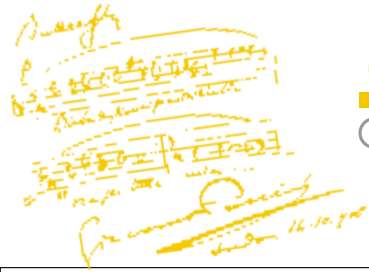


NEWSLETTER

CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND THE PERFORMING ARTS



Greetings

It is indeed a great honor to succeed Masafumi Tomioka as president of Min-On Concert Association. In keeping with Min-On's founding spirit to contribute to world peace, I pledge to dedicate myself to further expanding international cultural exchange through a broad-based movement of music, dance and the performing arts.

Min-On is certainly a pioneer in promoting cultural exchange on a global scale. I am delighted to announce that we will be bringing the Royal Dance of Cambodia Troupe to Japan in May. I hope everyone will enjoy the elegant Khmer dance.

Hiroyasu Kobayashi
President
Min-On Concert Association



Royal Dance Troupe of Cambodia to Present Elegant Khmer Dance

First Cultural Envoy from the City of Temple, "Angkor Wat"

The origins of Cambodian dance can be traced back to the ninth-century, and to the reign of King Suryavarman II in the 12th century. Many of the dancers who today make up the nucleus of the Royal Dance Troupe of Cambodia were trained at the Royal University of Fine Arts, which was established in 1965 with the mission of carrying on and protecting the country's traditional culture.

The group first visited Japan at the time of the 1970 Osaka World's Fair, winning high acclaim for its elegance and grace. However, in the midst of the turmoil resulting from the civil war that broke out in Cambodia that same year, more than 300 of the troupe's instructors and dancers were lost and the ensemble all but disappeared from the world stage.

The Royal University of Fine Arts was reopened in 1980 thanks to the dedicated efforts of persons affiliated with the Cambodian royal family and figures in the world of dance. Ten years later the reconstituted Royal Dance Troupe of Cambodia

performed at the Kennedy Center in New York City, having succeeded in

reviving the beautiful dance of Cambodia. In the years since, it has

performed to high acclaim in countries around the world, including Thailand, China, South Korea, Singapore, France, Denmark, Germany, Belgium and Canada.

For its upcoming engagements in Japan, the Royal Dance Troupe will perform a number of exquisite and soothing pieces, including the "Apsara Dance," which depicts an imaginary world of angels at play in a garden, and the comical "Coconut Shell Dance."

In addition to dancing, artists perform on folk instruments and sing, thus creating a stage redolent with the rich fragrance of culture.

This brings the number of countries with which Min-On has conducted cultural exchange to 85.



Main Performances:

May:	21/Kanazawa	22/Sagamihara	23/Tokyo	24/Kasukabe	27/Ichihara	28/Kariya	29/Handa	30/Okazaki	31/Toyota
June:	2/Ota	4/Ashikaga	5/Kashiwa	6/Sayama	7/Mie	10/Takayama	11/Ogaki	12/Seki	13/Kurashiki
	16/Neyagawa	17/Takatsuki	18/Suita	21/Niigata	22/Joetsu	23/Nagaoka	25/Toyonaka		14/Matsuyama

Total 28 performances in 27 cities



COMING SOON

Tunbaknari/India: A one-sided drum, similar to the *darabukka* of West Asia. It is frequently used to accompany folk music performances in Kashmir.



Lina Sastri to Perform Songs of Naples

Lina Sastri is a renowned Italian actress and vocalist. She first gained widespread recognition in 1983 when she received the Curcio Award for best actress, the highest honor in the Italian acting world, for her starring role in *Sei Personaggi in cerca d'autore* (Six People in Search of an Author, directed by Luigi Pirandello). For her film *Mi manda Picone*, which was nominated for an Academy

Award in the United States, Ms. Sastri received the David di Donatello (Best Actress) Award of the Italian Motion Picture Academy; as well as the Nastro d'Argento Award, which is awarded by film critics; and the Machera d'Argento Award, whose recipient is chosen by journalists across Europe.

