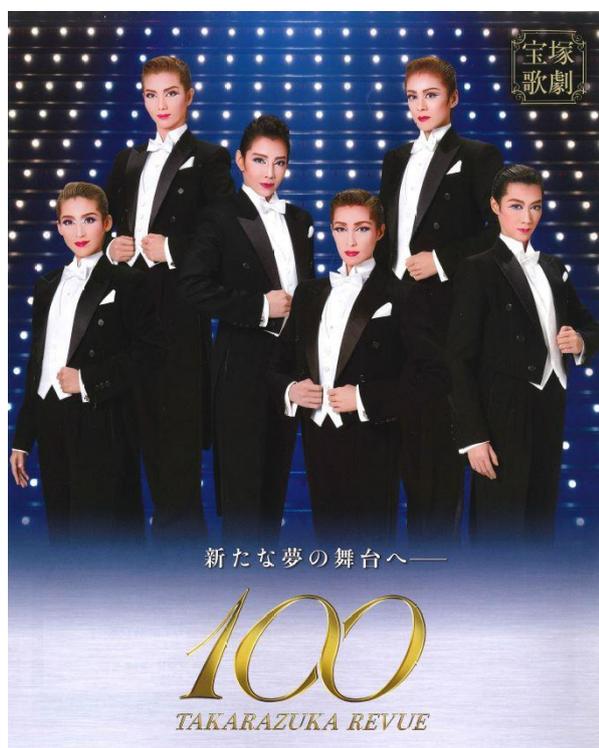


MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release – 29 July 2014



JAPANFOUNDATION



The Japan Foundation, Sydney presents

Takarazuka Revue

@ *Noh to Now* lecture series,
Art Gallery NSW

The Japan Foundation, Sydney proudly presents a talk on Takarazuka Revue by academic **Dr Leonie Stickland**. Titled '**The Allure of Gender-bending Musical Theatre**', it will be held at the Art Gallery NSW on August 27 from 6pm.

Takarazuka Revue is an all-female musical theatre company that celebrated its 100th anniversary this year. Highly prolific, Takarazuka has five different troupes that perform new works and classics, such as *Phantom of the Opera* and *Gone with the Wind*. While Takarazuka is far less known internationally than traditional theatre genres such as Noh and Kabuki, it consistently [attracts more patrons than any other form of theatre](#) in Japan.

This is the final talk in a five-part lecture series titled ***Noh to Now: Traditions and Counter-traditions in Japanese Performance***, programmed and presented by The Japan Foundation, Sydney in conjunction with the **Art Gallery NSW's** *Theatre of dreams, theatre of play: nō and kyōgen in Japan* exhibition.

Says **Leonie Stickland**, "Takarazuka Revue brings together gorgeous costumes, dynamic staging and [multi-layered gender dynamics](#) to produce spectacular popular entertainment. Its lavishly staged, gender-bending productions rival those of Kabuki – and indeed, may even be similar to how Kabuki was in its earliest days when it also was performed by all-female casts. Dashing heroes, swooning heroines, and lashings of gender fluidity are all calculated to transport the audience to a

dream-world, set perhaps in ancient Japan, an imagined romantic Paris or a Prohibition-era New York, and inhabited by characters more handsome or beautiful than in real life. If this sounds intriguing, then Takarazuka is most definitely for you."

Says Japan Foundation, Sydney director **Nao Endo**, "As shown by the introduction of a [Japanese Traditional and Contemporary Theatre elective](#) in this year's **HSC curriculum**, there is increasing recognition of the value of Japanese performing arts traditions in the Australian community. We are excited to work with the Art Gallery NSW to offer this timely series, which blends authoritative voices and perspectives from both Australia and Japan."



Program (remaining dates)

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| Aug 6 | Noh, and the Aesthetics of Restraint
Professor Naohiko Umewaka (Noh Master),
Shizuoka University of Arts and Culture | |
| Aug 13 | Song, Dance, Skill: Introduction to Kabuki
Dr. Shun Ikeda, Australian National University | |
| Aug 20 | Presence & Composition: Bunraku Puppet Theatre and Virtual Diva Hatsune Miku
Dr Yuji Sone, Macquarie University | |
| Aug 27 | The Allure of Gender-Bending Musical Theatre
Dr. Leonie Stickland, Murdoch University | |

Dates: August 6, 13, 20 & 27
Time: 6:00 – 7:00pm (Doors open 5.45pm)
Venue: Centenary Auditorium
Art Gallery NSW
Art Gallery Rd, The Domain
Sydney
Admission: Free. No bookings required.
Enquiries: reception@jpf.org.au / 02 8239 0055 (The Japan Foundation, Sydney)
Website: www.jpf.org.au

YouTube Playlists available



Search 'Noh to Now' on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) to sample the genres in this program.

ABOUT TAKARAZUKA REVUE:



[Takarazuka Revue](#) was established a century ago by railway developer and entrepreneur Ichizo Kobayashi, for whom the all-female theatre company was one of a number of attractions designed to enliven railway precincts and motivate people to ride trains. In addition to being a performing company, Takarazuka also has its own live-in academy where the actors train and are schooled in the ways of the company. Its [spectacular productions](#) have attracted many dedicated fans over the years, giving rise

to a distinctive and ardent fan culture.

ABOUT LEONIE STICKLAND:



Dr. Leonie Stickland began learning Japanese after seeing the Takarazuka Revue in Japan in 1970, with the secret aim of joining the company. Her dream was realised in 1989 when she became an in-house translator and voice actor for Takarazuka, producing English-language audio dramatizations of its productions. Dr. Stickland now lectures in Japanese at Murdoch University, and is the author of *Gender Gymnastics: Performing and Consuming Japan's Takarazuka Revue*.

ABOUT THE 'NOH TO NOW' LECTURE SERIES:

[Noh to Now: Traditions and Counter-traditions in Japanese Performance](#) is a five-part lecture series featuring local and international experts introducing different genres of Japanese performance. Spanning the centuries from the emergence of **Noh theatre** in the middle ages to the present day, the series explores both canonised and marginal artforms and artists, including Ankoku **Butoh** ('Dance of Darkness'), **Kabuki**, virtual songstress **Hatsune Miku** ([support act for Lady Gaga's recent US tour](#)), and all-female musical theatre troupe **Takarazuka Revue**.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION AT ART GALLERY NSW:

The Art Gallery NSW's [Theatre of dreams, theatre of play: nō and kyōgen in Japan](#) exhibition was organised in cooperation with the Agency for Cultural Affairs in Japan. It features a total of 165 works related to Noh theatre—many from the prestigious National Noh Theatre in Japan—including exquisitely carved masks, richly embroidered Noh robes, and paintings depicting this ancient performing arts tradition. The exhibition is now open and runs until September 14 (closed for conservation purposes July 28-30).

ABOUT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, SYDNEY:

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is the Australian arm of the Japan Foundation, which was established by the Japanese government to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. It runs a diverse range of programs and events, including exhibitions, talk events, grant programs and Japanese language courses for all levels from beginner to advanced. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with a global network of 22 offices in 21 countries. The Australian office was founded in 1977.



@japanfoundationsydney



@jpf Sydney

For more information please see www.jpf.org.au or contact:

Elicia O'Reilly (02) 8239 0055 / elicia_oreilly@jpf.org.au or

Jessica Chow (02) 8239 0055 / jessica_chow@jpf.org.au

Presented by



In cooperation with

