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Bahrain Art Troupe Introduces Extraordinary Arab Cultural Heritage to Japanese Audiences

The Kingdom of Bahrain is the only island nation in the Arab world, consisting of 33 natural islands and a series of man-made isles, collectively known as the “Pearls of the Arabian Gulf.” The Arabic word “Bahrain” means “two seas,” referring to the ancient assumption that there was a sea of natural spring water beneath the salt water sea bed. This spring water sea made life possible for ancient human habitants since prehistoric times, and provided bountiful harvests of the purest natural pearls that became the national pride of Bahrain.

The island of Bahrain was home to the ancient Dilmun Civilization around 5,000 years ago. Favored by its privileged location at a crossroads of ancient trade routes in the heart of the Arabian Gulf, the Dilmun Civilization was able to develop as a trade center for numerous routes, namely between the Mesopotamian and Indus Valley Civilizations. Due to the deep-rooted history of the island throughout the ages, Bahrain has always been a home for ethnically diverse inhabitants that contributed to the development of refined cultural values, rich musical heritage and artistic tradition.

This autumn, after a series of preparatory meetings beginning in 2014 with H.E. Dr. Khalil bin Ibrahim Hassan—the first and

former Bahraini Ambassador to Japan—and kind assistance from the Bahraini Embassy in Tokyo and the Japanese Embassy in Bahrain, the Min-On Concert Association realized a tour of the Bahrain Art Troupe in Japan. The Troupe chiefly consists of the members of the Mohammed Bin Faris Band, specially organized by the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities for this Japan tour. They were officially dispatched



A 10-year old member of the Art Troupe joyfully performs a Bahraini folk dance

for the purpose of cultural exchange in celebration of the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Japan. Their first ever extended nationwide tour was held from October 15 through November 9, introducing the unique and rich musical tapestry of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf region at venues in fifteen cities

across Japan.

The ensemble, featuring traditional ethnic instruments such as the oud, kanun, nay and various styles of hand-drums, as well as modern Western instruments such as violin and cello, performed a wide range of Arab folk music and dance, from festive melodies to working songs, lyrical numbers and farewell ballads. The repertoire included *Fidjeri*, which is unique vocal music traditionally sung by male-only pearl divers of Bahrain. *Fidjeri* involves singing and dancing through polyrhythms, including clapping, small hand-drums and earthen water jars played with both hands, all of which were available aboard ships during Bahraini pearling voyages.

More than a dozen styles of traditional folk song and dance, as well as modern original instrumentals and Arabian popular songs, were performed in two parts onstage during the Bahrain Art Troupe’s Japan tour. In their finale, a popular Japanese song exquisitely arranged in a unique Arabian style was also presented. The majority of Japanese audiences, who had never experienced Arabian music before, were delighted and inspired by their first-time encounter with an exotic display of the extraordinary cultural heritage of Bahrain and the Arab World.

H.E. Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al-Khalifa Sends a Heartfelt Message from the Kingdom of Bahrain to the People of Japan



H.E. Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al-Khalifa
President, Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities

We are always driven in creating ways to reach one another and build bridges between us. This may take time, meanwhile more immediate connections may be established through culture, both in its tangible and intangible elements. Culture

in all its forms is like magic capturing everyone without permission.

Culture is also a source of pride. It is the means by which we define and present ourselves to others without the need to explain. We cherish every time a different audience experiences who we are, the astonishment in their eyes and the joy of encountering beautiful details for the first time. A pulsating painting, a traditional dance, or tunes that carry a homeland's identity. Yes, it is the music! A language that fascinates everyone and recounts stories of the land and those who dwell it.

Bahrain enjoys a rich musical history with artists and musicians who have contributed to its development throughout time. "Fan al Sut" is one of Bahrain's most famous musical traditions. The environment of the island and the

varying trades practiced by its inhabitants contributed to shaping the features of its arts, namely its music, characterized by spontaneity, naturalness and simplicity.

How beautiful it is to transmit and showcase a part of our culture to Japanese society and to learn about our host country's rich traditions and deep cultural values. Especially as our two nations share a common characteristic of pride in their civilization and national heritage, because we believe that the true wealth of any nation is its culture and human heritage.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Min-On Concert Association and the Japanese Embassy in the Kingdom of Bahrain for their gracious invitation in providing Bahraini artists a platform to share our country's culture with the people of Japan.

