

Imajū Noh Museum

The creators of the Imajū Noh Museum have turned a former sake warehouse into a celebration of classical Japanese dance-drama and its connections to Nagahama. Noh masks, costumes, and musical instruments are on display inside this artfully renovated structure.

The museum's collection of masks includes centuries-old originals as well as reproductions of masks from famous Noh plays. The central room of the first floor is occupied by a half-scale Noh stage that is used for musical performances and workshops on chanting, dancing, and movement. As part of the museum's mission to make Noh feel accessible to everyone, visitors are encouraged to join in the workshops or even just try standing onstage. The second floor displays examples of props, instruments, and costumes (*shōzoku*) used in Noh theater.

Both Noh and its predecessor, *sarugaku*, have deep roots in Ōmi Province (now Shiga Prefecture), which served as the base for one of Japan's most prominent *sarugaku* troupes. The sake warehouse is part of a traditional manor complex belonging to the Imamura family, prominent merchants and sake brewers who have lived in Nagahama since its founding in the late sixteenth century.