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Season

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Japan Society presents

Nihon Buyo in the 21st Century From Kabuki Dance to Boléro

Wednesday, January 24, 7:30 pm

—Followed by a *Private Gathering for Artists and Members*

Thursday, January 25, 7:30 pm

—Followed by an artist Q&A

Friday, January 26 at 7:30 pm

Nihon Buyo in the 21st Century is supported by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan through the Japan Arts Council, The JEC Fund, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



2023—2024 Performing Arts Season Support

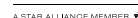
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Japan Society programs are made possible by leadership support from Booth Ferris Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I am very pleased to present tonight's *nihon buyo* program, performed by leading artists from Tokyo.

Since I took the helm of Japan Society's Performing Arts Program two decades ago, this is only the third time I have programmed this particular genre of arts because *nihon buyo* is, I have to say, quite challenging to put together for these reasons: booking dancers (leading dancers are always very busy) and several musicians (*nihon buyo* must be accompanied by live music, including multiple traditional instrumentalists as well as chanters), in addition to rental costs for wigs and costumes required in the traditional repertoire. However, looking at its popularity (many children and adults are practicing *nihon buyo* in Japan), we should recognize this genre in light of the Society's mission.

Another challenge is its name: *nihon* (meaning, "Japan") and *buyo* (meaning, "dance"). The name itself in English translation sounds too generic. If we refer to it as "kabuki dance" because *nihon buyo* dancers' training is based on kabuki dance, it would be easier for Americans to have an image of what *nihon buyo* is (and our marketing effort might be easier). Well, but... come to think of it, not many people (even among Japanese speakers) know the origin of the word "kabuki." Nor that of "noh" and "*bunraku*." Still, those terms have enjoyed becoming part of the international lexicon. Why not try to elevate the term "*nihon buyo*" to the popular status of "kabuki," "noh" and "*bunraku*?" That should be the effort that we should make—in light of Japan Society's mission. In fact, the development of *nihon buyo* has a particular history. Furthermore, *nihon buyo* has generated excellent choreographers in the past and the present, and today represents one of the important parts of the unique culture of present Japan.

To display *nihon buyo*'s creative spirit to adapt itself to contemporaries' taste while paying respect to the kabuki roots, the combination of tonight's two pieces, *Toba-e* and *Boléro -The Legend of Anchin and Kiyohime-*, should be the ideal bridge to connect from the 19th to the 21st centuries. I hope you will enjoy this distinctive juxtaposition.



Yoko Shioya
Artistic Director

Program

MUSIC

Matsuri (Festival) arrangement by Tosha Yukimaru
Hayashi-kata (Percussion): Tosha Yukimaru, Tosha Rokon
Fue (Flute): Tosha Suiho

DANCE

Toba-e

Servant Masuroku: Hanayagi Motoi (Jan. 24-25); Hanayagi Genkuro (Jan. 26)
Mouse: Hanayagi Suzuhiko
Chanters: Kiyomoto Kiyomidayu, Kiyomoto Ichitayu
Shamisen: Kiyomoto Eikichi
Hayashi-kata (Percussion): Tosha Yukimaru, Tosha Rokon
Fue (Flute): Tosha Suiho

INTERMISSION

MUSIC

Yugiri, the Courtesan

Chanters: Kiyomoto Kiyomidayu, Kiyomoto Ichitayu
Shamisen: Kiyomoto Eikichi

MUSIC

Hana (Flower) composition and arrangement by Tosha Suiho
Fue (Flute): Tosha Suiho
Ko-tsuzumi (Small hand drum): Tosha Rokon
O-tsuzumi (Large hand drum): Tosha Yukimaru

DANCE

Boléro -The Legend of Anchin and Kiyohime-

Conceived by Hanayagi Juo II
Directed and Choreographed by Hanayagi Genkuro
Music by Maurice Ravel

Kiyohime: Azuma Tokuyo (aka. Nakamura Kazutaro)
Ensemble dancers: Azuma Kansai, Hanayagi Suzuhiko, Fujima Naozo, Fujima Ryotaro

Costumes & Props: Shochiku Costume Co.,LTD.
Dresser: Aiko Fukumoto
Wigs: Ohsawa Co. Ltd
Wig master: Ryuji Nagano
Tour manager/Prop master: Junko Hanamitsu

*Traditional Japanese performers' and musicians' names are listed in the order of family name followed by given name. All others are listed first name, last name.

