



BACKES & STRAUSS

London

A SPARKLING PERFORMANCE

BACKES & STRAUSS BECOMES OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF TOKYO'S KABUKIZA THEATRE



Backes & Strauss, the world's oldest diamond company, is delighted to announce its association with the ancient Japanese art form of Kabuki in its new role as the official sponsor of Tokyo's recently restored Kabukiza theatre in Ginza.

2014 marks 225 years since the founding of Backes & Strauss - but Kabuki dates back even further, to the start of the 17th century when it came into being as a genre of theatre performed exclusively by women.

It soon came to the attention of the Imperial court, after which the tradition of an all-female cast was reversed so that males played the roles of both men and women - a fact that is partly responsible for the name 'Kabuki,' which is best translated as 'out of the ordinary.'



Despite centuries of dynastic change, the burning down of theatres during times of drought and attempts to undermine the art form during the 19th century, Kabuki has survived and thrived. It is now the most popular of all traditional styles of Japanese drama and attracts many leading stars from television and film.



To outsiders, however, the long, five-act plays based on history, dance or domestic life were often baffling - until the widespread introduction of audio guides during the 1970s opened up the art form to the wider world.

Masters of Diamonds since 1789

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Now, every seat in the Kabukiza theatre is equipped with a sophisticated LCD terminal which provides commentary, explanation and translation to help watchers understand the remarkable stories as they are played out on the elaborate Kabuki stage, which is designed for maximum dramatic effect with its 'flower path' walk way extending in to the audience and trap doors to enhance the element of surprise.

In its role as official sponsor of the theatre, Backes & Strauss will display information on the seat terminals about its own long history and the magnificent diamond watches it creates today - actual examples of which can be seen in two official showcases prominently positioned within the Kabukiza.

"It seems fitting that 'Kabuki' can be translated as 'out of the ordinary,' because that is also a description that can be applied to Backes & Strauss," says the firm's CEO Vartkess Knadjian.

"We specialise in creating unique pieces, and we like to believe that the 225 years of experience we have accumulated in the diamond business gives us the edge when it comes to selecting, cutting, polishing and setting the world's most precious stones in order to create watches which are as fascinating, as unusual and as spell-binding as the plays of the Kabuki.

"It is an honour to have been selected as an official sponsor of the theatre, and we look forward to relishing the role and learning more about this remarkable art form."



About Backes & Strauss

For over two centuries, Backes & Strauss has constantly looked forward, pioneering new diamond cutting techniques and entralling connoisseurs with its compelling designs.

Today, Backes & Strauss is part of the Franck Muller group. Backes & Strauss and The Franck Muller Group are masters of the art and science of their respective crafts. While Backes & Strauss is occupied with light and Franck Muller is concerned with time, both share a devotion to mathematical precision.

The result of this meeting of masters is a collection of timepieces so intricate, they are veritable masterpieces both inside and out

For further information,

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