

Japanese Traditional Music Enchants Audience at Torrance Cultural Festival at Ken Miller Recreation Center



Special Performance Blends Tradition and Innovation with Grand Master from JapanTORRANCE, CA - April 5, 2025 - The Torrance Cultural Festival, the city's largest annual celebration, marked its momentous 50th anniversary on Saturday with the Torrance Cultural Hall filled to capacity.

Adding a special touch to this milestone celebration was a shamisen performance by Fuji Japanese Music with Yamatogaku USA ensemble.

At 3:15 PM, the main stage welcomed Grand Master Yamato Ousho, the third-generation head of the Yamatogaku, who was specially invited from Japan, along with members of Yamatogaku USA.

The authentic sounds of "Yamatogaku," a traditional Japanese music form, resonated richly throughout the hall.

The audience listened intently to Grand Master Yamato O-sho's performance, her first visit to Torrance. The essence of traditional music brought from distant Japan was met with warm applause from the audience.

The program featured three pieces: "Edo Festival," "Fox," and "Musume Mikoshi.(Girls Festival Shrine Procession."

During the final piece, "Musume Mikoshi," the audience spontaneously joined in with the "Wasshoi, Wasshoi" chant. The hall was filled with a warm atmosphere as people of all ages united in this cultural experience.

A highlight of the performance was the innovative approach by director Mariko Watabe (artistic names: Yamato Kyosho, Katada Kimisen).

For the first time in Yamatogaku history, she introduced the challenge of singing while playing percussion instruments. Breaking from convention, the percussionists performed standing up while singing and even serving as emcees—an unprecedented presentation that earned surprise and acclaim from the audience.

Another creative element was having all singers perform standing while holding masks in one hand, making the performance visually engaging and accessible even to those unfamiliar with Japanese traditional music.

Throughout its 50-year history, the Torrance Cultural Festival has continuously explored new forms of cultural exchange. This performance perfectly embodied that spirit and captivated the audience.

Yamato-gaku USA's approach of preserving tradition while embracing innovation beautifully aligned with the festival's philosophy of multicultural harmony.

Yamato-gaku USA plans to continue promoting Japanese culture throughout Southern California. Their next event will be a 25th anniversary concert on November 2, featuring five top stars invited from Japan. This promises to be an unmissable event for fans of Japanese culture.

Yamatogaku.jp

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