Professor Silvio Marchetti, director of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura (Italian Culture Center) in Tokyo, has expressed high expectations for Lina Sastri's upcoming tour, which figures prominently

among the events marking the "Year of Italy in Japan." "We decided to present masterpieces of Italia Canzone, building upon Min-On's prior successes in this area," he explained. Describing Ms. Sastri as one of the most important female interpreters of Neapolitan songs, Professor Marchetti credited her with "capturing the spirit of Naples and conveying it to the audience through her intensity of emotion."

Performance Schedule:

April 25 (Thursday) 6:30 P.M. Green Hall Sagamiho
April 26 (Friday) 6:30 P.M. Tokyo Kosei Nenkin Kaikan

2002: Year of Japan-South Korea Exchange Korean Musical *Gambler* Makes Big Splash in Music World

This year South Korea and Japan will jointly host the FIFA World Cup soccer tournament. In keeping with this spirit of exchange, Min-On is pleased to provide audiences across Japan with the opportunity to experience the hit



Korean musical *Gambler*, by the Musical Company Seensee of South Korea.

Seensee, which has established itself as the country's premier musical production company, has presented many Broadway works in South Korea, including *Chicago* and *Rent*. It is also actively engaged in the creation of new works. The original production of *Gambler*, which was composed by Eric Woolfson of the Alan Parsons Project, has enjoyed a long and extremely popular run since its 1995 debut in Germany. Seensee's Korean-language production of the work quickly became a run-away hit that has been viewed by 50,000 people.

Set in a casino in Europe, it portrays in dramatic fashion the harrowing life

of a youth who is consumed by the vagaries of love and gambling. Woolfson's songs splendidly express the frame of mind of the protagonist as he swoons and struggles with emotions of love and greed, all leading to the story's remarkable climax.



Main Performances:

May: 23/Yokohama 25/Nagano 29 & 30/Oita
June: 1/Akita 2 & 3 Sendai 5/Tokyo
6/Fukushima 7 & 8/Shizuoka 12/Omiya
14/Okayama 16/Nagoya 18, 19 & 20/Fukuoka
22 & 23/Hiroshima

Total: 25 performances in 14 cities

Shunzo Ohno 2002 Tour: "Poetic Spirit of Japan"



Following the great success of his 2000 nationwide tour, trumpeter Shunzo Ohno will be visiting Japan again this year.

Born in 1949 in Gifu Prefecture, Shunzo Ohno went to New York in 1974, where he performed together with such jazz greats as Art Blakey and Roy Haynes. He went on to tour the world with Norman Connors.

In 1983, Mr. Ohno joined the Gill Evans Orchestra. His works include the Grammy Award-winning album *Live at Sweet Basils*.

In November 1998, Shunzo Ohno toured Japan with Wayne Shorter. The following year, he joined guitarist Larry Coryell on his world tour. In December 2001, Mr. Ohno was awarded the first Asia American Jazz Connection Music Award by the Universal Jazz Coalition and Jazz Center of New York in recognition of his many achievements.

For his upcoming "Poetic Spirit of Japan" tour, Shunzo Ohno will perform

such Japanese classics as "Sakura" (Cherry Tree) and "Kojo no Tsuki" (The Moon over a Ruined Castle). He will be accompanied by Henry Hey on piano, John Hart on guitar, Edward Howard on bass, and Billy Kilson on drums.

Main Performances:

May: 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12/Tokyo 14/Koshigaya
15/Utsunomiya 17/Chiba 18/Ichikawa
21/Shirakawa 22/Soma 24/Taira
25/Aizu 27/Gifu 29/Izuka
30/Omuta 31/Miyakonojo
June: 2/Wakayama 3/Koriyama 4/Nagoya
8/Mito 9/Tsuchiura

Total 22 performances in 18 cities

RECENT EVENTS



Na-xiao/Taiwan : A recorder type flute with five holes in front and one hole in back. It is similar to the *dong-xiao* flute of mainland China and the *shakuhachi*.

