

 **MINYO LIVE**

A special live performance co-produced  
with Blue Note Tokyo



札幌文化芸術劇場  
hitaru  
SAPPORO CULTURAL ARTS THEATER

# Performers: MINYO CRUSADERS

Special guests:  
**Chitose Hajime**  
**Yuto Kanno**

Lobby open: 13:00;  
Auditorium open: 14:00;  
Start: 15:00;

Estimated running time: about 2 hours,  
including intermission

**Moments at hitaru**  
**Sun., July 27, 2025**



 **MINYO SALON**

Enjoy a special buffet in the theater foyer featuring folk  
music DJs and tasty Hokkaido treats—available before the  
show, during intermission, and after the performance.

**DJ: Riyo**  
**Mountains**

Start: 13:00; End 18:00, excluding live performance times

\*We'll be sharing vendor information on the official hitaru website and  
social media as it becomes available.

札幌文化芸術劇場 hitaru

Kita 1 jo, Nishi 1 Chome, Chuo-ku, Sapporo 060-0001

SAPPORO CULTURAL ARTS THEATER

Ticket Price (Including tax) | **Adults** 4,000 yen **U25** 2,000 yen

\*Your ticket includes access to both the MINYO LIVE and the MINYO SALON. \*U25: U25 tickets are available not only to students but also to anyone born in 2000 or later (excluding preschoolers; available online). U25 ticket holders must bring an ID to verify their date of birth at the event. Failure to provide age verification may result in being asked to pay the difference for an adult ticket. \*Handling charges may apply, and seat selection may be unavailable depending on the ticket purchase method. Please ask at the ticket counter or outlet for details. \*The ticket sales end date varies by ticket counter/outlet. Please ask at the ticket counter/outlet for details. \*Preschoolers are not admitted. Childcare service is available for a fee (reservations required at least two days before; limited availability). Please contact Sapporo Sitter Service (Tel. 011-281-0511) for reservations. \*No inquiries regarding ticket cancellations or changes will be accepted after purchase. \*Wheelchair users should contact Doshin Play Guide (Tel. 0570-00-3871) to arrange their seating.

Organizer: Sapporo Cultural Arts Theater "hitaru" (Sapporo Cultural Arts Foundation)

Supporters: Sapporo City, Sapporo City Board of Education, Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation Cooperation: BLUE NOTE JAPAN Co.



Supported by the Agency for Cultural Affairs,  
Government of Japan  
through the Japan Arts Council

# MINYO CRUSADERS

Yoi Yoi! Yokosoようこそ (welcome) We are Minyo Crusaders! We sing historic Japanese folk songs (min'yō) with Latin, African, Caribbean and Asian rhythms. Originally sung hundreds of years ago by working-class Japanese people such as fishermen, coal miners and sumo wrestlers [HA!], these min'yō songs are now forgotten in Japan – yet we want to make them popular again. Please enjoy our website!

"Minyo Crusaders played with such verve and good cheer that most of the Jazz Café was dancing by the first song... a concert quite like any other" ★★★★★ The Times

"For Japanese people, min'yō is both the closest, and most distant, folk music" explains band-leader Katsumi Tanaka: "We may not feel it in our daily, urban lives, yet the melodies, the style of singing and the rhythm of the taiko drums are engrained in our DNA."

Initially indifferent to min'yō, a tragic event in recent Japanese history set Tanaka on his current path: "Following the Tohoku earthquake of 2011, I reflected on my life, work and identity. A fan of world music, I began searching for Japanese roots music I could identify with. Discovering mid-late 20th century acts Hibari Misora, Chiemi Eri and the Tokyo Cuban Boys, I was captivated by their eccentric arrangements and how they mixed min'yō with Latin and jazz." Lead singer Freddie fell for min'yō after hearing a song from his hometown on a TV competition whilst in a restaurant. It was a revelation – until then he had been an aspiring jazz singer yet was uncomfortable singing in English. The restaurateur told him a min'yō teacher was his neighbour and the two connected. Tanaka and Freddie formed Minyo Crusaders in 2011 in Fussa, a city where the US military Yokota Air Base is located in western Tokyo.

Recruiting other local musicians versed in Afro and Latin rhythms they began hosting jam sessions in the "Banana House," a building that was previously part of the US military air base and that used to house US soldiers. Following various member changes the band recorded their debut album for P-Vine records in 2016. Released in 2017 it received huge acclaim in Japan and was picked up for an international release by Mais Um in 2019. A debut European tour followed that autumn 2019 that included festivals Trans Musicales, Le Guess Who, Oslo World Music and Überjazz, with shows following at WOMADelaide and WOMAD New Zealand in 2020.

