
PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Midori Nishizaki Dance Group presents “YAObIKUNI”
Making its United States premiere performance in San Francisco**

WHAT: Midori Nishizaki Dance Group from Japan presents US premiere “Yaobikuni”
WHEN: Tuesday – September 21, 2004 at 8:00 p.m.
WHERE: Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, 3301 Lyon St., San Francisco, CA 94123
Ticket: \$35.00 - Purchase ticket at City Box Office at 415-392-4400 or www.CityBoxOffice.com
or in person 180 Redwood St., San Francisco, CA 94102-3280

With this year as the 150th anniversary for Japan and the United States cultural exchange – the Japan Cultural Bureau is sponsoring the production of Midori Nishizaki Dance Group’s “Yaobikuni” to the United States as part of their 2004 international cultural programs. This 45-member dance company has performed world-wide to great applause. They make their US premiere in San Francisco at the Historic Palace of Fine Arts Theatre on Tuesday, September 21st.

Midori Nishizaki II has worked on open air performances since began performing “Yaobikuni”, which won the Cultural Bureau Art Festival Award in 1989. Her current piece “Amida Nyorai”, also won this award in 2002. Nishizaki gained international acclaim for her performance in Spain and France. She brings a sense of drama to the stage creating strong themed dances told through a contemporary performance interwoven with traditional Japanese dance.

The traditional art of Japanese dance is appreciated and understood by people with special interests in this form of dance – however, with Nishizaki’s production, a dramatic story is told in dance and when available, in the natural setting of open-air – she has introduced this new form of Japanese dance and culture to the general public.

YAObIKUNI is the story of Princess Yao who eats the meat of a mermaid in order to obtain eternal youth and beauty much to the dismay of the priests who run from Princess Yao as the devils enter her life. Thus begins the story of Princess Yao’s life with priests, nuns, devils, and fairies shaping the course of her eternal existence.

Midori Nishizaki II, born in Kanuda, Tokyo, learned traditional Japanese dance at the age of 6 and entered the Nishizaki Dance Group headed by Nishizaki I. Nishizaki II organized the Nishizaki Midori Dance Group and School to popularize this new Japanese dance art. She worked on the television program Kinkan Folk Songs Battle for 35 years and has won the Artistic Award, Dance Critics Awards and Art Festival Award for her dance performances. Nishizaki says “Dance is for Everybody” and has transformed traditional Japanese Dance into an art form that can be understood and appreciated by all. This event is supported by Consulate General of Japan’s offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco and the Japan America Society. After its performance in San Francisco it continues on to Royce Hall at UCLA in Los Angeles.

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