

Bunraku Summer Festival

Date: Saturday, July 18 – Sunday, August 9, 2026 *No performance on Jul. 23 & 31

Time: 18:00-20:25 *End time is estimate and could vary. Venue: National Bunraku Theatre

Kotobuki Hashiradate Manzai (The Manzai Ceremonial Dance)

Hashiradate is a ceremony to celebrate the erection of the first pillar during the construction of a new house. This Bunraku piece features Tayū and Saizō performing a Hashiradate ceremonial dance at the entrance of a house while holding a small hand drum and folding fan in their hands, dancing energetically in prayer for the prosperity of each household.

Machi no Hi, based on Charlie Chaplin's Film, "City Lights"

In Osaka at the end of the Edo period, the vagabond Yojirō encounters Ohana, a beautiful, blind flower girl. Ohana assumes that Yojirō is a kind, rich man. On one occasion, Yojirō had saved the life of Kan'emon, the master of the large merchant house Daimonjiya stopping him from killing himself. Nevertheless, the next morning he found himself kicked out of the residence by Kan'emon, who forgot Yojirō because he couldn't remember what had happened while he was drunk.

Yojirō finds out about the predicament of Ohana and her mother. He promises Ohana that he will come up with money for her eye treatment and to help ease their financial hardship. He then enters a sumo match for the prize money, only to lose. Drunken Kan'emon, who happened to see this, takes Yojirō back to his residence and hands him a fortune after hearing about Ohana. However, Yojirō gets into trouble with Tōhachi, Daimonjiya's clerk who has his eye on the money. In addition, Kan'emon loses his memory again. Yojirō runs off with the money, and after handing the money over to Ohana is arrested and locked up.

Fast forward to the Meiji period — Ohana is cured of the eye disease and her flower shop is also doing well. One day, Yojirō, who served his term in prison, happens to see Ohana and he stands motionless. Meanwhile, Ohana does not recognize Yojirō — the person she has long been waiting for. Trying to give him flowers, Ohana takes Yojirō's hands, when she notices through the touch of his hands that he is the one she has been indebted to. At last, they get to connect their hearts to each other.

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