ABOUT NIHON BUYO

Nihon buyo can be translated as “Japanese (*nihon*) dance (*buyo*).” The word *buyo* consists of two Chinese characters—the first, *bu* (舞), which refers to traditional Japanese dance such as that found in *noh*, and the second, *yo* (踊), which carries a broader meaning of dance or dance-like movement. The word *buyo* was conceived as an equivalent to the English word “dance” around the end of the Meiji era (1868-1912), a time in Japan known for its radical Westernization. Does *nihon buyo* actually mean Japanese-Western dance?

Nihon buyo technique is the same as kabuki dance technique. In this sense, *nihon buyo* can be categorized as a type of traditional Japanese performing arts. If the technique of *nihon buyo* falls under traditional Japanese performance, then what would we consider to be the “Western” elements of *nihon buyo*?

When Western concepts of “high art” entered Japan at the end of the 19th century, a new performing arts movement began to develop. Japanese artists were inspired to incorporate individual expression into their work, and professional kabuki performers and kabuki dance practitioners began to free themselves from grand kabuki productions as their only means of public presentation.

Using traditional kabuki dance techniques, *nihon buyo* performers have built up a specialized *nihon buyo* repertoire that consists of adaptations of popular sections from kabuki plays, pieces inspired by classical *noh* plays, and various folktales, as well as unique works written and choreographed from scratch. They have also integrated musical elements from kabuki and *bunraku*, such as shamisen and storytelling chanters. As a departure from kabuki theater, which is traditionally performed by an all-male cast, many female dancers practice *nihon buyo* and have become professional stage performers.

By the time the Taisho era (1912-1926) began, artists in *nihon buyo* expanded their creations, including the incorporation of expressions from folk performing arts and group dance structures. Such development has continued to this day. In 1955, the Nihon Buyo Kyokai (or NIHONBUYO Association) was established to enhance the development of *nihon buyo* culture. Currently, approximately 3700 members are in the Association.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Matsuri (Festival)

Japan's *shinto* rituals use various percussion instruments punctuated by musical lines of *fue* (flute). This piece is an arrangement of the rhythm and note patterns that would traditionally be heard during these rituals. *Matsuri* begins with solemn percussion sounds dedicated to the gods and then bursts into lively, festive music that energizes the crowd.

Toba-e

Premiered at the Edo Nakamura-za Theater in 1819, this comical piece was inspired by a *zare-e* (an equivalent of the modern day *manga*) drawn by Buddhist priest Toba Sojo.

Synopsis: Late at night, a male servant tries to catch a mouse appearing in the kitchen, but the mouse is smart enough to draw his empathy, and the servant soon finds himself ensnared by the mouse's charm...

Yugiri, the Courtesan

Premiered at the Edo Nakamura-za theater in 1863, this piece is a song of lamentation about a beautiful courtesan, Yugiri, who tearfully expresses that she has not seen her lover, Izaemon, for a year. This is a masterpiece of the sorrowful *jōruri* (shamisen music with expressive chanted storytelling) performed in Kiyomoto style.

Hana (Flower)

This piece is a contemporary composition by Tosha Suiho, who also performs in this program. Imagining a spring season in the Heian period (794-1180), he depicts the Kazan Emperor's visit to a temple where cherry blossoms are in full bloom. The beginning portrays a view of a spring field and a gorgeous and noble procession. Then, the scene gradually changes with a blowing wind, and the petals fall like snow.

Boléro ~The Legend of Anchin and Kiyohime~

Set to Ravel's masterpiece *Boléro*, this original dance piece, conceived by the late Hanayagi Juo II, former grandmaster of the Hanayagi-ryu School, and directed and choreographed by Hanayagi Genkuro for its premiere in 2021, recounts the ancient Japanese folk tale *The Legend of Dōjōji*.

