



*The theatre link between our city Toyooka
and the rest of the world*



Ebara Riverside Theatre

About the theatre

As the home of various theatre groups including children's theatre, our aim is to not only be a local cultural hub but also a hub for global theatre communication and information exchange.



Ebara Riverside Theatre (ERST)

In 2020, the former Chamber of Commerce and Industry building in Toyooka City was renovated and turned into the Ebara Riverside Theatre (ERST). A two-minute walk from JR Ebara station, it features a brick-built exterior with the iconic old tower reinstated, giving a cozy and welcoming impression. The 120-capacity main theatre is located on the ground floor, with the first floor boasting a dedicated rehearsal studio which is also available for workshops and smaller performances.



Design Philosophy

We wanted to express our respect to this building, which had stood for 85 years in Ebara, by not bringing in new external ideas on how this theatre should look; instead, we renovated it in its own local and traditional style, maintaining its cultural history and environment.

We established this style through gathering narratives from the local community and walking around the town. Though much of our resources were spent on installing technical equipment and reinforcing the building's structure, we are aware that there are ever more improvements that need to be made. To continue to operate a theatre is to continue to create and to improve.

We therefore hope that we can continue to use and further develop this theatrical space together with the creators and the audience.

Hideharu Asanuma

(Architecture/Product design/Installation President, atelier mobile
/ Vice chair, NPO YOUKEIDESIGN)



Ebara Riverside Theatre

Logo Design Concept

Ebara Riverside Theatre, aims to be a theatrical hub for global communication.

Using the shape of the theatre as the general motif, the logo represents how the theatre is supported by the passion and pride of Ebara's local community. The softer forms are evocative of the people, and are simultaneously intertwined with the letters of "EBARA".

The logo encapsulates our hopes that the theatre, with its beautiful natural backdrop, will always open its doors to the local community and serve as a launchpad to the wider world as well as a creative centre from which artists can compete with myriad international talents. We sincerely hope that it will be a place that the people and the community of Ebara will be proud of.

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History

Ebara Riverside Theatre is a two-storey wooden building, originally built as Hidaka Town Hall in 1935.

The Town Hall became the office of the Hidaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1982. As Hidaka Town joined Toyooka City along with four other towns and formed greater Toyooka city in 2005, the Hidaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry changed its name to the Toyooka Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Throughout those periods, the building has been familiar to the local community.

Featuring a brick-built exterior with the iconic old tower reinstated, the building was renovated and became Ebara Riverside Theatre in April 2020.

We were able to renovate the building through our crowdfunding campaign “Building ERST – a theatre to open up the world”. Thanks to the significant amount of support from all over the world, we have been able to achieve free theatre admission for children under 18, as well as the launch of a youth theatre group.



Director

Oriza Hirata



Playwright / Director

Leader, Theatre Company Seinendan
President, Professional College of Arts
and Tourism

Artistic director, Ebara Riverside
Theatre

Festival director, Toyooka Theatre
Festival

Born in Tokyo in 1962.

Graduated from the International
Christian University with a degree from
the College of Liberal Arts, Humanities
Division.

Awards:

1995: 39th Kishida Kunio Drama Award (*Tokyo Notes*)

1998: 5th Yomiuri Theatre Award for Outstanding Director (*Tsuki no Misaki - The Cape of the Moon*)

2002: 9th Yomiuri Theatre Award for Outstanding Production (*Ueno Dobutsuen Sai-sai-sai Shugeki - Attacking Ueno Zoo for the Fourth Time*)

2002: AICT (Association Internationale des Critiques de Théâtre) Critique Award for his book "*Geijutsu Rikkoku Ron (Arts as the Basis of a Nation)*" published by Shueisha

2003: 2nd Asahi Performing Arts Awards Grand Prix (*Sono Kawa wo Koete, Gogatsu - Across the River in May*, as a part of The Year of Japan-Republic of Korea National Exchange in 2002)

2006: Montblanc de la Culture Arts Patronage Award

2011: Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres

2019: 22th Tsuruya Nanboku Award (*The Rise and Fall of Modern Japanese Literature*)

Councillor, Toga Cultural Foundation

Executive Board Member, The Japanese Society for Theatre Research

Board Member, Japan Foundation for Regional Art-Activities

Special Advisor, Toyooka City (Cultural policy)

Policy Advisor, Takarazuka City Advisor,

Hirakata City (Art & Culture)

Resident Company

Seinendan: a Theatre company formed by Oriza Hirata in Tokyo in 1983.

The company pursues a new theatre style through the 'contemporary colloquial theatre theory' proposed by Oriza Hirata. This completely new theatre style has had a major impact on the Japanese theatre scene since the 1990s and has attracted strong interest from outside the theatre world. The core of Hirata's criticism of traditional Japanese theatre is that modern Japanese theatre, which began with the importation of modern Western theatre, has been based on Western logic, even in the creation of plays. Hirata has long believed that this has led to a rampant use of forced stylistic and logical structures that have departed from the Japanese language, and even the actors' performances have become distorted in order to give them a sense of reality. Theatre styles such as "sometimes speaking in inaudible tones", "multiple conversations happening at once" and "actors speaking with their backs to the audience" were the outward characteristics of Seinendan's theatre style, and these were the only points that were initially emphasised and communicated. However, all of these features are based on a strategy of critically reviewing conventional theatre theory, creating a fresh theatrical language with a new syntax, taking the Japanese language and the Japanese way of life as a starting point, and reconstructing a dense and dramatic space.

