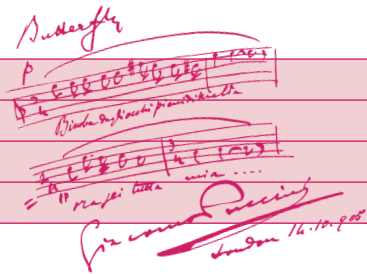


Newsletter

MIN-ON CONCERT ASSOCIATION



China

September–December

The China National Acrobatic Troupe

Visitors to Min-On

Coming Soon

“Legends of the Dragon and the Phoenix”:
True Human Beauty Lies in Challenging One’s Limitations

The Mongolian National Song and Dance Troupe “Sky Melody”

Recent Events

The Brilliant Debut of a Young Conductor!

Special Exhibition: The Exquisite World of the Takarazuka Revue

News in Brief

President of South Korean Cultural Federation Visits the Min-On Culture Center

Head of Macedonian Academy Visits Japan

Mongolia

October–November

Sky Melody



Visitors to Min-On



- Dr. Lin Tsong-Ming, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology (Mar. 3)
- Guilin City delegation (Mar. 5)
- General Manager Li Enjie, the China National Acrobatic Troupe (Mar. 14) — Photo A
- President Lee Soung-Rim, the Federation of Artistic and Cultural Organizations of Korea (Mar. 15)
- Rector Oscar Enrique Belloso Medina, Universidad Rafael Beloso Chacín of Venezuela (Mar. 19)
- Vice Rector Carlos Enrique Peña, Universidad Santa María of Venezuela (Mar. 19)
- Dr. João Ricardo Moderno, President of the Brazilian Academy of Philosophy (Apr. 1)
- Dr. Zhang Kai-Yuan, Central China Normal University (Apr. 4)

- Chancellor Carlos Santiago, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (Apr. 16)
- H.E. Mr. Orlando Hernández, Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba, H.E. Ms. Ana María Estévez, Ambassador of the Uruguay and Ms. Polly Ferman, Uruguayan pianist (Apr. 24) — Photo B
- Mr. Jordan Plevnes, President of Ohrid Academy of Humanism (May 4)
- Dr. Yi Ming, Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences (May 4)
- H.E. Mr. Samir Naouri, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (May 9) — Photo C
- Dr. Efim I. Pivovarov, Rector of the Russian State University for Humanities (May 31)
- Dr. J. Forbes Munro, emeritus professor of the University of Glasgow (May 31) — Photo D

Coming Soon

The China National Acrobatic Troupe to Tour Japan “Legends of the Dragon and the Phoenix”: True Human Beauty Lies in Challenging One’s Limitations

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan. To mark the occasion, Min-On is sponsoring a tour of Japan by a contingent of artists from the China National Acrobatic Troupe. Billed “Legends of the Dragon and the Phoenix,” the production will include performances in 61 cities during the last three months of the year.

The National Acrobatic Troupe was formed in 1950 under the personal direction of Chinese Premiere Zhou En-lai with the purpose of creating an acrobatic troupe representative of China. A gathering of the most outstanding performers from throughout the country, the group has won broad acclaim in international competitions for its skill and artistry; to date it has received more than 40 first-place awards, including the President of the Republic of France Award. It also performs an important role as a cultural emissary by accompanying Chinese dignitaries when traveling abroad.

Today the National Acrobatic Troupe holds undisputed claim to the title of China’s top acrobatic group in terms of the ability of its performers, and the scale and grandeur of its productions. A 51-member contingent of the National Acrobatic Troupe will shortly realize a visit to Japan at Min-On’s invitation.

Pieces in the production will include the “Spinning Plate,” where an artist, exhibiting a butterfly-like beauty, spins five plates with each hand for a total of 10 plates. Performers in “Crystal Cup,” an acrobatic

act involving glasses, exhibit a remarkable sense of balance and perfect teamwork. In “Bicycle Art,” a kaleidoscopic succession of formations are produced by artists on bicycles. The highlight of the event may be the piece “Diabolo,” which involves the use of tops, for which the group won the President of the Republic of France Award in 2005.

Expectations are running high for this production of “Legends of the Dragon and Phoenix,” the pinnacle of Chinese acrobatics, in which the strength of a dragon and the beauty of a phoenix are wonderfully on display.



- 114 performances in 61 cities through Japan are scheduled.
- Please refer to the following HP for more details. <http://www.min-on.or.jp/zatsugi07/>

An Elite Traditional Arts Ensemble from Mongolia to Visit Japan The Mongolian National Song and Dance Troupe “Sky Melody”

During the months of October and November, the Mongolian National Song and Dance Troupe will deliver a series of performances throughout Japan.

The cast will consist of a seven-member group singers and dancers called Sky Melody that is made up



of some of the most gifted artists in the Mongolian National Song and Dance Troupe. Since its formation in 1997, Sky Melody has performed to high acclaim both in Mongolia and abroad. The tour celebrates the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relationship between Japan and Mongolia.

The production will include a performance of the morin khuur, or Mongolian cello, the marvelous Khoomii, and various traditional dances. In their artistry one can glimpse the history and drama of the land of Genghis Khan.

