Wondrous Tales of Old Japan

Rebeca Wallin

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol37/iss1/21

This Play Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Play Review

**Title:** Wondrous Tales of Old Japan  
**Author:** David Furumoto  
**Reviewer:** Rebeca Wallin  
**Publisher:** Plays for Young Audiences  
**Publication Year:** 1999  
**Number of Pages:** 27  
**Production Requirements:** Kabuki style set, costumes, props, music, and makeup are required as well as training in the art form for the actors.

**Review**

Kabuki Theatre comes to life in a child friendly way in this dramatized collection of fairy tales from Japan. The show’s opening introduces children to the elements of Kabuki: music, costumes, vocal use, stage assistants, and movement are succinctly but thoroughly explained and demonstrated. Classic fairy tales are then retold in that style. *Momorato – The Peach Boy* is the story of a boy born from a peach to a childless couple who then rids the village of the ogres that have been tyrannizing it. In *The Story of Urashimataro*, a kind fisherman is brought to the Dragon King under the sea for a four day festival but when he returns finds that 400 years have passed. *Yuki Onna - The Snow Woman* tells of the Snow Queen who becomes human for a short while. And finally, in *Hanasaka Ji Ji – The Old Man Who Made The Trees Bloom*, a couple’s loyal dog bring them honor and riches while he lives and after his death.

The exciting and interesting stories – and the fact that it is performed in English, which is rare – make this a perfect introduction to the art form of Kabuki. The opportunities for post-show cultural exploration and discussion will please both parents and educators, making this an ideal show for an educational tour. The need for trained actors and the cost to produce the show with the needed pageantry should be taken into consideration.