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The Legend of Morning Glory

A Boy, A Girl, and A Promise



Many great love stories have been told throughout history - from Antony and Cleopatra to Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Everyone enjoys stories that end with some variation of "... and they lived happily ever after." On April 15 at 7:30 p.m., the World Theater at California State University, Monterey Bay will present a love story from the Kabuki theater, "The Legend of Morning Glory - A Boy, A Girl, and A Promise," written by master storyteller Brenda Wong Aoki.

The story dates to the early 1600s when Kabuki started in Japan. Aoki has created a monodrama, a play done by one actor, accompanied by a taiko drumming ensemble, dancers and live music. Her

work synthesizes Japanese Noh and Kyogen theater, Commedia Dell'arte, modern dance and everyday experience.

"The Legend of Morning Glory" tells the story of the daughter of a powerful samurai, who meets and falls in love with a boy from a poor family. When the boy's love poem about the morning glory (a flower that blooms only for a few moments in the sun) blows into the girl's boat, she is determined to marry him, turning down the rich suitors her father has lined up for her. Finally she runs away, determined to marry the boy. Unaccustomed to the world outside her father's castle, she cries herself blind and makes a living as The Morning Glory, an itinerant storyteller famed for

her tale of lost love. In the end, the two lovers meet one last time at a lonely inn on the banks of the Oi River.

"The story is about first love, the love everyone always remembers," Aoki said. "I heard this story from Pete Seeger when his wife, Toshi, invited me to perform with Pete and Arlo Guthrie when I was starting out as a young performer. At the time, Pete had tears in his eyes after he told the story. I didn't understand why he was so moved. I was too young. Today, many years later, I get it."

"In 2008, I was living in Japan and searching for a new story. I went to the **Aoki on Page A4**