“Mei Lanfang Memorial” Exhibit Held at Min-On Culture Center



To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations, and the Japan tour of China's National Peking Opera Theatre, an exhibition on Peking Opera great Mei Lanfang was held January 1-14 at the Min-On Culture Center in Tokyo.

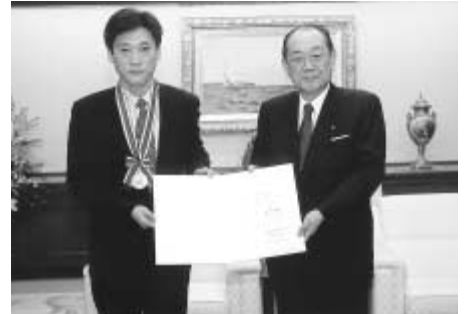
Born in 1894, Mei Lanfang belonged to the third generation in his family to be involved in Peking Opera. He specialized in playing women's roles, and created many original compositions. Mei Lanfang also had deep ties to Japan, visiting the country three times. In 1923, in the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake

(which devastated the Tokyo area), he visited Japan to give charity performances to benefit earthquake victims and to offer encouragement.

Mei Lanfang introduced Peking Opera to the world, and had a major influence on the international opera scene. He was friends with many prominent artists and cultural figures of his day, including Makسيم Gorki, Konstantin S. Stanislavskii, Charlie Chaplin, Burehito and

Rabindranath Tagore. In 1955, Mei Lanfang was appointed first president of the National Peking Opera Theatre.

The exhibition at the Min-On Culture Center, which includes costumes belonging to the artist and paintings, is the first public showing of many commemorative items. The opening was attended by First Secretary Mr. Feng Shnlong of the Chinese Embassy and Mei Lanfang



Memorial Museum Director Liu Zhanwen of China.

In his greetings, Mr. Liu introduced a message from President Hao Su Chen of Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign countries, who described Mei Lanfang as exemplifying Peking Opera. Mr. Feng thanked SGI President Ikeda, the Soka Gakkai and Min-On for holding the exhibition to raise the curtain on this year marking the 30th anniversary of the normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations.



Tango Orquesta El Arranque Performs in Tokyo



On February 16, the Tango Orquesta El Arranque, a youthful ensemble representing a new generation of Argentine Tango artists, performed at Orchard Hall in Tokyo's Shibuya Ward. Those attending the performance included Argentine Consul General

Mr. and Mrs. Carlos Rubio Reyna, Ambassador and Madam Carlos Clulow of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, and Ambassador and Madam Carlos Antonio Bievero of Venezuela.

The orchestra is renowned for its modern arrangements of Tango classics, performed with unique style on a stage abounding with the vibrancy of youth. It was accompanied by three dance couples, and by special guest vocalist

María José Mentana, whose deep and resonant voice brought down the house.

Mr. Reyna praised the performance, and said he was grateful to Min-On for bringing outstanding Argentine Tango artists to Japan each year.

On January 15, the members of Tango

Orquesta El Arranque visited the Min-On Culture Center in Tokyo. One of the artists remarked that since their student days they had all heard the name Min-On many times, and had strived to develop their abilities with the goal of one day appearing on the Min-On stage.



Uzbekistan Arts Academy Representatives Visit Min-On Culture Center

On February 21, Tursunali Kuziev, chairman of the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan, visited the Min-On Culture in Tokyo. Mr. Kuziev was accompanied by Abbos Usmonov, editor of the Russian and Uzbek daily *Voice of the People*, and Rector Usman Karabaev of the Kamoliddin Bekhzod National Institute of Arts and Design. On February 20, the three awarded an honorary professorship from the Uzbek Institute of Arts and Design to Min-On founder SGI President Ikeda.



In the course of a discussion with Min-On President Kobayashi, Mr. Kuziev said he was aware that in 2000 Min-On brought the Uzbekistan Folklore Ensemble to Japan for a nationwide tour.

He related that the artists who participated in these performances had described being deeply impressed by the wonderful support that the Min-On staff had provided. He added that in visiting the Min-On Culture Center for the first time he felt as though he were returning home.

