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THEATRE IN JAPAN

HISTORY

Classical Japanese theater includes *Bugaku* (court dance and music), *Noh* and *kyogen* (a type of comic drama), *bunraku* (puppet theater), and *kabuki*, *shingeki* (literally new theater) and musicals. The four most well-known types of Japanese theater are all still in practice today.

Theatre in Japan, began in the 14th century



NOH Theatre

The movement is slow, and the language is poetic.
NOH is performed on a square stage with a roof, that is supported at its four corners by pillars.
Noh and **Kyogen** are the oldest forms of Japanese theater



NOH is performed by males.
Costume are rich and heavy.

Today you can see this type of performances in modern theatre with In-built NOH stage.

Shite - the main role/protagonist



Waki- Supporting actor
Jiutai- The chorus
Hayashi- Musicians
Koken- Stage attendants (assist the performers)



THE "SHITE" AND "HAYASHI"

•Hayashi - the musicians, playing the flute, the hip-drum, the shoulder-drum, and the stick-drum

KABUKI THEATRE

Kabuki is a classical Japanese dance-drama.

Traditional in Japan, form of theatre with roots tracing back to the EDO period. Known for their eye-catching make-up, wigs, and old-fashioned form of Japan. May be difficult for some Japanese people to fully understand so some theatres provide headsets for rent, that narrates and explains the performances.



Most known for its iconic red and white makeup and its elaborate costumes

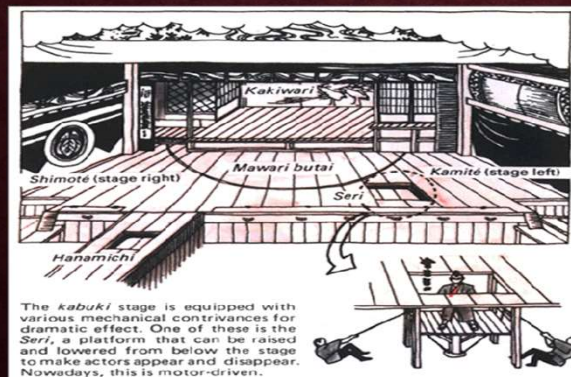


Known as *kesho*, kabuki makeup is based on a character's traits.

Dynamic stage sets such as revolving platforms and trapdoors are used.

Footbridge is another kind of stage used. It leads through the audience, allowing for a dramatic entrance or exit.

The colors of the costumes were also very important, since the colors expressed the character's primary emotions.



Bunraku Theatre

Bunraku is a form of Japanese puppet theater that was founded in the beginning of the 17th century. Bunraku puppets are three-dimensional.

Ningyotsukai--the puppeteers
Tayu--the chanters
Shamisen--the musicians



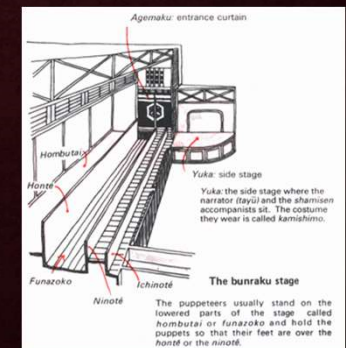
Principal Operator, and two assistants.
Strings are not used.
Life like actions and facial expressions. Its Narrated by a single person and speaks all the voices of the puppets.

Kabuki and Bunraku often share the same plays and stories. Tragic love stories, heroic legends and tales based on historical events.

Today you can see this type of performances, in modern theaters with western style seats.

Many bunraku **plays** are historical and deal with the common Japanese theme of *giri* and *ninjo* - the conflict between social obligations and human emotions

The audience watches the action from the front of a stage that has three partitions



RESOURCES:

- <https://www.theaterseatstore.com/blog/japanese-theater>
- <https://www.japan-guide.com/>