

Oha! Japan
Japanese Mini Season at the Unicorn

11 March – 6 April 2008

Unicorn continues its presentation of world-class international children's theatre with two plays from Japan, the **European Premiere of Kazenoko Theatre's Hello Maru-Chan** and the **World Premiere of The Twin Stars by Mike Kenny**.

The Unicorn presented Danish company Gruppe 38 in 2007, and a three-week festival of Swedish theatre in 2006.

There will also be a special community day with events and activities to experience and explore the world of Japanese culture, including: sushi making demonstrations, manga drawing classes, Taiko drumming and a post show discussion about how the Japanese and English see each other.

Hello Maru-Chan

11 March – 30 March 2008

Press Performance: Wednesday 12th March at 1.45pm

Hello Maru-Chan comes from Kazenoko, one of Japan's oldest children's theatre companies in their first visit to the UK, who collaborate with Australian master puppeteer Peter Wilson to present the story of a child born into an exquisite paper world. In this delicate and heart warming story, Maru-Chan explores the earth, sea and sky around her and meets many fantastic creatures and objects. The work, with music by Japanese composer Yoshie Shimamura, blends simplicity, innocence and beauty as myriad 3D paper creations introduce her to a world of possibilities.

Formed in 1950, Kazenoko performs to over 500,000 children from 7 theatrical bases in Japan each year. In collaboration with Peter Wilson it pushes the boundaries of puppetry, and **Hello Maru-Chan** has been loved by children around the world.

For ages: 4+

The Twin Stars

By Mike Kenny

Directed by Tony Graham

14 March – 6 April 2008

Press Performance: Tuesday 18th March 2008 at 7pm

A Unicorn commission, part-biography and part-fantasy, **The Twin Stars** investigates the early life of one of Japan's foremost children's writers – Kenji Miyazawa – and his first story, **The Twin Stars**; an exhilarating galactic adventure about two stars who become embroiled in a cosmic battle between constellations.

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The Twin Stars interweaves the story of Kenji Miyazawa's life in early 20th Century Japan, the death of his sister, his rejection of life in the family pawnshop and his compassion for the world of poverty he saw around him, with his magical explanations of the mysterious world of the heavens.

In a race to restore harmony before sunset, the Twin Stars must pacify the great constellations of the Crab and the Crow so the nightly dance can begin.

Japanese designers Hirotsugu Yabuta and Yukiko Tsukamoto create a stark and beautiful landscape that is transformed and animated by puppets, giant images and delicate costumes.

Kenji Miyazawa has similar status in Japan to Lewis Carroll or Roald Dahl in the UK. Trained as a geologist, his love of nature and the universe form the basis for his work. A number of his children's works have been made into animated movies (anime) in Japan including *Night on the Galactic Railroad*, *A Well-Ordered Restaurant*, and *Spring and Chaos*.

For ages: 7+

Listings Information

Hello Maru-Chan

At: The Clore Theatre

Dates: 11 – 29 March.

Times: 10.45am and 1.45pm – please check Unicorn website or contact box office for times on each day.

Press Performance: Wednesday 12th March at 1.45pm

Prices: Adults £9.50, Children/concs £6.50.

Previews 11-14 March, all tickets £5

The Twin Stars

At: The Weston Theatre

Dates: 14 March – 6 April

Times: Vary, Please check Unicorn website or contact box office

Press Performance: Tuesday 18th March 2008 at 7pm

Prices: Adults £14.50. Children/concs £9.50.

Previews 14-16 March all tickets £5

Please contact box office for group information and family tickets.

Box Office: 020 7645 0560 or visit www.unicorntheatre.com

For information and reviewing tickets please phone Sharon Kean on 020 7354 3574.