In its stage productions based on solid theatre theory, **Seinendan** is always trying to create new expressions that change the very framework of theatre itself.

Seinendan launched Seinendan Link in 2002 as a performance series in which the directors form an indefinite unit within the theatre company and put on their own projects, mainly at the Komaba Agora Theatre, where Oriza Hirata owned and managed. Planning, production and publicity are carried out in a manner similar to that of the main performance, with artistic director Oriza Hirata at the helm. Through Seinendan Link, Seinendan aims to become a 'theatre company', a rarity in Japan, with multiple directors, playwrights and numerous actors, offering audiences a wide variety of performances. In recent years, the company has particularly expanded its activities abroad, touring abroad every year. In France in particular, along with the growing appreciation of Oriza Hirata's plays, Seinendan's theatrical style and the acting skills of its performing actors have attracted a great deal of attention.

Workshops



While theatres are generally seen as places where people watch performances or listen to live music, it also has a role as a meeting place and venue for creativity. As a local theatre, the Ebara Riverside Theatre aims to be a hub for spreading theatre and arts education. We provide facilitators to elementary and junior high schools, two special needs schools in Toyooka, many high schools in the Tajima region, and to arts and cultural activities in other municipalities. Tajima Children's Theatre Company was also founded in 2023. The workshops we run are wide-ranging and have been used for corporate team-building days as well as civil service training and development. Our workshops are not only held in theatres but can also be brought to other venues and locations.

We hope that theatres can be space for various people to gather and meet.

Oriza Hirata, Artistic Director, Ebara Riverside Theatre

1. Education



**Communication education/expressive education/
theatre education, etc.**

We create and implement educational programmes according to specific school requirements and objectives. This may be to accompany the national curriculum, using theatre as a means of solidifying understanding of the lesson content; to develop and improve students' ability to communicate and express themselves; or to help create safe and inclusive classroom environments for children, to name but a few.

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| <p>State elementary schools in Toyooka</p> <p>'Non-Cognitive Skills Improvement Project'</p> <p>Organised by the Board of Education of Toyooka City</p> | <p>State elementary schools in Takarazuka</p> <p>'Self-Expression Improvement Project'</p> <p>Organised by the Board of Education for Takarazuka City</p> | <p>Hyogo Prefectural Izushi Special Needs School,</p> <p>'Theatre creation for study presentations'</p> <p>Organised by Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan</p> <p>2022 Comprehensive project for the development of children through culture and art (Artists' dispatch programme)</p> <p>2022 Project for the promotion of children's development through culture and art (Communicative ability improvement project)</p> <p>2022 Project for the promotion of children's development through culture and art (Cultural facilities utilisation projects)</p> |
| <p>Target: grade 1</p> <p>Main objective: non-cognitive skills improvement</p> | <p>Target: grades 4-6</p> <p>Main objective: improvement of self-expression</p> | <p>Target: grade 12</p> <p>Main objective: Instruction of creative theatre production</p> |

2. Enterprises



New employee training / corporate training / orientation training, etc.

Through roleplays, devised pieces and drama games, we foster relationships and create environments which develop empathy and self-awareness, and where communication is easy and encouraged.

We also organise workshops for specific workplace needs and purposes, including team building, improvement of interpersonal communication, and prevention and understanding of harassment in the working environment.

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| <p>Promoting project for the camp training for corporations in Eco House</p> | <p>Nishimuraya Hotel Shogetsutei New employee training Organised by Nishimuraya</p> | <p>'Hyogo Construction Industry Tajima District Council Communication skills training services Organised by Toyooka Art Action General Incorporated Association</p> |
| <p>Venue: Ebara Riverside Theatre Studio</p> <p>Target: Employees of Ishiko Trading Company / LIFULL Co.</p> <p>Main objective: Theatre workshop experience to encourage communication between employees</p> | <p>Venue: "Hakuyou" at Nishimuraya Hotel Shogetsutei</p> <p>Target: New employees of Nishimuraya Hotel Shogetsutei</p> <p>Main objective: To experience and understand theatre (as the ryokan is located in Toyooka City, focuses on art and theatre as important subject.) To encourage communication and maintain good relationships between new employees</p> | <p>Venue: Ebara Riverside Theatre Studio</p> <p>Target: Managers of the member companies of Tajima District Council of the Hyogo Construction Industry</p> <p>Main objective: To improve communication skills</p> |

3. Diverse objectives



Theatre creation / Theatre experience / Community exchange / Cross-cultural exchange / Facilitation training

We conduct workshops with a variety of participants and purposes in mind. These include, but are not limited to: enjoying theatre with the performers; devising pieces; participation in dramatic experiences with all the family; and developing mutual understanding amongst diverse and inclusive communities.

