

December 24,2024

Suntory Holdings Limited

Daikin Industries, Ltd.

Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan
Suntory and Daikin Jointly Exhibit on the Themes of Air and Water
“UNDER THE MIDNIGHT RAINBOW”
The Largest Water Show in the World Expo History
Announcing the Character Designs,
Voice Actor Cast and Theme Song



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OSAKA, Japan, December 24, 2024 - Suntory Holdings Limited and Daikin Industries, Ltd. have announced the character designs, voice actors and theme song for “Under the Midnight Rainbow”, which the two companies will jointly exhibit at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan (Osaka, Kansai Expo). The voice actors include Hana Mouri, a young, rising sixteen-year-old actress with an outstanding singing voice who has been active in stage plays and musicals since first grade of elementary school. She will play the main character “Ao”. Actress and comedian Tomochika will play “Dodo”, the spirit of air and water, and Mari Natsuki will play “Ao's Grandma”.

“Under the Midnight Rainbow” is a spectacular show that fully utilizes air, water, light, fire, video and music to depict the story of life on a grandiose scale.

The story takes place on an island where, according to legend, all living creatures gather for a festival when a rainbow appears on a moonlit night. The main character, a child named “Ao”, and “Dodo”, the spirit of air and water, meet under a rainbow on an enchanted night, and a jubilant and colorful festival unfolds among living creatures.

■ Character Designs

“Ao”, Main character



“Dodo”, the Spirit of Air and Water



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■ Story presented by a star-studded cast of three talented voice actors

Hana Mouri, a young actress known for her outstanding singing ability and range of emotions, was selected to play the main character “Ao”. Her radiant, uplifting voice helps to invigorate the show. Meanwhile, Tomochika, a talented voice actress known for playing a variety of unique characters, is the voice of “Dodo,” the spirit who leads “Ao” to the festival. Her lighthearted Kansai accent brings humor and authenticity to the role for added charm to the story. Mari Natsuki voices “Ao’s Grandma”, who teaches “Ao” the island's traditional songs and the night rainbow legend. She plays an important role in the beginning of the story for drawing the audience into the story.

■Comments/profiles from the voice actors

[Profile of Hana Mouri, who plays the main character “Ao”]



Born in 2008, age 16. (B-Pro) She joined the Ookina Yume children’s theatre group in her first year of elementary school. She has been active primarily in musicals, including the role of young Nala in the Fukuoka production of the Shiki Theatre Company's “The Lion King” (2019-2020). She has won numerous awards, including the Grand Prize in the Intermediate Division of the English Vocal Election (2021) and Gold/Grand Prix award in the All Japan Children's Singing Competition Middle School Division (2024).

[Comment from Hana Mouri]

“When I first heard ‘the traditional song’ (theme song) that “Ao” sings, it somehow made me feel nostalgic and at the same time, I was strongly drawn to its mysterious world. I knew that I had to sing this song myself, so I was overjoyed when my wish came true and I was given the role. “Ao”'s vibrant and curious nature reminded me of myself when I was 10 years old, and so I played the role by drawing on my own memories from that time. Not only is the technology fantastic, but the entire production is remarkable and filled with the passion and humanity of many people. I believe our future would be better if we paid more attention to air, water, and the earth. Please come to the venue and see the show.”

[Profile of Tomochika, who plays the role of “Dodo”, the spirit of air and water]



Born in Ehime Prefecture, she won the NHK Award for Best Upcoming Performer and the NHK Kamigata Manzai Contest in 2003.

In 2019, she won the Best Supporting Actress Award at the 28th Japan Movie Critics Award for her role in *Uso happyaku* (2018) She is also active as the singer Chieko Mizutani and as professional middle-aged part-timer Kazuo Nisho.

She is also starring in the suspense show on the YouTube channel *Film-est TV, Hot Springs Mystery: Dogo Stripper Serial Murders*.

From August 2025, she will hold the Chieko Mizutani 50th anniversary commemorative performance at the Meijiza, Shinkabukiza, and Hakataza theatres.

[Comment from Tomochika]

“I imagined “Dodo” as a cute, interesting, meddling, yet lovable creature, and I kept those qualities in mind as I played the role of “Dodo”. I hope this show will touch not only the hearts of children but also those of adults, leaving everyone with a warm feeling. I feel honored to be involved in some way with Osaka, Kansai Expo. Please come to the venue and see it for yourself.”

[Profile of Mari Natsuki, who plays “Ao’s Grandma”]



After debuting as a singer in 1973, she expanded her acting career in the 1980s to the theater and films and received several awards like the Ministry of Education Award for Arts/Best New Artist. In 1993 she established an artistic expression that maximizes her physical ability in her own conceptual performing art project: “IMPRESSIONIST”. She has dominated three major theatre festivals in the world: Sibiu Arts Festival, the Avignon Theater Festival and the Edinburgh Theater Festival. She keeps on working actively in a wide variety of fields, such as music support activities for developing countries under the “One of Love project”, narrating Mukashibanashi no Oheya (The room of folk tale) by BS TBS, and DJing for FM Yokohama “Life Goes On - SOIXANTE BLUES -” every Friday. As a voice actress, she has been in the Studio Ghibli animation Spirited Away, Isle of Dogs directed by Wes Anderson, and Walt Disney's Moana.

[Comment from Mari Natsuki]

“In playing the role of Ao's Grandma, I poured all my energy into conveying the joys of life and the future as life mentor to my grandchild. More than 50 years have passed since the 1970 Osaka Expo, and it's time to unite the strengths of Japan to the future. Please come to the venue and enjoy this experimental space of a future society.”

