

QUEST PRODUCTIONS

For Immediate Release

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WHITE FROST FALLS: LOVE POEMS TO A WARRIOR

(Washington, DC) - What does a wife do when her husband goes to war? In Quest's tragicomedy *White Frost Falls*, the war bride, played by Shizumi Shigeto Manale, carries on a passionate correspondence with her absent spouse, but not by e-mail as is commonly done in today's conflicts. Shizumi's heroine is the first Empress of Japan, and her correspondence is with her Emperor husband. Set against a background of ancient Japan, *White Frost Falls* utilizes deaf and hearing actors in an exquisite piece of theatre that has captured the attention of audiences and critics around the world.

"I first developed elements of *White Frost Falls* as a solo dance piece," says Shizumi about Quest's production that was recently staged to critical acclaim as part of QuestFest at the 2003 Edinburgh Festival Fringe. "It premiered in Luxembourg in 1999 where it was named Best Performance of the Year."

Accomplished deaf performer Willy Conley, also a published playwright, and world-class physical theatre actor Mark Jaster join Shizumi, who plays the role of the Empress in the QuestFest production. *White Frost Falls* has as its origin the ancient Japanese art form of Wakka, a predecessor of Haiku.

"This show blends the unique and fascinating styles of three premiere Quest affiliate artists in a way that will mesmerize audiences," proclaims Quest founder Tim McCarty. "Mark Jaster and Willy Conley are not trained in Japanese theater, but this production affords them an opportunity to explore new aspects of their talent. It is a marvelous production that draws audiences in from the opening curtain right through to the end."

Women who were members of the imperial court generally lived separate from their husbands and would communicate by writing poems to them. Shizumi worked from this premise to develop a series of poems from the Empress to her absent husband, played by Jaster. Conley plays the messenger entrusted with this correspondence.

White Frost Falls is available for immediate booking. For booking information contact Margie Farmer at Class Acts on Tour, 410-374-9059. The performers and director are available for media interviews and features. Media should contact Paul Harrelson at Quest Productions.

For more information about *White Frost Falls* or Quest Productions check our website: www.quest4arts.org.

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