Commemorative Reception Celebrates Bahrain–Japan Partnership

On the evening of October 27, at the midway point of their Japan tour, the Bahrain Art Troupe took to the stage at Nakano Sun Plaza Hall for their Tokyo premiere. The capacity audience included H.E. Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa, Director of Museums & Antiquities Directorate, a member of the royal family who led the delegation of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities to Japan. Also, H.E. Dr. Khalil bin Ibrahim Hassan, who initiated

the collaboration with the Min-On Concert Association as Bahraini Ambassador to Japan three years ago to realize this event, was in attendance alongside ambassadors, diplomats and many distinguished guests from 15 different countries.

Immediately after the performance, a commemorative reception was held in the banquet hall of the same venue, attended by dignitaries and distinguished guests alongside the members of the Bahrain Art Troupe.

After H.E. Dr. Khalil Hassan expressed thanks for the event coming to fruition and addressed the significance of the delegation dispatched by the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, Director H.E. Shaikh Khalifa gave a speech in commemoration of this magnificent cultural exchange.

His Excellency praised the art and culture-related cooperation and partnership between the Kingdom



Representing the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, H.E. Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa delivers a speech

of Bahrain and Japan in recent years, remarking, "I am glad for positive feedback from the organizers and the Japanese audience regarding tonight's performance. I hope that this will encourage many more Bahraini cultural events in Japan in the future. Lastly, my wish is that the performance you saw today will encourage you to visit Bahrain and experience our rich cultural heritage."



H.E. Dr. Khalil Hassan expresses thanks for the partnership

Nicaraguan Diva Katia Cardenal Moves Japanese Audiences' Hearts



Katia Cardenal is Nicaragua's most popular singer-songwriter and an important figure in the new generation of Latin American folk music. Born in Managua, Nicaragua in 1963, Katia became a fan of popular music at an early age and began singing with a local chorus group. As a teenager, Katia began to perform her original melodic poetry in public together with her brother, Salvador Cardenal. They called themselves Duo Guardabarranco, after the name of Nicaragua's national bird, the turquoise-browed motmot, or *guardabarranco*. The duo became popular quickly, not only in

Nicaragua, but also internationally as one of the leading proponents of *nueva trova*, the "new song movement." Their original lyrics proclaimed a message of love, peace and environmental protection.

After marrying a Norwegian man, Katia moved to Norway with him and strengthened her solo career in Europe, releasing nine solo albums while separated from her brother Salvador. She became one of the country's most well-known and popular foreign artists, performing more than 100 successful concerts in Norway and touring over 30 countries worldwide. Currently, she resides back in Managua, Nicaragua and continues international music activities while strongly supporting the global peace and environmental movement.

With support from the embassy of the Republic of Nicaragua in Tokyo, Min-On invited Nicaraguan diva Katia Cardenal, accompanied by her daughter Nina Cardenal on guitar and popular Nicaraguan rock band, La Cuneta Son Machín, for their first ever Japan tour across 21 cities this autumn. Concluding their remarkable month-long tour on October 26, their final concert was held at Nakano Sun Plaza Hall, Min-On's regular venue in Tokyo, drawing a full house of more than 2,000 people, including ambassadors, diplomats and distinguished guests from 18 countries. The passionate performance of their full repertoire, including Katia's classics such as "Mariposa De Alas Rotas," "A Donde Van" and "Casa Abierta," as well as popular numbers from La Cuneta Son Machín, enthralled the audience. The Latin rhythms captivated them, and Katia touched their hearts through the powerful message of love and peace she continues to triumph.

Colombian Periferia Dance Company Speaks the Language of Dance

As a part of Min-On's musical outreach programs open to the general public that contribute to the flourishing of music and art, the Min-On Music Museum occasionally hosts a series of music-related cultural lectures alongside admission-free concerts. A variety of international artists, musicians and cultural performers are invited to speak on themes pertaining to their specialized genres of art or music, and to give a live performance.

After the great success of the cultural lecture and concert delivered by acclaimed Colombian percussionist Tupac Mantilla last winter, H.E. Gabriel Duque, Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia to Japan, cordially requested Min-On to again co-sponsor and organize a cultural lecture alongside a performance

by the extraordinary Colombian Periferia Dance Company. With the support of the Colombian Embassy in Japan, the event was held at the Akasaka Civic Center for a capacity audience chosen through RSVP postcard lottery, as well as ambassadors and diplomats invited from the embassies of 13 different countries in Tokyo.



