

Fujitsu and the Nohgaku Performers' Association to Promote ICT Use in Traditional Theater Arts, Expand Fan-base

Tokyo, July 18, 2019 – The Nohgaku Performers' Association and Fujitsu Limited today announced that they have concluded an ICT partnership agreement, aiming to use ICT to spread the beauty of the Noh and Kyogen theater arts and contribute to the further growth of the Noh and Kyogen world by attracting new fans.

On the basis of this partnership, and in advance of a Noh festival for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games (*1) to be held from July to September 2020, the two organizations will use ICT to enhance information delivery and utilize fan data. At the same time, they will also promote the use of ICT to improve the convenience of ticket purchases and provide audiences with new viewing experiences.

As the first step in this partnership, the two organizations will conduct a trial using ICT at "Essence Noh," an event that will be held on July 31 and August 4, 2019. The event will utilize Fujitsu's Ontenna (*2) user interface devices, which can convert sounds such as Noh chanting and the rhythm of flute and drum into vibrations that are conveyed to users, and the RETISSA head-mounted display, which enables the audience to simultaneously watch the performances on stage and read English subtitles without shifting their gaze, thereby providing a new viewing experience that can be enjoyed by diverse audiences without discrimination, including those with auditory disabilities and people who do not speak Japanese.

The two organizations aim to further expand the use of ICT within the world of Noh and Kyogen on the basis of this partnership, and will contribute to the further development of the world of Noh and Kyogen by bringing diverse people from around the world to endorse these theater arts.

Background

As the number of foreign visitors increase in Japan, the Noh and Kyogen theater arts as part of traditional Japanese culture are attracting global attention. Accordingly, the Nohgaku Performers' Association is aiming to further expand its audience, pursuing more active information delivery and promoting greater diversity in performance formats that will allow various people to enjoy Noh and Kyogen.



Photo of a Noh performance

Fujitsu has contributed to the development of the sports industry through the use of ICT, offering organizations a variety of digital solutions for sports, including viewing methods that enable diverse fans to enjoy events, and services that provide unified management and analysis of the characteristics of fans and attendance data, which will be linked with data from smartphone applications. Now Fujitsu is applying those solutions to contribute to the expansion of the culture industry, beginning with the world of Noh and Kyogen theater.

Fujitsu and the Nohgaku Performers' Association have previously undertaken joint efforts to spread the beauty of Noh and Kyogen, including conducting a real-time translation trial using Fujitsu Software LiveTalk (*3), a diversity communication tool, to translate presentations at the 3rd Symposium – Nohgaku Festival 2017-2020, which was held on January 26, 2018 by the Nohgaku Performers' Association's.

Summary of the Partnership Agreement

The Nohgaku Performers' Association and Fujitsu have concluded an ICT partnership agreement to contribute to the further growth of the world of Noh and Kyogen while bringing in new fans. On the basis of this partnership, in advance of a Noh festival for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, the two organizations aim to use ICT to create new viewing experiences for audiences and to implement systems for selling tickets, collecting and analyzing data on fans and attendees, and for the Nohgaku Performers' Association to deliver information to its audience.

ICT to be Trialed at “Essence Noh”

1. Use of the Ontenna, a user interface device for sensing sound with your body
 - The Ontenna is a user interface device that can be attached to the body, such as in the hair, on the earlobe, or on a sleeve or collar, enabling users to sense the features of sound, including rhythms and patterns, through vibrations and light.
 - The devices will be trialed in an easily accessible performance that will be conducted from 2-4 PM on July 31, 2019. The devices will provide a totally new Noh and Kyogen viewing experience, giving the audience a sense of elation with real-time vibration along with sound volumes in the performance.
 - Because the Ontenna devices do not rely on language, they can offer a new viewing style regardless of disability or nationality.



Ontenna devices

2. Use of RETISSA head-mounted displays
 - RETISSA devices are head-mounted displays made by QD Laser, Inc. (*4) that use technology to directly project an image onto the retina by scanning a weak laser across the retina, using an ultra-miniaturized projector.
 - The displays will be trialed at a performance available in multiple languages, held from 4:30-6:20 PM on August 4, 2019. The RETISSA displays, which are worn like glasses, feature a miniaturized projector built into the frame. By displaying English subtitles directly on the retina, the displays will enable the audience to simultaneously watch the performance onstage with their eyes while also reading the English subtitles projected onto their retinas without shifting their gaze.



A RETISSA display

Details of “Essence Noh”

Title: Essence Noh

Dates: July 31, 2019 and August 4, 2019

*Performances will be split into four themes: Accessibility, Diversity, Profundity, and Multilingual Access

Location: National Noh Theater (4-18-1 Sendagaya, Shibuya City, Tokyo, Japan)

Sponsors: Nohgaku Performers' Association, the Association for Japanese Noh Plays

Future Plans

Based on the results of the trials at “Essence Noh,” the two organizations aim to fully implement the use of ICT in areas such as information delivery, ticket purchases, and audience relations, as well as in the use of Ontenna devices and RETISSA displays at a Noh festival for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, to be held in 2020.

Glossary and Notes

***1. A Noh festival for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games:**

A series of Noh and Kyogen performances featuring the most famous performers of the Noh and Kyogen world in Japan. As part of a historic festival, performances will be held on Monday, July 27 to Friday, July 31, Monday, August 3 to Friday, August 7, on Friday, August 28, and on Friday, September 4 during the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, sponsored by the Noh Performers' Association and the Association for Japanese Noh Plays.

***2. Ontenna:**

Manufactured and sold by Fujitsu Electronics Inc.

***3. Diversity communication tool Fujitsu Software LiveTalk:**

Developed and sold by Fujitsu Social Science Laboratory Limited.

***4. QD Laser, Inc.:**

Established in April 2006 as a venture company of Fujitsu, with capital from Fujitsu and Mitsui & Co. Global Investment Inc., a subsidiary of Mitsui & Co., Ltd. It is engaged in the development, production, and sales of high-performance semiconductor lasers, including quantum dot lasers, from the visible light region up to 1300nm wavelength, based on the joint development from an industry-academic collaboration of more than ten years between Fujitsu Laboratories Ltd. and the University of Tokyo.

Related Links

“Essence Noh” on the Nohgaku Performers' Association website: <http://www.nohgaku.or.jp/>

Ontenna website: <https://ontenna.jp/en/>

Fujitsu Launches Event Support Service Featuring Ontenna, a User Interface Device to Sense Sound with the Body (press release, June 11, 2019): <https://www.fujitsu.com/global/about/resources/news/press-releases/2019/0611-01.html>

RETISSA displays: https://www.qdlaser.com/module/pdf/eyeware/1812262419_01L.pdf

Press Contacts

Fujitsu Limited

Public and Investor Relations Division

Inquiries: <https://www.fujitsu.com/global/about/resources/news/presscontacts/form/index.html>

About The Nohgaku Performers' Association

The Nohgaku Performers' Association was established in September 1945, soon after the end of the Second World War, and consists of professional Nohgaku performers of each role and school throughout Japan. There are about 1,110 full members as of July 2019. The purpose of our activity is to maintain the tradition and the discipline to retain and develop Nohgaku, the unique Japanese performing art of 650 years' history.

About Fujitsu

Fujitsu is the leading Japanese information and communication technology (ICT) company, offering a full range of technology products, solutions, and services. Approximately 132,000 Fujitsu people support customers in more than 100 countries. We use our experience and the power of ICT to shape the future of society with our customers. Fujitsu Limited (TSE: 6702) reported consolidated revenues of 4.0 trillion yen (US \$36 billion) for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019. For more information, please see www.fujitsu.com.