

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF
HAWAII
SUMMER
THEATRE

Two Japanese Plays
KANTAN

PRODUCTION STAFF

STAGE MANAGER	ROBERT SOLLER
PROPERTIES	JACK VAUGHN
LIGHTING	TOM MOSSMAN, LILLIAN SAKAI
SOUND	WILBUR HINDS
MASK CONSTRUCTION	EDWIN LANGHANS, LILLIAN SAKAI, PAUL PEARCE
BUSINESS MANAGER	GENE J. PAROLA
HOUSE MANAGER	DOUGLAS KAYA
PROMPTER	MOLLY SHELL

This group has been assisted by the classes in *Theatre Practice* (Drama 200).

July 30, 31,
August 1, 2, 1958
FARRINGTON HALL

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SUMMER THEATRE

presents

KANTAN

attributed to

Zeami (1364-1443)

Translated by Arthur Waley

CAST

HOSTESS	MOLLY SHELL
ROSEI	GERTRUDE TSUTSUMI
ENVOY	LARRY MELCHER
ATTENDANTS	EDWIN YOON, JOEL AWAI
BOY DANCER	MIYOKO SUGANO
COURTIER	GILBERT CHUN
CHORUS	CYRUS FARYAR, JACK VAUGHN, JOHN LAW HARRY CHANG, CONNIE STEWART, FRANCES GARNER, RHEA EHLERS, BRENDA BROWNING

Musicians: DR. SHIGEO KISHIBE, FUMIE MIZUTA

Choreography of the dances by TATSUO ASAYAMA

Costumes from the collection of MASAO TSUJITA

There will be an intermission between the plays

KANTAN

by

Yukio Mishima

Translated by Donald Keene

CAST

JIRO	CYRUS FARYAR
KIKU	CONNIE STEWART
BEAUTY	FRANCES GARNER
DANCERS	RHEA EHLERS, BRENDA BROWNING, NANCY WESTROPP
1ST GENTLEMAN	LARRY MELCHER
2ND GENTLEMAN	HARRY CHANG
SECRETARY	JACK VAUGHN
PHYSICIAN	TOM MOSSMAN
1ST DOCTOR	JOHN LAW
2ND DOCTOR	LOUIS COPPOLA
CHORUS	JOEL AWAI, GILBERT CHUN, EDWIN YOON, MOLLY SHELL, MIYOKO SUGANO, VICTORIA TSE

The Time: 1954

Masks and costumes designed by MORDECAI GORELIK
Additional costumes furnished by SHUSUI HISAMATSU

Productions Directed by EARLE ERNST
Technical Direction by ROBERT SOLLER, assisted by
JACK A. VAUGHN and THOMAS MOSSMAN
Costume construction by FRANCES ELLISON

TONIGHT'S PLAYS

Toward the end of the 14th century, a father and son, Kannami and Zeami, using both native and foreign materials, created the Nō theatre of Japan, which survives in modern times in much the same form as that in which it was conceived. The play *Kantan*, though not listed in his *Works*, is commonly attributed to Zeami. Well into the 19th century the Nō was a traditional amusement of the upper class, but certain performances were open to and popular with commoners. The Nō thus greatly influenced all subsequent forms of Japanese theatre.

The Nō is a theatre of restraint and quietude, showing in its methods of production the influence of Zen aesthetics. It deliberately eschews all imitation of actuality and sharply restricts the materials with which it works. The stage, a permanent construction, is simply a platform, and no scenery is placed upon it other than "fictional things" (in *Kantan*, an inn and a palanquin) which no more than suggest real objects. The most frequently used property is the fan, which conveys any meaning suggested by its form or manipulation. The actors, wearing theatricalized versions of 14th century costume, avoid realistic movement and gesture. The rhythmical basis of the performance is provided by two or three drummers and a flutist. A chorus, usually of eight or more, chants the narrative parts of the play and at times the lines of the characters.

The philosophy of the majority of Nō plays is found in the tenets of the Amidist sect of Buddhism. The central character is usually seeking freedom from those earthly passions which bind him to the world of actuality and prevent his attainment of Nirvana. Frequently, he appeals to a priest or monk. In *Kantan*, however, he achieves his deliverance through other means.

Since Nō plays are written in poetic form, using a variety of complex, untranslatable literary devices, and since the performance arises out of the Gregorian-like chanting of the text by a chorus, an exact reproduction in English is impossible. The present production is intended to create something of the highly stylized, nonrealistic effect of the Nō, without presuming to imitate the high degree of technical excellence of Japanese performers.

Yukio Mishima is one of the youngest, most popular and prolific of contemporary Japanese writers. He has written ten novels (two of them, *The Sound of Waves* and *Confessions of a Mask*, recently published in the United States), as well as many successfully produced plays. In many ways Mishima is a traditionalist, having written, for example, both for the doll theatre and the *kabuki* theatres, which date from the beginning of the 17th century. His use of the traditional Japanese literary forms is also demonstrated in his *Five Modern Nō Plays* (*Kantan* being one of them) in which he takes the themes of the ancient plays and develops them in terms of contemporary experience.

Mishima has suggested that the director of his modern Nō plays change them in any way necessary to make them meaningful for American audiences. Taking the author at his word, the director of *Kantan* has made a number of changes in the play. These seem to him, however, justifiable in that they point up what is implied in the text.