At the Ebara Riverside Theatre, we not only conduct drama workshops but also research their impact and best practice, as well as training and educating workshop facilitators.

Performances outside the Ebara Riverside Theatre

The Ebara Riverside Theatre coordinates performances by resident company Seinendan in various non-theatre venues such as schools or nurseries. Below are examples of small-scale productions for children. Please contact us for details and conditions if you are interested.

1. Visiting performances

We also visit nurseries and perform these productions. These are primarily aimed at children, however can also be enjoyed by the supervising adults.



Productions



The Tiny Princess and Dr. Measure

Created and directed
by Oriza Hirata

Summary: The Tiny Princess of the Tiny Kingdom is always picked on by the Enormous Prince of the Enormous Kingdom. She asks Dr. Measure, who measures everything, to set off on an adventure together to find enormous or large things in the Tiny Kingdom. Measuring various items, they come to the realisation that there are some things that cannot be measured or compared.

This is an immersive and interactive theatre experience, where the children will be participants in how the story moves forward.

Running time: Approx 30 minutes
Suitable for: ages 5 to grade 1 children
Time required for stage set-up :
approx 1 hour
Time required for stage removal:
approx 1 hour



Tongue-Cut Sparrow

Created by Oriza Hirata
Directed by Roland Gutmann
Puppet-making and instruction by
Jessie Caillot

Summary: "I will cut out your tongue so that you will never misbehave again." Familiar to many Japanese since childhood, this timeless Japanese fable tells the story of a kind old man, his greedy wife, and an injured sparrow. It's a tale that highlights the consequences of kindness and greed.

A gem of a one-man show with puppets by Kenji Yamauchi (Seinendan).

Running time: Approx 30 minutes
Suitable for: ages 4+
Time required for stage set-up :
approx 1 hour
Time required for stage removal : 30 minutes

2. Performances at art appreciation events

Performances at arts festivals

The company performs at arts festivals for high school students, mainly in the Tajima region. Performances can be held at the Ebara Riverside Theatre, or at a theatre near the school.

Productions



Night on the Galactic Railroad

Based on the novel by Kenji Miyazawa
Written and directed by Oriza Hirata

“Galactic station, galactic station -.”
On the night of the Star Festival, the conductor's voice suddenly rings in Giovanni's ears as he looks up at the night sky alone and lonely. Together with his best friend Campanella, they travel through different constellations in search of "true happiness", and they end up ...? A fantasy of life woven with shining stars and beautiful friendships at the edge of the universe.

Running time: approx 1 hour
Suitable for: grade 5+



A Meeting with Santa Claus

Created and directed by Oriza Hirata

Is there a Santa Claus?
Where does he come from?
What does he usually do?
This production answers head-on the eternal question of children all over the world.
The first participatory theatre for parents and children by Seinendan, which has been very well received throughout the country. Welcome to the meeting for all children and adults who believe in the existence of Santa Claus.

Running time: approx 1 hour
Suitable for: Children of all ages and adults who believe in Santa Claus

Tajima Youth Theatre



Tajima Youth Theatre is a youth theatre company based at the Ebara Riverside Theatre. We currently have two groups, **the Junior Class** (primary grades 4-6 and junior high school grade 1) and **the Senior Class** (junior high school grades 2-3 and high school students). They meet and rehearse twice a month, culminating in a presentation at the ERST for the Junior Class and a full-scale performance for the Senior Class.



Hyokkori Theatre



Since its opening in 2020, Ebara Riverside Theatre has been producing and performing plays, as well as conducting theatre workshops at numerous schools, including the Tajima Children's Theatre.

Through these activities, we received a request from Hyogo Prefectural Izushi Special Needs School to hold their graduation play at Ebara Riverside Theatre. We conducted theatre workshops for the third-year high school students, had numerous rehearsals, and were able to stage a wonderful graduation performance in February 2023.

With loud voices and soft voices, fast movements and slow movements, and even jumping around, we have created a unique "theatre" that only we could create. Seeing their proud faces, we received many requests to continue providing a space for them to engage in theatre.

Considering what we could do at the theatre, we decided to start a project called "Hyokkori Theatre," where we create theatre together with people aged 15 and over with disabilities. With the support of our past experiences, professional staff and actors from theatre companies, as well as teachers from special needs schools and welfare professionals in the community, we are carrying out "Hyokkori Theatre."

By minimizing barriers to participation and creating a place where people of various abilities can experience theatre, we aim to make the theatre a place where many people can meet and interact.

Supporter Membership

Experience the Dramatic Arts by becoming a member.



Join our membership to support the theatre's productions and encourage world-class creations.

Members are offered discounted prices and priority access to tickets.

Through the membership program, our aim is not only to develop the Dramatic Arts but also to bring it closer to everyday life.

To find out more details about our membership, visit our website:

<https://ebara-riverside.com/member/>

or scan the QR code.





Contact Information

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[Closed on Sundays unless there is a performance]



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<https://ebara-riverside.com/theatre>



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<https://lin.ee/24XowGd>



Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/ebarariverside.jp/>