■Release of theme song “Niji-matsuri - Dancing under the Rainbow -” which is sung in the story

The music video for the theme song “Niji-matsuri - Dancing under the Rainbow -”, has been released. It was composed and produced by Yoko Kanno, a composer/music producer who also worked on the music for the water show. As a traditional song handed down on the island where the show is set, “Niji-matsuri - Dancing under the Rainbow -” takes its inspiration from traditional music, such as folk songs, island songs, and children's songs, and was created by searching for melodies that are remembered at the DNA level across time and space. It powerfully expresses the vitality of living creatures connected through water and air.

The illustrations for the video were done by Ryu Kato, a filmmaker who has collaborated with many famous artists and is known for his gentle and beautiful depictions of life and nature, which are important facets of this show. In “episode zero” of the story, he depicts an anecdote about a rainbow at night that happened on the island long before the main character “Ao” was born, linking the story to the traditional song.

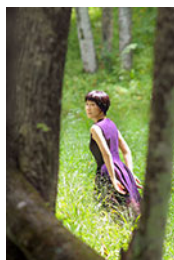
- Lyricist :Naoki Tanaka and Yoko Kanno
- Composer :Yoko Kanno
- Music Publisher :piano inc./Meow on the Bridge Inc.
- Artist (singer) :Ao (Hana Mouri)

Music Video URL :<https://youtu.be/PueVHes4weo>



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[Profile of Yoko Kanno, who composed and produced the music]



Composer, Arranger and Music Producer

Composition and Arrangement of NHK's song Flowers Will Bloom "Hana wa saku" to support the reconstruction efforts for the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami Composition and Arrangement of "Cowboy Bebop"(TV Anime Series 1998 / Live-Action Series 2021 by Netflix), "Macross Frontier" and "Ghost in the Shell - Stand Alone Complex-" Composition, Arrangement and Conducting of "Ray of Water", the celebration song for the National Festival of the 20th Anniversary of His Majesty The Emperor's Ascension to the Throne Composition and Arrangement of the Netflix series "The Makanai: Cooking for the Maiko House", directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda Featured in the 2023 edition of Newsweek's "100 Japanese People the World Respects"

[Summary of "Under the Midnight Rainbow"]

■About the Show

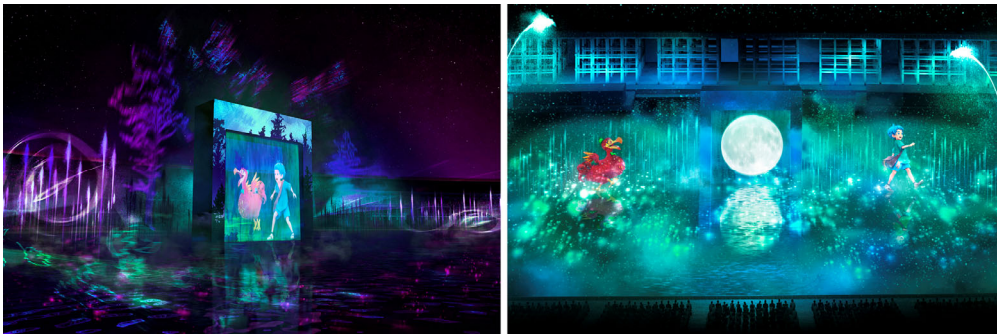
◇Majestic idea inspired by the "air" and "water" surrounding the earth

The concept of this show tells the story of a festival where air and water create protective bonds and envelop life. Air and water were born on this planet billions of years ago. All living creatures, including humans, consume air and water in passing down the baton of life and evolution. The concept of this show emanates from this fantastical idea: "If we could listen to the conversations of air and water, which have seen everything on Earth, what kinds of stories would they tell us about all that has happened on Earth? Maybe they would counsel us on the future path that we should take."

When a rainbow appears on a moonlit night on an island where legends still endure, the island creatures are rumored to hold a festival. On one such night, Ao, a child of the island, encounters a magical rainbow. In this mysterious story, Ao mingles and communicates with various creatures at the festival and is delighted.

◇Spectacular show held daily in the largest show area in Expo history

A massive stage space is being created on the water of the “Water Plaza”, which is roughly 200 meters by 60 meters in area. About 8,800 square meters are planned for the show area. At the center of the stage, a water cascade will be constructed to form a water screen. About 300 fountains will be placed in a densely arranged area together with a variety of lighting, lasers, and other production equipment. These elements will resonate with music, creating a spectacular show where visitors can experience the story.



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■About the Production

Creators who are active around the world came together in the planning and production of this show as one of the highlighted entertainment attractions for the Osaka/Kansai Expo.

Participants included Naoki Tanaka, who directed the colorful projection mapping at the TOKYO 2020 Paralympic Opening Ceremony “PARAde of ATHLETES.” Music composer, arranger, and producer Yoko Kanno, who was selected as one of Newsweek’s “100 Japanese People the World Respects” in 2023, was in charge of the music. ECA2, a French production company that has been planning and holding world-class events and shows for over 20 years, also participated with its unique mix of art and technology.

◇Staff

- Planning/Original Concept :Naoki Tanaka
- Production :ECA2
- Music :Yoko Kanno

[Related Information]

Official Water Show website :<https://www.expo2025.airandwatershow.jp/en/>

Promotional Movie :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW7Pv1p-nbQ>

Suntory Expo 2025 website :<https://www.suntory.co.jp/events/expo/2025/en/>

Daikin Expo 2025 website :https://www.daikin.com/air/daikin_achievements/expo2025

Daikin Design Web Interview with Naoki Tanaka:

<https://www.daikin.co.jp/design/2024/12/entry-101>