

AUCKLANDER | Lifestyle Asian persuasion

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Aucklander

The Aucklander By: Sharu Delilkan ① 2 minutes to read

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Improvisational performer Yuri Kinugawa hopes The Secret of Dongting Lake's all-Asian cast signals a change in the local theatre industry.

"I've always thought it was odd that, despite being full of Asians, there's minimal Asian representation in the Auckland theatre scene," she says.

The Oryza Foundation for Asian Performing Arts' general manager, Yee Yang, hopes to address this with the school holiday show.

The foundation is keen to work with internationally experienced artists like Yuri in the future - not just to produce more Asian theatre, but also to tap into her knowledge as a teacher.

"She has a lot to offer to the less experienced cast members," says Yee Yang. "I believe her wealth of knowledge and maturity will help the other actors up their game."

The Secret of Dongting Lake, based on a Chinese folk tale, is aimed firmly at schoolchildren's imaginations. Written by Michelanne Forster, it's a tale of magical powers, mystical spirits and the water dragon of Dongting Lake. All the classic elements are in the story: unrequited love, good trouncing evil and a rich fantasy world.

The founder and director of Impro Works, Japan's longest running improvisational theatre company, Kinugawa says it's a treat to play the Empress's older nanny, Lady Wisteria. "I love being different things to different people in the show. It allows me to explore many faces within the same role."

Time Out Theatre for Children and Oryza Foundation for Asian Performing Arts presents The Secret of Dongting Lake, Concert Chamber, Auckland Town Hall, Oct 4-9, 11am. Tickets: ph 357 3355 or see www.the-edge.co.nz











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