club founded the Opera Theater Kon-nyaku-za as a specific opera company which constantly performs opera repertoire in Japanese, and they started touring around the country.

Since its foundation, the theater members have been striving for easily heard Japanese operas to every audience, even to children. In other words, they have been aiming at acquiring a method of singing which clearly tells the story to its audience. Their achievements are regarded with high esteem in various circles. Moreover, they have been presenting innovative ideas with physical expression based on the training of *Konnyaku taisō*. They have created and performed as many as 60 or more original operas, played by a small number of singers only with a piano accompaniment or a small-scale instrumental ensemble, as contrasted to grand opera. A famous composer, Mr. HAYASHI Hikaru (1931 – 2012) was an artistic director from 1997 until 2012. Now, Ms. HAGI Kyoko, a composer, leads around 40 singers of this opera company as its music director.

In terms of main repertoire, the early operas were mostly based on popular Japanese folk tales as *Amanjaku to Uriko-Hime* (Amano-gnome and Princess Uriko) and *Okon Jōruri* (The Magic Fox). Since 1986, they have created new productions, which are based on literal works by Japanese famous writers including MIYAZAWA Kenji. *Gauche the Cellist*, *General Son-Ba-Yu* and *the Three Physicians* are good examples. On the other hand, they have adopted many operas, based on foreign literal works, as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare, *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka and so on. The theater was awarded many prizes for its creative activities, and also invited to present its opera at the ceremonial

opening programs in New National Theater of Tokyo (1998) and Tokyo Bunka Kaikan (1999) etc.

Currently, the theater carries on approximately 250 performances a year at home and abroad, such as in Europe (France, Romania, Hungary, Austria and Czech Republic) and in Asia (Indonesia, Thailand, India, Malaysia, Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam and Laos).

\* Excerpted from <http://www.konnyakuza.com/prf01about.html>

(Professor emerita, Tokai University)

## 主な上演作品 Main Repertoire

### ○林 光 作曲 Composed by Hikaru Hayashi

- ♪ セロ弾きのゴーシュ (宮澤賢治)

Opera *Gauche the Cellist* (based on the novel by Kenji Miyazawa)

- ♪ 森は生きている (サムイル・マルシャーク)

Opera *Dvenadtsat mesyatsev* (based on the novel by Samuil Marshak)

- ♪ 変身 (フランツ・カフカ)

Opera *Metamorphosis* (based on the novel by Franz Kafka)

- ♪ 吾輩は猫である (夏目漱石)

Opera *I Am a Cat* (based on the novel by Soseki Natsume)

- ♪ 三人姉妹 (A. P. チェーホフ)

Opera *Three Sisters* (based on the novel by Anton P. Chekhov)

- ♪ イヌの仇討あるいは吉良の決断 (井上ひさし)

Opera *Inu no Adauchi* (based on the novel by Hisashi Inoue)

- ♪ 花のラ・マンチャ騎士道あるいはドン・キホーテ最後の冒険 (M. de セルバンテス)

Opera *Last Adventure of Don Quixote* (based on the novel by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra)

- ♪ ロミオとジュリエット・瓦礫の中の (シェイクスピア)

Opera *Romeo and Juliet* (based on the novel by William Shakespeare)

他作品多数 And many more operas.

### ○萩 京子 作曲 Composed by Kyoko Hagi

- ♪ 北守将軍と三人兄弟の医者 (宮澤賢治)

Opera *General Son-Ba-Yu and the Three Physicians* (based on the novel by Kenji Miyazawa)

- ♪ 金色夜叉 (尾崎紅葉)

Opera *Konjiki-yasha* (based on the novel by Koyo Ozaki)

- ♪ ガリバー (J. スウィフト)

Opera *Gulliver* (based on the novel by Jonathan Swift)

- ♪ 月の民 (加藤直)

Opera *Tsuki no Tami* (based by the text by Tadashi Kato)

- ♪ にごりえ (樋口一葉)

Opera *Nigorie* (based on the novel by Ichiyo Higuchi)

- ♪ まげもん—Magaimon—夏の陣 (チョン・ウイシン 鄭義信)

Opera *Magaimon* (based on the text by Wi Shing Chong)

- ♪ 好色一代男 (井原西鶴)

Opera *Kōshoku Ichidai-otoko* (based on the novel by Saikaku Ihara)

他作品多数 And many more operas.

○林 光／萩 京子 作曲 Composed by Hikaru Hayashi and Kyoko Hagi

♪ 十二夜 (シェイクスピア)

Opera *Twelfth Night* (William Shakespeare)

♪ ハムレット (シェイクスピア)

Opera *Time for Hamlet* (adapted from the original by W. Shakespeare)

♪ 夏の夜の夢～嗚呼！大正浪漫編～ (シェイクスピア)

Opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (based on the novel by W. Shakespeare)

○モーツァルトのオペラ W. A. Mozart

♪ フィガロの結婚-モーツァルト・エキゾチカー

Opera *The Marriage of Figaro*

♪ 魔法の笛

Opera *The Magic Flute*

### 受賞歴 Awards

1976年 「ウイナーワールドオペラ賞・特別賞」(創作活動全般)

Vienna World Opera Award (the present Giraud Opera Prize), the special prize awarded for the creativity in the general activities

1989年 「ジローオペラ賞・特別賞」(《十二夜》の成果)

Giraud Opera Prize, the special prize for *Twelfth Night*.

「文化庁芸術祭賞(音楽部門)」(《セロ弾きのゴーシュ》の成果)

The Arts Festival Prize for Music, awarded for *Gauche the Cellist* by the Agency for Cultural Affairs

「音楽之友社賞」(演奏活動全般)

*Ongaku-no-tomo-sha* Award for the creativity in the general activities

1992年 「キッズ&アーツアンサンブル賞」(《セロ弾きのゴーシュ》の成果)

Kids & Arts in Kobe Ensemble Award, for *Gauche the Cellist*.

1997年 「山本安英の会記念基金賞」(日本語の「歌芝居」の成果)

*Yasue Yamamoto Memorial Foundation Prize*, awarded for the work of Music Theatre in Japanese

「三菱信託音楽賞」(《変身》の成果)

The Mitsubishi Trust Music Award, for *Metamorphosis*.

2000年 「平成12年度東京都優秀児童演劇選定」(《ロはロボットのロ》の成果)

Tokyo Selection of Excellent Arts for Young People, awarded for *Teto the Robot*.

「東京都教育委員会 優秀賞」

Tokyo Board of Education Award

「(社) 日本演劇協会賞」

Japan Arts Association Award

「(財) 都民演劇賞」

Arts for Citizen of Tokyo award, awarded *Teto the Robot*.

2002 年 「第 12 回イーハートオブ賞」(多数の宮澤賢治作品のオペラ化に対して)

*Iihātōbu* Award, for all operas based on the novel by Kenji Miyazawa

by the Kenji Miyazawa Learned Society

2008 年 「平成 20 年度児童福祉文化賞」(《セロ弾きのゴーシュ》の成果)

Child Welfare Cultural Award 2008, for *Gauche the Cellis*.

注：以上のデータはこんにやく座公式 HP より転載

<http://www.konnyakuza.com/prf01about.html>

Note: All titles and descriptions above were reprinted from Konnyakuza's official website.

[http://www.konnyakuza.com/prf\\_e.html](http://www.konnyakuza.com/prf_e.html)