

Noh Matsukaze 松風

(“Pining Wind”)

Two sisters, Matsukaze (“pine wind”) and Murasame (“passing rain”) were in love with the exiled nobleman Ariwara no Yukihiro. Years later, even after their deaths, their spirits yearn intensely for him. Matsukaze, in near frenzy, dances wearing his hat and robe, and then mistakes a pine tree for him. The piece, in typical Noh fashion, depicts controlled yet intense inner emotions. Images of the moonlight and the pine set the mood.

Author: Kan’ami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384) and Zeami Motokiyo (1363?-1443?).)

Scene: Autumn, Suma Shore, now a part of Kobe.

Category: Third category woman play, without taiko.

Characters (in order of appearance)

- Waki (secondary actor): a traveling priest.
- Ai-kyôgen (interlude actor): a villager.
- Shite (main actor): Matsukaze (Pinning Wind).
- Tsure (accompanying shite actor): her sister, Murasame (Autumn Rain).

Synopsis: scene by scene

1. Waki entrance: A traveling priest from Kyoto, singing of the scenery he passes on his way from the capital, reaches a village by the Suma seashore.
2. Exchange between Waki and Ai: The priest sees an unusual pine tree on the beach and asks a villager about it. He is told that it is a memorial to the two salt-gathering girls, Matsukaze and Murasame, who had been lovers for a short time of the exiled nobleman Yukihiro
3. Waki song: The priest asks for lodging. The woman replies that it is too humble a hut, but the priests insist there is nowhere else. The woman finally agrees and the chorus describes how she opens the door for them, the rough reed mat braided with grass upon which they will sleep, the dew-drenched sleeves of their cloaks, the damp hut, and the misery of a traveler’s bed.
4. Entrance of Shite and Tsure: Two women, Matsukaze and Murasame, appear (on the bridgeway) on their way to Suma ashore carrying buckets for drawing seawater. They sing of the life of poor saltmakers, the moonlit seascape, and the autumn wind as they reminisce about Yukihiro.
5. Song of Shite and Tsure: The women sing of the moon while drawing brine into their buckets. They return to their hut along the seashore.
6. Dialogue between Waki, Tsure and Shite: The priest requests a night’s lodging. He at last is invited into their hut.
7. Dialogue between Waki and Shite: The priest refers to Yukihiro’s poem, the pine tree on the beach, and Matsukaze and Murasame. The two women begin weeping.
8. Narrative of the Shite and Tsure: Revealing their identities, Matsukaze and Murasame plunge deep into nostalgic memories made immediate when they bring out of the keepsake cloak and hat left by Yukihiro.
9. Shite’s mad scene: Matsukaze, yearning intensely for Yukihiro, clasps a robe and court hat, keepsakes from him. Hugging them near her, she weeps. She then puts on the robe and hat. Suddenly standing as if mad, Matsukaze points to the pine tree saying it is Yukihiro. As she moves forward, Murasame tries to stop her but she doesn’t listen. She repeats the poem Yukihiro recited when he left them, playing on the word matsu meaning “to wait” or “pine tree” : “Should I ever hear you pine, then will I return”. Recalling Yukihiro’s departure, the sisters weep.
10. Shite’s dance: Dressed as Yukihiro, Matsukaze dances the deliberate chû-no-mai dance. Again she recalls Yukihiro and approaches the pine tree. Once more she dances, this time the slightly frenzied ha-no-mai.
11. Shite’s mad scene, ending: After embracing the pine, she appeals to the priest to pray for them. Morning dawns. The spirits vanish leaving only the wind blowing in the pines.(Richard Emmert)