

National Bunraku Theatre

Saturday, July 4, 2026

Traditional Japanese Music performance

Bunraku Sujōruri

Gidayū-bushi, which is a type of Jōruri – narrative music to tell a story to a tune – is unique in that it has both musical and dramatical elements. It was developed as Ningyō Jōruri puppet theater, now called Bunraku, by linking with puppet manipulation. This program offers the opportunity to appreciate the charms of narrative music through Gidayū-bushi performed by the *tayū* (narrator), accompanied by *shamisen* players bringing the story scenes to life with the sounds of their *shamisen*.

Keisei Koi Bikyaku (The Money Courier of Love)

- Ninokuchimura (Ninokuchi Village)

Chūbei, the son of a wealthy farmer, was adopted by the Kameya family, which ran a courier agency in Osaka. He became intimately involved with a courtesan named Umegawa and embezzled 300 ryō of money that belonged to someone else. Having committed a grave crime, Chūbei is on the run and together with Umegawa, arrives in his hometown of Ninokuchi Village in Yamato Province (now Kashihara City, Nara Prefecture) to have a final meeting with his biological father, Magoemon. Set in a snow-covered rural village, the story poignantly and beautifully depicts the bond between a parent and child.

Kanadehon Chūshingura (The Treasury of Forty-Seven Loyal Retainers)

- Hayano Kanpei Harakiri (Hayano Kanpei's Suicide)

Hayano Kanpei regretted not being present for the grave incident involving his lord, Enya Hangan. While Kanpei was trying to make a fresh start by working as a hunter in the hometown of his wife Okaru, one night he jumped to the hasty conclusion that he had accidentally shot and killed his father-in-law, Yoichibei. Accused by his mother-in-law and by fellow samurai, Kanpei is finally driven to take his own life. This is a scene brimming with tension that highlights the cruel fate of a young man who, while hoping to restore his honor as a samurai by avenging his late lord, is instead led to a tragic end.

Kamiko Jitate Ryōmen Kagami (The Two Women of Virtue)

- Daimonjiya (The Daimonjiya Shop)

Yorozuya Sukeroku eloped with the courtesan Agemaki, ending up a fugitive who had evaded a checkpoint. To repay a former benefactor by saving Sukeroku, Daimonjiya Eizaburō advises his younger sister Omatsu, who is Sukeroku's wife, to sell herself into servitude. Omatsu agrees to sacrifice herself for her husband. The brother and sister weep along with their mother, Myōsan. Just then, Yorozuya Sukemon, who had disowned his son Sukeroku, arrives at Daimonjiya's place. The anguish of a merchant bound by duty is imbued with profound emotion. The second half takes a comical turn as Gonpachi, the manager at Daimonjiya, and his crew hatch a devious scheme.

Learn more about BUNRAKU

Visit → <https://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/bunraku/en/>

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—Guidance for Japanese Puppet Theatre Appreciation—

*This website is provided in Japanese / English / Simplified Chinese /

Traditional Chinese / Korean / German / French / Spanish.

