

国際演劇年鑑 2014

*Theatre
Yearbook
2014*

*Theatre
in Japan*

日本の舞台芸術を知る

NOH and KYÔGEN—KABUKI and BUNRAKU—MUSICAL—CONTEMPORARY THEATRE—
CHILDREN'S and YOUTH THEATER and PUPPET THEATER—JAPANESE CLASSICAL
DANCE—BALLET—CONTEMPORARY DANCE and BUTOH—TELEVISION and RADIO

公益社団法人 国際演劇協会日本センター
ITI / UNESCO

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Theatre Yearbook 2014

Theatre in Japan

Published in March, 2014

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Commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs,
Government of Japan in the fiscal 2013
under the 'Program for Nurturing Upcoming Artists
who lead the next generation'.

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| Plate-making | Yubido Co., Ltd. |
| Printing | Sankyosha Co., Ltd. |
| Binding | Wincam Co., Ltd. |

Printed in Japan

Foreword

The Japanese Centre of International Theatre Institute is a non-profit organization that plays a part in the international network comprised of National Centres of approximately a hundred countries and regions constituting the International Theatre Institute (ITI), which is a non-governmental organization under the umbrella of UNESCO.

The preamble of the UNESCO Constitution begins with the famous phrase “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed”. In Article 3 of the standing rules of the Japanese Centre of International Theatre Institute, it is stipulated that the purpose of the Centre is “to contribute to the development of culture and realization of peace in Japan by deepening multilateral understanding and facilitating the creations and exchanges of theatre and dance based upon the purpose of the UNESCO Constitution”.

Theatre and dance are media that have the excellent attributes of helping people to take interest in each other and enabling us to think about man and the society by sharing time and space together. Even in today’s society in which means of communication have developed and the volume and speed of conveying information have increased dramatically, the role of theatre and dance that help us gain deeper insights into man and society will not be taken away.

The Japanese Centre has continued to publish the Theatre Yearbook since 1972. From 1997, we started publishing it in two parts, namely ‘Theatre in Japan’ (the English version) for readers outside Japan and ‘Theatre Abroad’ (the Japanese version) for domestic readers. Starting from the FY 2011 edition, we have been implementing the publication by receiving commission from the Agency for Cultural Affairs under the ‘Program for Nurturing Upcoming Artists who lead the next generation’.

Furthermore, we have been presenting reading performances under the project in order to introduce remarkable plays of the world since 2009 as part of the research study activities to promote international theatrical exchange. In 2013, we translated and presented three plays from Palestine, Afghanistan and Algeria for the first time in Japan in the fifth round of the ‘Theatre Born in Conflict Zones’ series.

As of July 1, 2013, the Japanese Centre made a transition from an incorporated association into a public interest incorporated foundation and made a new start. We will continue to publish the Theatre Yearbook believing that continuation and accumulation provide the bases for culture.

We hope that you will give your continued support and cooperation to our activities in the years to come.

March 27, 2014

In commemoration of the World Theatre Day

Nagai Taeko
President

Japanese Centre of International Theatre Institute

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N.B. Japanese names are basically written in Japanese way :
family names come first and given names second.

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**Shots from the Performing Arts in Japan
in 2013**



Kanze Kiyokazu,
National Noh Theatre,
Okina (The Aged Man)
© National Noh Theatre



Umewaka Genshō, National Noh Theatre, **Super Noh Zeami** © National Noh Theatre



Kongô Tatsunori, Kongô Noh Theatre, **Shakkyô (The Stone Bridge)** © Kongô Hisanori / Yamaguchi Hiroko



Ôshima Masanobu, Ôshima Noh Theater, **Tokusa (Scouring Rushes)** © Ikegami Yoshiharu

Kyôgen



Nomura Man, National Noh Theatre, *Iori no Ume* (The Plum Blossom Hut) © National Noh Theatre



Yamamoto Tôjirô, National Noh Theatre, *Tsurigitsune* (Fox Trapping) © National Noh Theatre