- 12 performances in 12 cities through Japan are scheduled.
- Please refer to the following HP for more details. <http://www.min-on.or.jp/>



A Stage Reserved for Competition Winners The Brilliant Debut of a Young Conductor!



Mr. Kentaro Kawase, the winner of the Tokyo International Music Competition for Conducting, gave debut concerts during March in Tokyo and Hyogo. Mr. Kawase conducted the Kanagawa Philharmonic Orchestra at the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan on March 25, and the Century Orchestra

Osaka at the Hyogo Prefecture Geijutsu Gekijo on March 29.

To date, only 30 young conductors have ascended this vaunted stage, the opportunity to appear on which is granted only to competition winners. And today these highly talented musicians are actively pursuing careers in the classical music world.

This year only one artist was given the honor to raise his baton on this stage. By the unanimous decision of the judges, Mr. Kawase was awarded second place in the competition. (First place was not awarded.) He is a young man of enormous talent with a promising future.

The program for the concerts, chosen by Mr. Kawase, consisted of Mozart's "Posthorn Serenade", Strauss' Horn Concerto no. 1 in E-flat, op. 11, and Sibelius' Symphony no. 2 in D-major, op. 43.

Music critics praised Mr. Kawase's execution of the challenging program. Writing in *Mostly Classic* magazine, one critic commented that his conducting exhibited "refinement and clarity". "The energy emitted from his baton animated the orchestra and produced exhilarating music". (*Ongaku Gendai* magazine)

Min-On will continue these efforts to discover and provide a platform to launch the careers of talented young musicians.



80 Years from the First Review in Japan Special Exhibition: The Exquisite World of the Takarazuka Revue



From April through July, the special exhibition "The Exquisite World of Takarazuka Revue—Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the First Production of 'Mont Paris'" was held at the Min-On Music Museum.

The Takarazuka Revue was formed in 1913 as an all-women choir. It performed

for the first time in 1914, which marked the dawn of a new age of cultural freedom in Japan. In 1919, a music school was founded, and the group, composed of students and graduates, was reorganized and began operation as the Takarazuka Girls Revue. In 1927, it performed its first revue in Japan, titled "Mont Paris". The theme song from the production captured the spirit of the time, becoming one of the most popular songs of the day.

With women playing all of the roles, including those of men, and with the notoriety of being the first

group to introduce overseas musicals to Japan, the Takarazuka Revue from the outset enjoyed immense popularity; and its fame has only grown over the years. It has performed in the United States, Europe and Asia, and to this day continues to command worldwide acclaim.

The exhibition commemorates the 80th anniversary of the Revue's first performance in Japan. It spotlights the activities of the group's founder Ichizo Kobayashi, who is known for his outstanding vision and foresight. The highly popular exhibition ran through July 22.



Artistic Exchange Deepens Friendship

President of South Korean Cultural Federation Visits the Min-On Culture Center



On March 15, President Lee Soung-Rim of the Federation of Artistic and Cultural Organizations of Korea visited the Min-On Culture Center in Tokyo.

The Federation was founded in 1962 as an umbrella organization for various groups of Korean artists—including musicians, actors, photographers, entertainers, artists, architects, dancers and cinematographers. South Korea's largest association of cultural figures and artists, it is presently comprised of 10 associations, with a total membership of 1.2 million. President Lee is herself a leading musician in the genre of traditional Korean music.

Min-On has been promoting cultural exchange between South Korea and Japan since 1984. It has brought to Japan the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts and the Seoul Performing Arts Company, which are two of South Korea's leading artistic ensembles, and has hosted Japan productions of popular Korean musicals and other events.

Commenting on Min-On's wide-ranging activities to promote exchange between the two countries, President Lee remarked: "Artistic exchange deepens friendship. I am determined to further promote cultural exchange between Korea and Japan".

Youthful members of the Min-On staff greeted Ms. Lee in Korean on her arrival, and the entire visit was pervaded with a spirit of friendship. To commemorate the occasion, Min-On presented President Lee with the Min-On Award of Highest Honor.



Toward Intercultural Understanding and Harmony

Head of Macedonian Academy Visits Japan



President Jordan Plevnes of the Ohrid Academy of Humanism of the Republic of Macedonia visited the Min-On Culture Center on May 4.

Mr. Plevnes presented the first "World Award of Humanism" for Min-On's founder, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, in recognition of his contributions to the realization of world peace based on humanism.

Macedonia, which traces its roots to the Kingdom of Macedonia that produced Alexander the Great, is a land of astounding scenic beauty. The city of Ohrid on the shores of Lake Ohrid is the site of one of the oldest human settlements in Europe; the lake, and the nearby historic buildings and natural environs are registered as a World Heritage Site.

The Ohrid Academy of Humanism was founded in 1991 as a think tank with the mission of promoting understanding and harmony between people of different cultures.

In his remarks, President Plevnes expressed gratitude for the heartfelt reception that he received on his arrival at the center, saying that he felt as if he were returning home, and warmly praised Min-On's efforts to promote cultural exchange. Mr. Plevnes and his party viewed the classical piano collection on display in the Min-On Music Museum.

The visit marked a step forward in cultural exchange between Macedonia and Japan.



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