Synopsis: Anchin, an ascetic monk, comes to the Kumano region on a pilgrimage and asks for a place to stay for the night. The innkeeper's daughter,

Kiyohime, falls in love with him at first sight. Anchin, who is unable to refuse her passion, promises to stop by again on his way back. However, Anchin does not come on the appointed day. When Kiyohime learns that he has betrayed her, she turns into a giant snake and gives chase to Anchin, finally burning him to death as he attempts to flee into the bell of Dōjōji Temple.

This tragic love story is recorded in an 11th-century Buddhist story, and has been adapted with different titles across many forms of traditional performing arts, including noh plays (*Dōjōji*), puppet plays (*Hidaka-gawa Ai'iri-zakura*) and kabuki plays (*Kyokanoko Musume Dōjōji*).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

(Traditional Japanese performers' and musicians' names are listed in the order of family name followed by given name. All others are listed first name, last name.)

Hanayagi Motoi (dancer) trained under his mother Hanayagi Shu from the age of two, and under Living National Treasure Hanayagi Juraku from the age of six. Motoi has performed in numerous productions presented by The Japan NIHONBUYO Association and The National Theatre and has also appeared on TV programs. Motoi has also actively performed abroad in Europe and East Asia, including *Japonismes 2018*, an extensive showcase of Japanese arts and culture held in Paris to celebrate 160 years of Japan-France diplomatic relations, and the closing ceremony of Culture City of East Asia 2019 held in Tokyo; Incheon, South Korea; and Xi'an, China. Through the Motoi-no-kai Association, over which he presides, he studies classical pieces centered on Hanayagi-ryu School's repertoire, in addition to choreographing new pieces. Motoi is the recipient of many prestigious awards such as the Medal with Purple Ribbon; the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Art Encouragement Award and Newcomer's Award; the Tokyo Shimbun Dance Arts Award; the Hanayagi Juo Award for Newcomers; the Minister of Education's Encouragement Award at the New Year Dance Competition sponsored by The Japan NIHONBUYO Association; the Dance Critics Association Award; the Matsuo Performing Arts Awards' Newcomer Award, the Agency for Cultural Affairs Art Festival Excellence Award (Kono-kai Association), among many others. Motoi is the Director of the Hanayagi-ryu School's Hanayagi-kai Association and the Councilor of the Toshima

Mirai Cultural Foundation. He teaches at Nihon University College of Art's Department of Drama and Nippon Sport Science University's Sports Culture Studies.

Azuma Tokuyo (dancer), also known as Nakamura Kazutaro for his appearances in kabuki theater, was born in 1990 as the first son of a prestigious Japanese traditional dance family, Tokuyo's father is the kabuki actor Nakamura Ganjiro IV; his mother is the *nihon buyo* dancer Azuma Tokuhō, the third grandmaster of the Azuma-ryu School; and his grandfather is the late Sakata Tojuro IV, Living National Treasure designated by the Japanese government. He made his stage debut as Nakamura Kazutaro in January 1995 in *Komochi Yamamba* at Naka-za Theater in Osaka. In March 2010, he played the role of the 19-year-old girl Ohatsu in *Sonezaki Shinju* at the age of 19. In September 2014, he became the seventh headmaster of the Azuma-ryu School of *nihon buyo* dance with the stage name Azuma Tokuyo. While pursuing an *onnagata* career (female role performer) mainly in kabuki productions, he has also expanded his activities to film and television. In August 2016, he appeared in a contemporary theater production, *Richaado III*, written by Hideki Noda and directed by Ong Keng Sen. In the same year, he choreographed the shrine maiden dance for a scene in Makoto Shinkai's blockbuster anime, *Your Name*. In 2020, he performed with another kabuki star, Onoe Ukon, in *ART Kabuki*—a new type of kabuki production focusing on visual art elements for online distribution. In 2021, he played the lead role in the theatrical version of the popular novel and animated film *The Night is Short, Walk On Girl*. In 2023, he organized and presented *Azuma Kabuki*, reviving the large-scale international tour production of *nihon buyo*, which Azuma Tokuhō I created and toured from 1954 to 1956, in commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Azuma-ryu School.