Nomura Mansai, Mansaku no kai Kyogen Company / Mitsui Memorial Museum, **Kusabira (Mushrooms)**
© Masakawa Shinji



Shigeyama Sensaku IV, **Suou Otoshi (The Dropped Gift)** on November 17th, 2005
© Shigeyama-Kyogen-kai / Kawanishi Yoshiki

Kabuki



New Kabuki-za theatre opened
on April 2nd, 2013.
© Shochiku



Onmyou-ji (Sorcerer),
Ichikawa Somegorô,
Nakamura Kankurô
©Shochiku



Ichikawa Danjūrō XII playing the role of Kamakura Gongorō Kagemasa in *Shibaraku (Stop a Moment!)* at Kabuki-za (May 2003). © Shochiku



Kanadehon Chūshingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers), Matsumoto Kōshirō © Shochiku



Sukeroku yukari no Edo zakura (Sukeroku's Cherrytrees in Edo), Ichikawa Ebizô © Shochiku



Kumagai-Jinya (Kumagai's Battle Camp), Nakamura Kichiemon, Kataoka Nizaemon © Shochiku



National Bunraku theatre, ***Shinjū Ten no Amijima*** (The Love Suicides at Amijima)
© National Bunraku Theatre cooperated by NPO Ningyo Joruri Bunrakuza Mutsumi-kai



National Bunraku Theatre, ***Igagoe Dôchû Sugoroku*** (The Vendetta at Iga Pass)
© National Bunraku Theatre cooperated by NPO Ningyo Joruri Bunrakuza Mutsumi-kai



National Theatre, *Sonezaki shinjū* (The love suicides at Sonezaki)

© National Theatre cooperated by NPO Ningyō Joruri Bunrakuza Mutsumi-kai

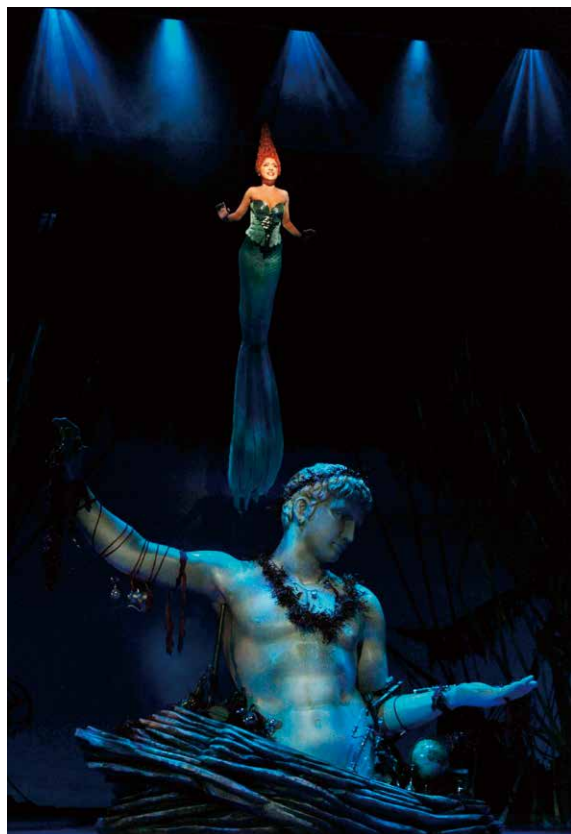


National Theatre, *Ôtōnomiya asahi no yoroi* (Ôtōnomiya's Armour)

© National Theatre cooperated by NPO Ningyō Joruri Bunrakuza Mutsumi-kai



HoriPro Inc.,
Merrily We Roll Along
© Watabe Takahiro



Shiki Theatre Company, ***The Little Mermaid***
© Shimosaka Atsutoshi



Citizens Arts Administration Center of Toyama / Toyama City,
Aubade Hall The Masterpiece Musical Performance Series Hello, Dolly! © studio wood