Periferia Dance Company was founded in 2010 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia by the artistic director and choreographer Lobadys Pérez. He delivered a cultural lecture on the theme of dancing as a universal language and creating a complex and innovative body vocabulary. He has developed a system for dance as a social and pedagogical tool, and during the past two years, Periferia has also developed an educational project officially supported by the Colombian Ministry of Culture that gives young dancers a chance to train and strengthen their creative muscle and sense of artistic interpretation. Periferia Dance Company's performance of creative on-stage dialogue served as an eloquent testimony to the lively Colombian spirit through the artistically rich language of dance.

Min-On Global Music Network Deepens International Friendships



“Political and economic relations are ruled by calculations of power or gain, making them unstable and ephemeral, whereas exchange in the realm of culture is more enduring. Respect for other cultures leads to respect for the people of those cultures. The friendship that grows from such sentiment becomes an indestructible foundation for lasting peace,” Min-On founder Daisaku Ikeda remarked. Based on this idea of a significant role in promoting international cultural exchange, the Min-On Concert Association has promoted overseas dispatches of Japanese artists while inviting a remarkable number of leading musicians and artists to Japan from around the world for more than 50 years.

Min-On Global Music Network is an overseas dispatch program designed for cultural exchange programs featuring talented

young musicians and artists from Japan and other countries. This specific program was launched in 2014 through a dispatch of young Japanese artists to Seoul, Korea for an exchange with young Korean artists, and was successfully followed by dispatches to Moscow in 2015 and Singapore in 2016.

This year, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Malaysia, Min-On dispatched a group of nine talented young Japanese musicians and artists to Malaysia as the fourth installment of the Min-On Global Music Network. Among them were a pianist, a cellist and violinists for a classical music performance, as well as a *shakuhachi* flutist, a Tsugaru *shamisen* player, a *taiko* drummer, a Nichibu dancer and *koto* players for a traditional Japanese performance. From Malaysia, a group

of eight talented young musicians and dancers, including players of various ethnic instruments, displayed the traditional Malaysian performing art known as *Malay gamelan*.

Under the theme of “Legacy,” their joint performance was held in Kuala Lumpur at three different venues for three days in October: the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on the 17th, the Malaysia Tourism Centre on the 18th and the National Academy of Arts, Culture & Heritage on the 19th. Each performance was attended by a number of distinguished guests, university students and a public audience from the local community. In the spirit of perpetuating the esteemed cultural heritage of both countries, the Min-On Global Music Network provided a significant opportunity to deepen the bond of friendship and respect between the youth of Malaysia and Japan.

Tottori Prefecture Students Enjoy Superb Instrumental Performance

The Min-On School Concert Program has a long history of cultivating schoolchildren’s emotional development through music appreciation in Japan and other countries for over 40 years. Since its inaugural concert held at the Shibetsu Middle School in a remote area of the northern prefecture of Hokkaido in 1973, a total of over 1.3 million students from more than 4,300 schools across Japan, including schools on isolated islands and in heavily mountainous regions, have enjoyed live performances by professional artists at local venues. Especially since the beginning of the 21st century, Min-On began holding special school concerts for those in areas affected by natural disasters, to provide spiritual support and encouragement through the power of music.

October 21, 2017 marked exactly

one year since a major earthquake affected Kurayoshi city and the surrounding area in Tottori prefecture. On that occasion, Min-On sponsored a special school concert by internationally acclaimed Japanese traditional instrumentalists AUN J-Classic Orchestra and HIDE for all Kurayoshi elementary and middle school students at the Community Plaza of Kurayoshi City Park Square. During the concert, a variety of traditional Japanese instruments were introduced, and some students had the opportunity to play Japanese drums during an impromptu lesson by the professional artists. The energetic and superb performance by the Japanese instrumental experts gave hope to the youth of Kurayoshi city, and throughout the show, the huge crowd of students spontaneously broke into enthusiastic applause.



Peacebuilding through the Indelible Power of Music

Dialogue Between **Kazuto Ito**, President of the Min-On Concert Association and **Olivier Urbain**, Director of the Min-On Music Research Institute



The basis of genuine world peace will be formed by the fostering of a mutual understanding through a grass-roots exchange that transcends distinctions of race, nation and ideology.



