



CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Yasuko Naka

AREA OF PERFORMANCE: Singing, playing Irish harp



SUMMARY

Yasuko Naka is a professional performer of traditional Irish music and made her debut from a major label in Japan in 2007. She has published four CDs and a songbook that feature Irish traditional songs and she gives several live shows every year. She has expanded her performances and activities in public events including St. Patrick's events in Japan as well as in receptions hosted by the Irish Embassy in Japan. She has sung national anthems of both Japan and Ireland in those events.

Naka has shown enthusiasm in improving her skills of cultural understanding and traditional Irish singing by visiting Ireland and receiving lessons from local Irish singing tutors. She has expanded the list of songs that she can sing in Gaelic language as the result of these tuitions in Ireland.

Naka started her entertainment performance career at Takarazuka Revue, a Japanese professional musical performance group, in 1983. She is a member of Japan Celtic society, and a member of Shamrock Ladies Society of Japan.

STORY

It was the song Londonderry Air, in which melody Yasuko Naka found feelings of sorrow, strength and beauty as she heard at the age of ten, although she didn't understand what the song was about. The tune has become her most favourite song

since then.

As Naka started her own music performance career after leaving Takarazuka Revue performance group, she came across the traditional song. Naka felt the same emotion of sorrow, strength and beauty as she did at ten. She then learnt that her favourite Londonderry Air was an Irish song, not an English song as she had thought. Naka realised that Irish songs had given strong inspiration to her music spirit and that it was the music of Ireland she would want to devote herself to. Naka then started singing traditional Irish songs and playing Irish harp on her knee.

Her performance now extends to dedication performance of singing the Irish and Japanese national anthems in various events, and receptions hosted by Irish Ambassador to Japan.

SKILLS

- Singing performance of Irish traditional songs in English and in Gaelic, as well as singing English, Scottish and Welsh songs.
- Singing performance with Irish harp
- Dramatic reading performance of Irish and Japanese traditional tales/picture books in Japanese language
- Introductory lecture of Irish culture
- Singing performance of Irish national anthem in Gaelic
- Voice training
- Lecture on career at Takarazuka Revue

MAJOR PERFORMANCES / PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Jul 2023	Performance: Singing with harp at the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum in Matsue, Shimane Prefecture, Japan
Nov 2022	Performance: Singing with harp at the reading event of the poet Paula Meehan on her visit in Japan
Oct 2022	Performance: Singing with harp at The Inaugural Seamus Heaney Award Ceremony in Japan
Jul 2022	Performance: Singing of national anthems of Japan, and Ireland at reception party for Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin's Japan visit
2022-2023	Performance and lecture: Irish music for elementary schools of Iwate-machi in Iwate Prefecture
2019-2024	Performance: Singing with harping at annual event Ireland Festival of Iwate-machi in Iwate Prefecture
Dec 2019	Lecture: Irish Music at Waseda University, Japan

Nov 2019	Performance: Singing with harp at the 25 th anniversary of Sanin Japan-Ireland Association
Sep 2019	Direction and performance: Singing with harp at the 25 th anniversary of The Celtic Society of Japan
Oct 2018	Broadcast: Singing with harp in a radio programme of NHK Radio (NHK is the Japanese public broadcasting corporation of TV, radio and online)
Mar 2018	Performance: Singing of the first version of the Japanese anthem, which was written by John William Fenton (at St. Patrick's Day event in Tokyo)
Mar 2018	Performance: Singing with harp in an event hosted by the Japan-Ireland Society in Japan
Jul 2016	Performance: Singing with harp in the renewal ceremony of Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum in Matsue, Shimane Prefecture
Mar 2015-2024	Performance: Singing of the national anthems of Japan, and Ireland in St. Patrick's Day event in Tokyo
Mar 2015-2017	Performance: Dedication singing of the national anthems of Japan, and Ireland at the Tamagaike Dedication Stage of Geku, Ise Shrine
Nov 2013-2019	Performance: Singing with harp in disaster grief events in Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture
Dec 2011	Direction and Performance: Singing with harp in a Christmas event at the Home of a Diplomat in Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture
Oct 2007	Made a debut with a Japanese major music label, Victor Entertainment. Started giving live shows in Tokyo, Fukuoka and Nagoya several times every year since then. Also started playing in public events, embassy events and hospitals
Sep 2004	Started playing Irish harp
Nov 1999	Started singing Irish music in a band (also played bodhran)
2004 to now	Voice/singing trainer in Nihon Narration Acting Institute
1999 - 2008	Voice/singing trainer in Victor Music College
1985 - 1988	Performed musical plays in Takarazuka Revue (Flower troupe), a Japanese professional musical performance group

NEXT STEPS

Naka is hoping to bridge the Irish and the Japanese cultures through singings and to share them in communities as there are common elements of believing in what is invisible, in songs and stories/tales of the two countries.

Naka is interested in making an Gaelic language textbook (or a CD book) for Japanese people at elementary level as she feels the language textbooks available in Japan are a little difficult for self-learning.

STUDIES / LESSONS / EDUCATION

2016	Paula Carroll (Clare, a Clare Fun Presenter), Irish Singing
2014/2016	Mary Mac Namara (Clare), Concertina
2013 - 2019	Festus Jennings (Tokyo), Gaelic
2013	Mainead Deiseach (Dublin), Irish Singing
2004 - 2006	Mitsuyo Nishimura (Tokyo), Irish harp
2004	Roisin Cearley (Adare), Irish Singing
1983 - 1984	Takarazuka Music School

DISCOGRAPHY <https://yasukonaka.com/discography/>

Dec 2018	Tales from the Green Country, songbook of Irish music (published by Aiku Publishing)
Dec 2018	Slow & Flow (published by “cherish garden”, the artist label)
Dec 2015	Beyond (published by “cherish garden”, the artist label)
Oct 2012	Sign (published by “cherish garden”, the artist label)
Oct 2007	Windfall (published by Victor Entertainment)

MEDIA ON NAKA’S WORK, SLOW AND FLOW

Publication: Weekly Kinyobi

Music Critic: Hiroshi Matsumura

Irish songs sung in Gaelic, which gives feeling of sorrow deep inside of your heart. Ear is not transmissive. Music is something you learn and is not produced in your nature. It is not easy for a Japanese singer to sing in Gaelic. Naka continues to high level of challenge singing in Gaelic and I feel deep love and respect to the different culture in her singing. Her deep thought makes her singing shine beautifully.

Publication: Latina

Music Critic: Yutaka Oshima

This is an outstanding work of a decade. I would say to her not to hurry but continue singing in this style. Her talented singing performance has become absolutely visible after her long and diligent effort of singing. She has introduced new sides with unique arrangements of the same old familiar songs. She has successfully

exposed the real beauty of these songs by revealing inner nature of these songs, that has long sung in so common ways.

ADVISORY NETWORK

Mitsuko Ohno, Ph.D. (Aichi Shukutoku University, Aichi)

Yomiko Matsui (Irish food writer, photographer, essayist)

Naoko Yamashita (Irish government official guide)

Yoko Watanabe (Traditional Irish literature author)

CONTACT

Email: souda@t04.itscom.net

Website: www.yasukonaka.com

Tel: +81-90-8101-8582

Address: 2-13-9-207, Himonya, Meguro-ku, Tokyo Japan

(as of May 2024)