Toho co.,Ltd, **Les Misérables** © Toho co.,Ltd

Contemporary Theatre



mum & gypsy, *cocoon* © lida koichi



Komatsu-za Ltd. / HoriPro Inc., *The army on a tree* © Abe Takayuki



Modernswimmers, *Be Dead* © Kaneko Hiromi



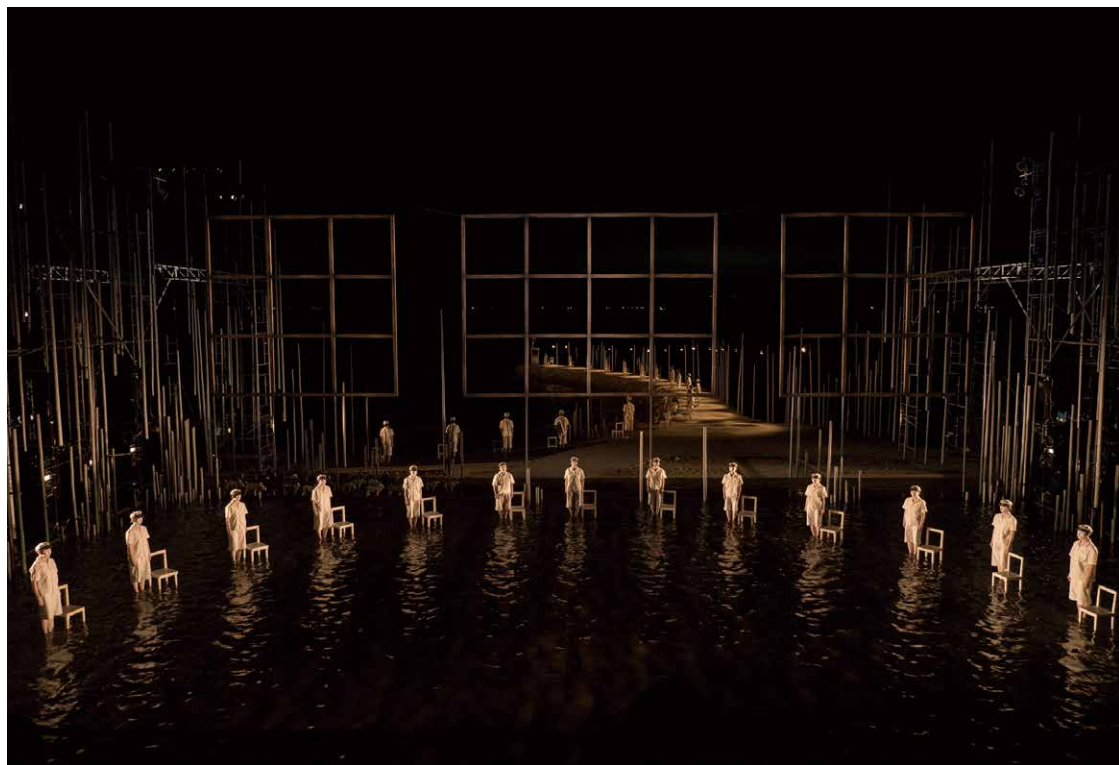
New National Theatre, Tokyo, *Edward II* © Yakou Masahiko



Saitama Gold Theater, *Raven, We Shall Load Bullets* © Miyagawa Maiko



NODA MAP, *MIWA* © Shinoyama Kishin



Ishinha, **MAREBITO** © Inoue Yoshikazu

Children's and Youth Theater / Puppet Theater



Puppet Theatre PUK, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* © Nakatani Yoshitaka



Gekidan Urinko Theater Company, *Crime and Punishment* © Shimizu Jiroo



Shiki Theatre Company, *Das doppelte Lottchen* © Abe Akihito



Nissay Theatre Family Festival 2013 *Musical Puppet Show "Go! Go! the Monkey King"* © Saegusa Chikashi

Japanese Classical Dance



Wakayagi Kichikoma,
Kiyomoto Hyôtan (The Gourd)
© Video Photo Saito



Fujima Kanemon,
Fujima Kanjūrō,
Kotobuki Shiki Sanbasō
© Shochiku



Fujima Shûtarô, Fujima Shûnosuke, *Kurui-jishi (The Crazy Lion)* © Fujima Shûtarô