Olivier Urbain

Director of the Min-On Research Institute

Kazuto Ito

President of the Min-On Concert Association

President Ito: First and foremost, as newly appointed president in 2017, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the contributors and sustaining members of the Min-On Concert Association for their tireless support over all these years.

Director Urbain: I was also appointed as the director of the Min-On Music Research Institute (MOMRI) this year and I sincerely appreciate the honor. I was born and raised in Belgium and pursued my academic career in America and the United Kingdom. I have been conducting research in the fields of music and peace studies for many years. Since the founding of MOMRI in 2014, together with three other research fellows, I've been devoted to pursuing a multidisciplinary investigation of the application of music in peacebuilding activities.

Ito: More than a half century ago in Japan, classical music concerts and theatrical performances were a high

society luxury beyond the reach of ordinary people. Under these circumstances, Min-On was born in 1963 to realize the Founder's vision of establishing a concert association unencumbered by excessive formality and financial burden. Since then, for 54 years to date, we have shared our founding principle with the volunteer members of the Min-On Promotion Committee and the thousands of Min-On Concert Association sustaining members: "The basis of genuine

world peace will be formed by the fostering of a mutual understanding through a grass-roots exchange that transcends distinctions of race, nation and ideology. To this end, exchanges in art and culture will be indispensable." Because of their tireless efforts and a profound understanding of our basic principle to promote a wide variety of significant undertakings, Min-On became the unprecedented global music association that it is today. As a staff member of the Min-On Concert Association for the last 35 years, I have witnessed the power of music to foster friendship and mutual respect through cultural exchange activities.

Urbain: My first involvement in Min-On's undertakings was a symposium sponsored by the Min-On Music Museum in 2013 titled "The Power of Music," which had the theme of "Music and Peace" and included a panel discussion with Dr. Agnes Chan from Hong Kong, a pop singer and popular TV personality in Japan.



MOMRI Annual Report Conference from October 19 - 22, 2017

Then, later in 2014 the Min-On Music Research Institute was established, and I joined as a Senior Research Fellow while working as director of the Toda Peace Institute. Since my academic career was focused on the field of peace studies, I was so excited to join the research institute and consider on “the application of music in peacebuilding” from various angles. Currently I am exploring the implications of music psychology in peacebuilding activities, concentrating on the direct connection between music and emotion.

Ito: As I mentioned, through thousands of domestic and international concert activities, we have experienced and gained confidence in the power of music to inspire, encourage and heal the hearts of people worldwide—regardless of race or nationality. I can share many testimonials that prove these positive effects stemming from musical activities. I think it is very important to continue related research work to give further academic substantiation to the power of music in our lives.

Urbain: Indeed. Recent studies have proved the positive effects of music and detailed the development of methods, including music therapy, that improve people’s health



Two-millionth visitor welcomed at the Min-On Music Museum

and mentality. But at the same time, we know that music can also have adverse effects and influence people, leading them in a negative direction. Thus, it is also important to research methods to avoid any negative use of music. Of course, we mainly contribute to intellectual foundations to enhance the effective application of music in supporting peacebuilding activities.

Ito: I will never forget a very personal and moving experience I had in 1990—witnessing the first meeting between Min-On Founder Daisaku Ikeda and the late South African president Nelson Mandela. Three years later, I visited South Africa as a Min-On staff member to prepare a cultural

exchange program with South Africa. During the trip, I also had the opportunity to meet Mr. Mandela. I asked him the question, “How could you endure the severe struggles of your 28 years of imprisonment?” He answered, “Because I continuously heard the strong singing voices calling out to me, ‘Rohlahla Mandela!! Freedom is in your hand’ from the other side of the wall, I could retain the courage to endure.” I was deeply inspired by his answer and felt supremely confident in the indelible power of music.

Urbain: It is my hope that fifty years down the road in our research, a great number of universities and institutions will be engaged in a variety of academic programs on the theme of “music and peacebuilding,” and the Min-On Music Research Institute will have grown as a global center of intellectual resources for musicians and artists around the world, supporting their peacebuilding activities.

Ito: I also hope that the Min-On Culture Center and Music Museum will be visited by more people from around the world, and further grow as a center of global exchange for musical culture and international friendship.