Hanayagi Genkuro (choreographer, dancer) was born in Nara Prefecture and began training in *nihon buyo* under his father Hanayagi Tomohito and subsequently under Grand Master Hanayagi Juo II. Genkuro made his stage debut in 1990 with *Ayatsuri Sanbaso*, and in 1998 received his stage name Hanayagi Genkuro. Genkuro received the Encouragement Award at the Nova Dance Competition for New Dancers for his performance of *Ame no Goro* in 2000 and became an Authorized Master of the Hanayagi School in 2002. Majoring in *nihon buyo*, he graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts in 2003, where he was awarded both the Ataka and Jokan Scholarships.

In the same year, he received the Osaka Prefecture Governor's Prize for his performance of *Tomoyakko* in 2003. In 2007, Genkuro received the Encouragement Award of the Minister of Education Culture, Sports, Science and Technology at the Nihon Buyo Association's annual New Year Dance Convention. In 2013, he received the Newcomer Award from the Japan Dance Critics Association for his performance of a new *nihon buyo* piece entitled *Run Melos, Run*. Genkuro performed at Japan Society in November 2014 as part of *The Shamisen Sessions, Vol. 3—A Salute to Tradition* alongside the Living National Treasure shamisen player Takemoto Komanosuke, and again in March 2017 to lead the program entitled *Nihon Buyo Dance & Music with Geimaruzo*. In 2018, he performed in Paris as part of the *Japonismes 2018* festival, an extensive showcase of Japanese arts and culture organized by the Japanese government. In 2020, Genkuro performed with kabuki star Nakamura Ichitaro and Onoe Ukon in 2020 for *ART Kabuki*, a new production created during the pandemic featuring lavish kabuki dance, made available via online streaming. In addition to being an active performer of traditional *nihon buyo* dance, Genkuro has choreographed for TV and other media platforms. In 2021, he choreographed *Bolero ~The Legend of Anchin and Kiyohime*, which premiered at the Edo-Tokyo Museum and was selected to be featured in the *Stage Beyond Borders* series, an international streaming platform operated by The Japan Foundation. Genkuro's other recent choreographic work includes: *Utsuriyuku Toki* for the dancer Onoe Ukon (2021), *Puppeteer Hisa* for the butoh dancer Akaji Maro (2022) and *Galaxy Express 999* (2022), commissioned by The Japan NIHONBUYO Association.

Azuma Kansai (dancer), born in 1989, is a kabuki actor trained as a disciple of Sakata Tojuro IV and Nakamura Ganjiro. Kansai was a member of the 21st graduating class of the National Theatre's Kabuki Actor Training program in 2015. He was also a member of the group that won the 2015 National Theatre Special Award given to the combat scene performance in *Nanso Satomi Hakkenden*. In the same year, he made his professional stage debut as a townsman in *Kawasho* at Kabuki-za Theater in April and at Minai-za Theater in December. In June 2019, he won the National Theatre Special Award for his role as *koken* (stage assistant) for *ningyo-buri* (acting that imitates the moves of a puppet) in *Shinrei Yaguchi-no Watashi*.

Hanayagi Suzuhiko (dancer), born in Tokyo in 1992 in Tokyo, is a son of the *nihon buyo* dancer Hanayagi Mako. From an early age, he was taught

by his grandmother, Hanayagi Kimiko, who is also a *nihon buyo* dancer, and when he was 6 years old, he began training under the third grandmaster and headmaster of the Hanayagi-ryu School. In 2004, he began learning the *nagauta* shamisen, and in 2007, he enrolled in the *nagauta* shamisen major at The Music High School attached to the Department of Music at Tokyo University of the Arts. In the same year, he was granted the name Hanayagi Suzuhiko by the fourth grandmaster and headmaster of the Hanayagi-ryu School. In 2010, Suzuhiko enrolled at Tokyo University of the Arts, Department of Traditional Japanese Music, majoring in *nagauta* shamisen. Upon graduating from university, he began a dancing career, quickly garnering praise and winning the Chairman's Award, Convention Award, and Encouragement Award at the New Year's All-School Dance Convention. Notable programs in which Suzuhiko has participated include performing in legendary dancer Bando Tamasaburo's Special Dance event and performing in the Star Dancers Program presented by the National Theatre. He teaches at Nihon University College of Art's Department of Drama.

