

The Art of Kabuki: Famous Plays in Performance. Translated, with commentary, by Samuel L. Leiter. (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1979. Pp xxi + 298. \$16.95.)

This volume emphasizes the theatricality of kabuki performance. It presents an introduction, translations from four plays, photographs of productions, and a glossary. Especially useful are the introductory essays to each of the translated excerpts, where not only is background material to the play and its author(s) presented, but also explanation and commentary on the work's plot and kata as viewed by actors and critics over time. The four plays excerpted are "Bento Kozo" (Benten Musume Meono Shiranami) by Kawatake Mokuami; "Sugawara's Secrets of Calligraphy" (Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami) by Miyoshi Shoraku, Namiki Senryu, and Takeda Izumo; "Shunkan" (Heike Nyogo no Shima) by Chikamatsu Monzaemon; and "Naozumurai" (Kumo ni Mago Ueno no Hatsuhana) by Kawatake Mokuami. The translations are unusual for the detail with which manifold problems of staging are clarified. The book is useful for improving appreciation of kabuki as performance.

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