

### *Hiraba, Ayumi, and Masuseki*

The *hiraba* (lit. “level area”) is the center part of the first-floor seating. The seats are labeled from right to left in the traditional Japanese style, using the *hiragana* letters *i, ro, ha, ni, ho, he, to, chi, ri, nu...* From the stage to the back of the theater, the seats are numbered in Chinese character numbers from 1 to 11. The seats in this center part of the theater are called *masuseki* (“squared box seats”) where up to five people can sit. The flexible seating arrangement allows members of the audience to move and turn around freely so that they may see the main stage, the *hanamichi*, or the flying players. A gentle slope upwards away from the stage ensures that the spectators can see well.

There are also boxes (*sajiki*) on both sides of the theater on the first and second level.

In addition there are five walking planks (*ayumi*) 15 cm in width that stretch across the *hiraba* seating area. These planks facilitate access to the seating areas.

The front row seating area is called *kaburitsuki*, which literally means “to bite into.” Here the audience can enjoy the kabuki at its most intense. Yet another name for the front row seats is the *amaochi* (“rain falls”), because when a lot of water is used in the play the audience will get splashed upon.

※Note that there may be slight changes in the names and numbers of the seats in the Shikoku Konpira Kabuki Oshibai performances.