Fujima Naozo (dancer) was born in 1992 in Tokyo and trained under the late Fujima Shuzo and Fujima Shunosuke. In 2014, he graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts, Department of Traditional Japanese Music, majoring in *nihon buyo*. His award and prizes include first place in the Japanese dance section at the Tokyo Shimbun Newspaper-sponsored National Dance Competition; the Award of the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; and the Chairman's Award at The Japan NIHONBUYO Association's annual New Year Dance Convention. He has appeared in numerous stage and TV productions and has also taken on choreography and direction.

Fujima Ryotaro (dancer) was born in Hokkaido and started practicing at the age of four. In 2002, he was granted the name Fujima Ryotaro by Fujima Kan'emon VI. In 2006, he became the pupil of kabuki actor Onoe Shoroku IV and assumed the kabuki stage name Onoe Matsuo. At the same time, he started training in *nihon buyo* under Fujima Monjiro. In 2007, he made his kabuki actor debut at the National Theatre. Ten years later, however, he shifted his career from kabuki acting to a focus on *nihon buyo* and acquired a certification as a Fujima-ryu Kan'emon-ha Instructor. At the New Year's All-School Dance Convention, he won the Convention Award in 2019 and 2020, and the grand prize in 2021. In 2022, he won the Minister of Education's

Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award, was awarded first place in the Japanese dance section of the 79th National Dance Competition and received the Tokyo Shimbun 5th Japanese Dance New Talent Award. In 2023, he received the 53rd Dance Critics' Association Newcomer Award.

Kiyomoto Kiyomidayu (chanter) was born in 1980 in Tokyo. In 1986, he started training under Kiyomoto Enkoma and his father, Kiyomoto Kiyomidayu. In 1995, he assumed his father's stage name, becoming Kiyomoto Kiyomidayu II. In 2012, he received the Encouragement Award at the 25th Seiei-kai Convention. In 2013, he appeared in kabuki star Ichikawa Ebizo's program, *Invitation to the Classics: Flowers of Edo*. In 2018, he performed in the Shochiku Grand Kabuki's production of *Kasane* at the Palais National de Chaillot in Paris, France, as part of the *Japonismes 2018* festival.

Kiyomoto Ichitayu (chanter) was born in Tokyo in 1983 to an esteemed family of *Kiyomoto-bushi* style chanters. His family lineage includes his grandfather Kiyomoto Eizaburo, and great-grandfather Kiyomoto Shizutayu, both Living National Treasures designated by the Japanese government and members of the prestigious Japan Art Academy. His father, elder sister and great-grandmother are also chanters. Ichitayu's stage debut was at the age of two years and seven months. In 1998, he took the stage name Kiyomoto Ichitayu and participated in a kabuki production for the first time. In 2015, he received the Encouragement Award at the 29th Seiei-kai Convention. In 2018, he performed in the Shochiku Grand Kabuki's production at the Palais National de Chaillot in Paris, France, as part of the *Japonismes 2018* festival. Currently, Ichitayu appears in many kabuki productions, *nihon buyo* performances, and TV and radio programs through NHK—both as a *Kiyomoto-bushi* chanter and an old-style *Ogie-bushi* chanter. Ichitayu graduated from the Department of Japanese Traditional Music at Tokyo University of the Arts.

Kiyomoto Eikichi (shamisen) became a disciple of Kiyomoto Eisaburo after graduating from the Department of Music at Tokyo University of the Arts, majoring in composition. In 1989, he was granted the stage name Kiyomoto Eikichi by the seventh headmaster of the Kiyomoto family, and since then he has appeared in kabuki dance programs as a *kiyomoto-bushi* shamisen player. In 1990, he performed in Nakamura Utaemon's production, *Sumida-gawa River*, toured in Paris and Frankfurt. In 2018, he performed in Shochiku

Grand Kabuki's production at the Palais National de Chaillot in Paris, France as part of the *Japonismes 2018* festival. Eikichi is also active as a composer. His compositions include *Shokusou – Kusa ni Fureeba*, an *Etude* series, *Oedo Nihonbashi* for Yuka Kamebuchi & VOJA, and a theme song for NHK's TV program *Geino Hana Butai*, among others. Eikichi is a member of So-ho 21 (an association to create and promote new music on Japanese traditional instruments) as well as the Federation of Contemporary Composers for Traditional Japanese Music. He teaches at Tokyo University of the Arts and serves as a Board Member for the Kiyomoto Grandmaster Takana-wa-kai Association.