# Chitose Hajime

Born on January 5, 1979, in Amami Oshima, Kagoshima Prefecture, she made her major debut in 2002 with the single *Wadatsumi no Ki*. Rooted in her hometown's traditional *shima-uta* folk songs, her voice—hailed as one that comes around only once every hundred years—made a powerful impact on the public. Her one-of-a-kind vocal talent has also earned high praise overseas, leading to collaborations with renowned artists such as Deep Forest, The Chieftains, and Sly & Robbie. She continues to captivate audiences on stages that transcend both genre and borders, solidifying her status as one of Japan's leading female singers. Her work often centers around themes of peace, including the anti-war song *Shinda Onnanoko (The Little Girl Who Died)*, produced by Ryuichi Sakamoto. In 2015, her cover album *Heiwa Gannen (The First Year of Peace)* earned the Good Planning Award at the 57th Japan Record Awards. Following the designation of her hometown, Amami Oshima, as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site in 2021, she has also gained recognition as a storyteller and cultural bearer, dedicated to passing down *shima-uta*, the traditional Amami folk music that lies at the heart of her artistry. In recent years, she has been actively exploring new interpretations of *shima-uta*, not only preserving its traditional style but also experimenting with band arrangements and remixes. She has also held live performances featuring *shima-uta*. While continuing to live in her hometown of Amami Oshima, she remains energetically engaged in performances across Japan.



# Riyo Mountains

A DJ duo consisting of Takehiko Sato and Takumi Saito, united by their passion for traditional Japanese folk music. They collect and research folk songs from all over Japan, incorporating them into DJ sets and overseeing the reissue of CDs and vinyl records. Their mix series includes *Riyo Mountains MIX Vol.1* through *Vol.5*. They have also supervised CD and vinyl reissues such as: *Yumi Kagura* by Shigeo Tanaka, *Sakai Ishinage Odori* by the Sakai Ishinage Odori Preservation Society, *Kizaki Ondo* by the Kizaki Ondo Preservation Society with Clark Naito, *Osharaku* by the Kasai Osharaku Preservation Society and others, and *Nanyatoyara* by the Ninohe City Nanyatoyara Preservation Society. They contributed a mix composed entirely of Japanese folk music to the London-based internet radio station NTS LIVE. As DJs, they have performed at parties across Japan, including *Soi48* (Tokyo), *Furinkazan Gakuen* (Yamanashi), and the *Dai Bon Odori Festival* at Hachiman Shrine in Yamato-cho (Tokyo). Their media appearances include *NHK Radio 1's Radiru Lab*, *NHK Sendai's Minyo o Dozo*, and *TBS Radio's After 6 Junction*. They also write a regular column titled *Riyo Mountains no Minyo o Tazunete (Visiting Folk Songs by Riyo Mountains)* for BOLD Magazine, and serve as hosts for *Minyo o Tazunete MIXED BY DJ Riyo Mountains* on NHK FM.

# Yuto Kanno



Born into a family deeply rooted in the Tsugaru shamisen tradition—his grandfather was Kozan Kanno, the founder of the Kozan school, and his father was the second-generation Kozan Kanno—he was exposed to the Tsugaru shamisen and Japanese folk music from an early age. Beginning in the fifth grade, he formally studied the fundamentals of the Tsugaru shamisen under the guidance of his grandfather and father. Developing his own unique playing style and tone, he has been featured extensively in newspapers, on television, and on radio. Through performances as a three-generation family ensemble, solo acts, and collaborations with various other instruments, he has earned tremendous acclaim in Japan and overseas. Armed with exceptional skill, he has competed in national competitions and claimed the title of Japan's No.1 champion seven times. In 2019, he won the world championship. Driven by a strong desire to inspire younger generations to take an interest in Japan's traditional performing arts, he has been collaborating with artists across a wide range of genres while continuing to cherish classical performance and the "spirit of Japan," which he has cultivated through folk songs since childhood. He is also dedicated to nurturing the next generation through lessons and school performances, constantly exploring new possibilities for the Tsugaru shamisen.



## Ticket Information

- Sapporo Community Plaza membership website <https://sapporo-cp-members.jp/>
- Sapporo Community Plaza Ticket Center window  
2F, Sapporo Community Plaza 10:00–19:00 (closed on Wednesdays and except days the plaza is closed)
- Doshin Play Guide Tel. 0570-00-3871  
Takakuwa Bldg., Minami 1-jo Nishi 1-chome 8-2, Chuo-ku, Sapporo  
MARUZEN & JUNKUDO Bookstore Sapporo (B1) 10:00–19:00 (closed on Tuesdays)  
<https://doshin-playguide.jp/>
- Seicomart multifunctional printer Secoma code: P25072701
- Ticket PIA P code: 294-332
- Lawson Ticket L code: 11441

\*Handling charges may apply, and seat selection may be unavailable depending on the ticket purchase method. Please ask at the ticket counter or outlet for details.  
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## Event Information



Ticket-related inquiries

Doshin Play Guide  
Tel. 0570-00-3871 10:00–19:00 (closed on Tuesdays)

Event-related inquiries

Sapporo Cultural Arts Theater Project Management, Sapporo Community Plaza  
Tel. 011-271-1950 9:00–17:00 (except on closed days)

## hitaru official sponsors

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