

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017 – Busu and the Damask Drum

Manga meets Mishima – a young all-female cast from Tokyo will bring a double bill of short Japanese classics to the stage at the 70th

Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Busu and The Damask Drum unite traditional and contemporary Japanese practices in a show that is fun, celebratory and thought provoking. It features richly costumed performers, accompanied by live folk music and Awa dance.

The production (which previews at London's Soho Theatre on 11 August) is a showcase for emerging talent. It is the result of workshops and programmes to develop young theatre makers that have been delivered in Japan by the UK's StoneCrabs Theatre Company since 2006. Irreverent and playful, the show updates Yukio Mishima's adaptations of Busu (a Kyogen farce) and The Damask Drum (a Noh drama) making them accessible for a modern Western audience.

Mishima, who committed ritual suicide in 1970 after the failure of his attempted military coup, was one of Japan's most influential 20th century writers and was considered for the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was renowned for his work to update traditional forms and make them relevant to contemporary audiences. And now Tokyo's Busu Theatre and StoneCrabs are collaborating on a 21st-century retelling of the tales.

✖ Busu (The Delicious Poison) is a comedy where the servants Tarō-kaja and Jirō-kaja are entrusted with sugar by their master, but told not to eat it, as it is poison; naturally, the temptation proves irresistible.

In the Damask Drum a gardener-cum-caretaker falls in love with

a lawyer. Despite 101 love letters, the lawyer is unmoved. She cruelly sets him an impossible challenge with the promise of her love if he succeeds – the consequences are tragic and supernatural.

Director Franko Figueiredo says: “Like Mishima we want to bring traditional Japanese forms to a new audience, making them accessible and enjoyable for audiences all round the world. These are two miniature gems – a light comedy and a tragic ghost story – that we are retelling using a combination of dialogue, dance and music that we hope will appeal to audiences of every age. It’s like Japanese Manga meets Mishima.”

Busu Theatre reinterprets traditional Japanese forms to create theatre that speaks to a millennial audience. StoneCrabs draws on the creativity of artists and writers of many cultures, to deepen understanding of the richness and diversity of society.

[Tickets here.](#)

Drama/Physical Theatre | Venue: Greenside at the Royal Terrace
(Venue 231) Jade Studio | 14 – 26 August | 13:50 | 50
minutes | Guidance: 12+ | Tickets: £8
to £10 | Box office: 0131 5572124