Tosha Yukimaru (*hayashi-kata*/percussion) was born in Tochigi Prefecture in 1997. He trained in Japanese traditional percussion (*hayashi*) under Tosha Rosetsu II, and on shamisen under Kineya Sansumina. He attended a special music high school and majored in piano. He began practicing *hayashi* when he was in the 12th grade and enrolled at the Department of Japanese Traditional Music of Tokyo University of the Arts. In 2018, he was granted the stage name Tosha Yukimaru by the 6th Headmaster Tosha Rosen. Since graduating from university in 2020, Yukimaru has performed in many programs both in Japan and overseas (France, South Korea), as well as promoting Japanese traditional music in Tochigi Prefecture.

Tosha Rokon (*hayashi-kata*/percussion) was born in Tokyo in 1998. From an early age, he received training in *hayashi* under his grandfather, Tosha Roko, and his father, Tosha Roei. Currently, he practices percussion under the sixth headmaster Tosha Rosen, and in *O-tsuzumi* (large hand drum) under Tosha Roshu. He made his stage debut in 2007 in *Kazahana no Kai*. In 2018, he received the Grand Prize in the Japanese Instrument Category at the 31st New Performer Competition of the Ichikawa City Cultural Reconstruction Foundation and was selected as an Aoyama Music Foundation scholarship fellow in 2019. In 2020, he graduated from the Department of Traditional Japanese Music at Tokyo University of the Arts. In addition to performing traditional Japanese music for kabuki productions and *nihon buyo* programs, he has formed a young *hayashi* players group "Chirikara II III," and collaborates with Western musicians, creates music videos, and has performed abroad in places such as Chile, Franc, and South Korea. He has recorded music for NHK's *Nippon no Geino*, the NHK Period Drama Series and soundtracks for movies.

Tosha Suiho (*fue*/flute) was born in Tokyo in 1979 as the son of *fue*/flute player Nakagawa Yoshio. He trained under Tosha Shuho, Tosha Meisho (designated as an Important Intangible Cultural Property), and Nakagawa Yoshio. In 2004, he was granted the stage name Tosha Suiho. He received a master's degree from the Graduate School of Music of Tokyo University of the Arts, majoring in *hayashi* (accompaniment to traditional Japanese music). While in school, he received the Jokan Award, the Doseikai Newcomer Award and the Acanthus Award. He has appeared in many concerts and broadcasts, including programs presented by the National Theatre of Japan. He is a member of the Mashiho-kai Association of the Tosha-ryu School and the Seito-kai Association for the younger Tosha-ryu School members. In 2017, Suiho self-produced a recital titled "Tosha Suiho Fue no Kai" at the Kioi Hall. In the same year, he participated in a three-city tour of the production *Nihon Buyo Dance & Music with Geimaruza*, produced by Japan Society. Suiho is a member of Ryoma Quartet, a pop-music-flavored band consisting of three Japanese traditional instrumentalists (*fue*, percussion and shamisen) and a violinist. The group had a major commercial debut and appeared at Japan Society's online Annual Dinner in 2021.

The sound used for *Boléro ~The Legend of Anchin and Kiyohime~* is from the compact disc, *Revel, Charles Dutoirt, Orchestre Symphonique De Montreal*, (Decca - UCCD-50002, EAN 4988005556523, released by Universal Music Classics in Japan on May 20, 2009).

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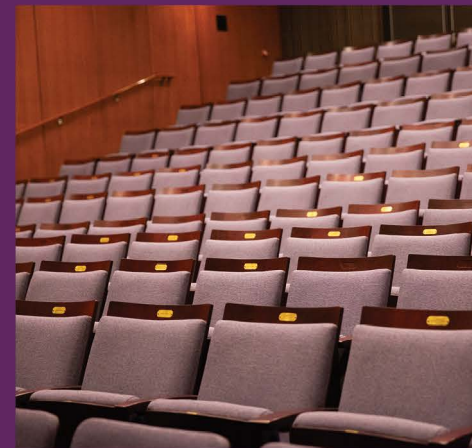
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