On their departure, Mr. Kuziev wrote in beautiful Uzbek script in the guest register: "I pray for Min-On's great success in its sublime mission to elevate human spirituality and culture."



Brazilian Regional Leader Visits Min-On

On January 23, Mayor José do Carmo Garcia of Cambé, Brazil, who is president of the Association of Municipalities in Parana State (AMEPAR), visited the Min-On Culture Center.



Min-On staff members welcomed Mayor Garcia and his wife Maria on their arrival with a rendition of the song "Hana" (Spring Flower, composed by Rentaro Taki). Mr. Garcia said he was delighted to visit the Min-On center for the first time, and to have the opportunity to talk with everyone. "In my capacity as mayor, I conduct dialogue with all kinds of people," the official said, calling dialogue his work and his mission. He added: "I have learned the importance of dialogue from the writings of Min-On founder SGI President Ikeda. I feel that dialogue is the foundation for constructing genuine peace." Mr. Garcia also praised the cultural movement that Min-On is promoting.



China-Japan Friendship Association Vice President Discusses History of China-Japan Friendship

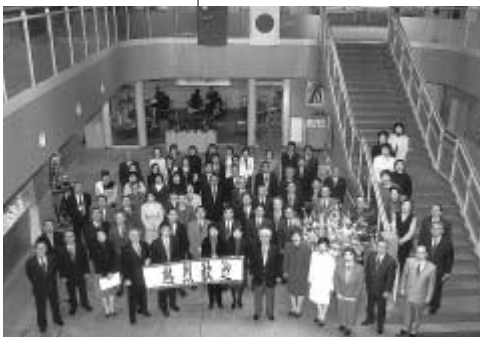
Vice President Huang Shiming of the China-Japan Friendship Association arrived in Japan on February 10 to attend the opening performance by China's National Peking Opera Theatre, which is presently conducting a nationwide tour at Min-On's invitation. Mr. Huang, who for many years served as an interpreter for Premier Zhou Enlai and other Chinese dignitaries, has served as vice president of the association since 1986. In that capacity, he has worked to strengthen friendship between the two countries.



On the afternoon of February 15, Mr. Huang visited the Min-On Culture Center in Tokyo. During the course of his discussion with Min-On President Kobayashi, the Chinese official explained that during his meetings in Okinawa with representatives of the media, and with cultural and educational figures, he had talked at length about the importance of China-Japan friendship, and the pivotal role that SGI President Ikeda played in facilitating the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries 30 years ago.

The official said he had been very impressed by the Peking Opera Theatre's performance in Okinawa, and predicted that the tour would be a great success. He added that he felt there was now heightened awareness in the Okinawa media for Min-On's activities.

The Peking Opera Theatre's tour will conclude on April 29.



Visitors to Min-On

- Honorary Rector Professor Murat Jurinov of International Kazakh-Turkish University, Kazakhstan (December 19)
- A delegation from the Guangzhou City (December 19)
- Mr. Zhou Shengtao, Deputy Director of the city of Turfan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China (December 27)
- Dr. and Mrs. Raffaele Mantegazza, Professor of the University of Milan, Italy (January 7)
- Mr. Liu Zhanwen, Director of the Mei Lanfang Memorial Museum, China (January 10)
- Members of Tango Orquesta El Arranque (January 15)
- Ambassador Jamil Majid of Bangladesh (January 17)
- Members of Wiener Strauss Capelle (January 22)
- Mr. and Mrs. José do Carmo Garcia, President of the Association of Municipalities in Parana State, Brazil (January 23)
- Mr. Saburo Iwanami, Headman of Tokyo's Nerima Ward (January 24)
- Mr. Hiroshi Kawaguchi, Headman of Kosaka, Akita Prefecture (February 2)
- Mayor Hitoshi Iri of Sakado, Saitama Prefecture (February 6)
- Mr. Takao Sasaki, President of the To-o Nippo Press Co., Ltd. (February 6)
- Mayor Koichi Yokota of Watsukanai, Hokkaido (February 12)
- Vice President Huang Shiming of the China-Japan Friendship Association (February 15)
- Chairman Tursunali Kuziev of the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan (February 21)

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