

Kyomai Dance (Program Text)

One of the most recognizable styles of traditional Japanese dance is *Kyomai*, which originated in Kyoto during the eighteenth century. In modern times, many people discover *Kyomai* through *geiko* and *maiko*. At this theater, *Kyomai* dances are generally performed by *maiko* from Gion Kobu, one of the five traditional entertainment districts where *geiko* and *maiko* work in Kyoto. In Gion Kobu, *geiko* and *maiko* practice the *Kyomai* dance of the Inoue school. It was inspired by the measured, symbolic gestures of *noh* theater, as well as by the elegant, refined movements of dances that were favored by the nobility and the imperial family during Kyoto's time as the capital of Japan. Unlike other types of dance designed to be performed on stage or in front of large crowds, the *Kyomai* dance of the Inoue school was designed for the *zashiki*, small tatami-mat parlors where guests would dine, chat, and enjoy entertainments such as song and dance.

Tonight's show presents two *Kyomai* dances. One of the dance numbers changes depending on the season; the other is the popular classic called *Gion kouta* (A Song for Gion).