

『今は昔』 “Once Upon A Time” Stories, Cast, and Japanese Musical Instruments



竹取物語 *Taketori Monogatari*

The oldest story in Japan, *Taketori Monogatari*. Born from bamboo and said to have the power of the gods, Princess Kaguya gives her nobleman suitors impossible demands. And then returns to her home on the moon ... This fascinating story with hints of science fiction is told here with a focus on the love between Princess Kaguya and the Mikado. Before she returns home, she must put on the heavenly robe that erases all memory of what came before. Her final letter to the Mikado and her gift to him: the elixir of life With traditional *biwa* “*hiki-gatari***”, this is classic Japanese storytelling.

**Hiki-Gatari: A style of narrative storytelling through speech, song, and the playing of traditional Japanese instruments



今様赤頭巾 *Little Red Riding Hood*

Everyone knows the Grimm’s “*Little Red Riding Hood*.” But even before Grimm, there were many stories with the little girl, her grandmother, and the wolf. A more grown-up take on this story brings the three to Japan and gives it the suspense this story deserves.



浦島TARO *Urashima Taro*

The earliest versions are found in the *Manyoshu* and *The Records of the Tango Province*, and although the most well-known version is found in the *Otogizoshi* from the *Muromachi* era (1336-1573), all along the Japan coast there are many different oral traditions of *Urashima Taro*. But there is never a happy ending. This version searches for the truth behind all the questions that emerge from this classic Japanese Tale.

Jack Lee Randall ジャック・リー・ランドル

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Began his puppet experience at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta. Currently creates and performs shadow and puppet works and lives in Toyama, Japan.
<http://jackleerandall.com/>



Ikuyo Hirota 広田郁世

Japanese-style painter. Also involved in direction and design for theatre and responsible for the shadow design of these three stories. She is the head of the puppet group *Mao Company* and lives in Toyama.

《箏》稲葉美和 Miwa Inaba《KOTO》

Started studying *Ikuta Koto* at the age of four. She has composed music for radio and TV programs including the NHK special “*Growing a Child of the Earth*.” She has also participated in concert tours of many Japanese and foreign musicians.
<https://inaba.kmlw.net/>



《BIWA》Yoshiko Sakata 坂田美子《琵琶》

Recipient of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology Fine Arts Award and recognized by NHK for her proficiency in Japanese music. Lecturer at *Toho Gakuen College of Drama and Music*. She creates original works that explore the possibilities of the *biwa*, song, and storytelling.



箏

The *koto* is a traditional Japanese string instrument said to have come from China during the *Nara Period* (710-784) and used in Japanese court music. During the *Edo Period* (1603-1868) *Yatsushige Kengyo*, the Father of Modern *Koto*, introduced the *koto* to general audiences. *Koto* generally has 13 strings, but some can have 17, 20, or even 25 strings. The *koto* is characterized by its bridges which can be moved to adjust pitch.



琵琶

The *biwa* is a string instrument said to have originated in Persia and come to Japan via China during the *Nara period* (710-784). In addition to the *gaku biwa* used in Japanese court music, there is also the *mousou*, *heike*, *satsuma*, and *chikuzen biwa*. The *satsuma biwa* was used to improve the morale of samurai in the *Satsuma Domain* (present day *Kagoshima prefecture*). The *Biwa* player strikes not only the strings but anywhere on the front face of the *biwa* using a “*bachi*”, a large plectrum shaped like a *gingko leaf*. *Yoshiko Sakata* uses a *satsuma biwa* with 5 strings.



千葉市若葉文化ホール
Chiba City Wakaba Culture Hall



千葉市若葉区
千城台コミュニティセンター
Chishirodai Community Center

General information (Reception time 9:00am to 6:00pm)

CHIBA City WAKABA Culture Hall ☎043-237-1911 chiba-aw.jp/wakaba
CHISHIRODAI Community Center ☎043-237-2241 chiba-aw.jp/chishiro

Address & Access from the nearest station

2-1-1 Chishirodai-nishi, Wakaba-ku, chiba City, CHIBA
3minutes by walk from Chiba City Monorail “CHISHIRODAI Station”