From the Editor

- » This autumn, for the first time Min-On introduced both the musical culture of the Kingdom of Bahrain, delivered by the Bahrain Art Troupe, and of the Republic of Nicaragua, through a performance by Katia Cardenal and La Cuneta Son Machín onstage, fascinating thousands of audiences across Japan. Both countries’ introduction to Japan marked a new milestone in Min-On’s remarkable history of successfully initiating cultural exchanges with 107 countries and regions worldwide to date. It is most certainly an unparalleled accomplishment in the global exchange of musical culture and the building of benevolent relationships.
- » This issue of Harmony reports the successes of the Min-On Global Music Network dispatch to Malaysia and the Special School Concert held in Tottori prefecture. Both events are a part of Min-On’s Public Outreach programs. Min-On has offered a variety of multifaceted musical and cultural activities as outreach programs involving the general public, carried out in the spirit of its underlying goal to develop new artistic talent, contribute to the emotional,

educational and developmental needs of young people, and share the joy of music and art with a wide public audience in Japan and around the world. The Min-On Music Museum and Music Library are inconspicuous but significant parts of these Public Outreach undertakings. The admission-free Music Museum welcomed its two-millionth visitor this autumn. In commemoration, the staff members of the Min-On Culture Center gave a warm round of applause and a bouquet of flowers to the visitor. Alongside the Music Museum, we cannot forget the significant contributions of the Min-On Music Library, which contains more than 45,000 music scores and over 33,000 music reference materials, as well as more than 120,000 audio recordings available to the general public. Especially high-priced music scores are available for checkout by registered members of the library. This opportunity has greatly helped school bands and amateur musicians to increase their musical repertoire and performance chops. Min-On has been proud to fulfill the significant goals of these Public Outreach programs. Thank you!

From the Min-On Music Museum Collection

Aerophones

There are a number of ways to classify musical instruments. In the West, they are divided into three categories of string, wind and percussion instruments. The classification used in the Folk Instrument Exhibition Room at the Min-On Music Museum follows the system that is now in general use, in which instruments are classified according to the source of their vibration. It also uses shape and other factors to produce more specialized groupings. This results in four categories: chordophones, aerophones, membranophones and idiophones.

Aerophones are instruments that use air as the source of vibration to produce sound. The exhibition room displays the rich wisdom and creativity of each instrument from countries representing a diverse array of ethnic, linguistic and religious traditions.



The Min-On Concert Association Celebrates the People's Music

The Min-On Concert Association was founded in 1963 by Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Soka Gakkai International, as a nonprofit, independent nondenominational organization to promote the global exchange of musical culture. Min-On aims to develop mutual understanding and respect among people of different races and nationalities. In 1965 it became an incorporated foundation, which is now supported by more than one million sustaining members nationwide. Min-On literally means "people's music," and its aim is to share the joy of music and to unite people through shared emotion, thus creating an ever-expanding circle of friendship among people around the world.

Today, Min-On sponsors some 800 performances each year, attracting a total audience of more than 1.2 million, and making available diverse music of high quality—from classical to modern, from popular to traditional—to as wide a range of music lovers as possible. Min-On also sponsors various musical programs, including free concerts in schools and the Tokyo International Music Competition to encourage the emotional development of young people and foster the growth of new talent.

Since its foundation, Min-On has hosted more than 78,000 cultural performances and concerts, with a total audience of more than 110 million. Through these various musical activities, Min-On has successfully initiated cultural exchanges with 107 countries and regions around the world.

About The Min-On Music Museum and Music Library

The Min-On Culture Center is home to the Min-On Music Museum and Music Library. The collection includes more than 120,000 vinyl records, CDs and DVDs, as well as 45,000 musical scores and 33,000 reference books and other materials, all of which are freely available. On display in the museum are

a number of antique harpsichords and classical pianos, various music boxes and gramophones, and a variety of ethnic instruments collected from around the world. The museum also hosts various special exhibitions and cultural activities on different musical themes. Entrance to the museum is free of charge.

Come and Visit Us!

Address: Min-On Culture Center
8 Shinano-machi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 160-8588
Tel: 03 5362 3400 **Fax:** 03 5362 3401

Exhibit and Shop

Open: 11:00-16:00 (Tuesday-Saturday)
10:00-17:00 (Sunday & public holidays)

Closed: Every Monday (If Monday is a public holiday, next day is closed)

Music Library

Open: 11:00-18:30 (Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday)
(Closed on public holidays)

Closed: August 1-15, Year-end / New Year