Bandô Mitsuteru, Creative original Japanese traditional dance *Seshûmu – cesium (Eternity – Cesium)* © Video Photo Saito

Ballet



The National Ballet of Japan, Ballets Russes Stravinsky Evening *Les Noces* © Shikama Takashi



Asami Maki Ballet Tokyo, *The Lady of the Camellias* © Yamahiro Yasuo



Shinohara Seiichi Ballet Recital
DANCE for Life 2013 "femme fatale"
 © Tsukada Yoichi / Ito Sayaka



The Tokyo Ballet,
Mats Ek's Carmen
 © Hasegawa Kiyonori



Michiko Sasaki Ballet Company, ***The Fountain of Bakhchisaray*** © Furuichi Eiji (TES OSAKA)

Contemporary Dance / Butoh



Saburo Teshigawara+KARAS, **SECOND FALL** © Abe Akihito



Mika Kurosawa & Dancers, Minimal Dance Project vol. 3 **Big River** © Tsukada Yoichi



CONDORS, *TIME IS ON MY SIDE* © HARU



Co. Yamada Un, *The Rite of Spring* © Hatori Naoshi

Contemporary Dance / Butoh



Owlspot Theater (Toshima Mirai Cultural Foundation) / Toshima-ku, Owlspot produce
Kanshosha (Appreciator) © Ikegami Naoya



Umeda Hiroaki, **4.temporal pattern** © Hatori Naoshi



Sankai Juku, *Umusuna – Memories before History* © Sankai Juku



Kasai Akira, *I dance the Japanese Constitution* © Kamiyama Teiji

Contemporary Dance / Butoh



Kawaguchi Takao, **Kazuo Ohno** © Kamiyama Teijiro



Project Ohyama, **Odorubaka** © Matsumoto Kazuyuki

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The Japanese Performing Arts
in 2013

30 years have passed since the National Noh Theatre was founded in 1983. The National Noh Theatre is apart from holding its own programs of Noh and Kyôgen, also involved in the training of performers and collecting written materials on Noh, and in 2013, there were numerous 30th anniversary programs commemorating the occasion.

Noh and Kyôgen 2013

The 30th Anniversary of the Opening of the National Noh Theater and Awards for the World of Noh

Nishi Tetsuo

Some of these featured Kanze Kiyokazu in *Okina* (The Aged Man), Umewaka Genshō in *Yōkihi* (Imperial Consort Yang Guifei; the *Kan no kakari* and *Uten-adome* -variant), Kongō Hisanori in *Tsuchigumo*

(The Earth Spider; *Chisuji no den*- and Sasagani-variant) and others on September 15th. Also Ôtsuki Bunzō performed *Sumiyoshi môde* (Visiting the Sumiyoshi-shrine; the *Yorokobi no mai*-variant) on September 16th, Tomoeda Akiyo performed *Hagoromo* (The Feathers Robe; *Maikomi*-variant) and Nomura Man Iori no ume (The Plum Blossom Hut) on September 17th. Finally, Nomura Mansai performed the *Rômusha* (The Old Warrior) on September 20th.

In addition, there were special events hosted by the National Noh Theatre itself to commemorate its 30th anniversary including Umewaka Genshō in *Super Noh Zeami* (written by Umehara Takeshi, premiere April 19th), Katayama Yûsetsu in *Sekidera Komachi* (Komachi at the Sekidera-temple; May 29th), Kongō Hisanori performing *Dôjôji* (The Dôjôji-temple; ancient version, November 1st), Yamamoto Tôjirô in the Kyôgen play *Tsurigitsune* (Fox Trapping) and Nomura Mansaku performing *Taiko-oi* (The Drum-carrier; December 7th).

Furthermore, in October there was a special month-long

program at the National Noh Theatre titled: 'Gekkan Tokushû/Zeami 650 Years' featuring the following works attributed to Zeami; on October 2nd, the play *Hakuraku ten* (The Poet Bai Juyi; Nagakijo no den-variant), on the 9th, *Unoha* (Cormorant Feathers); on the 12th, *Sanemori* (The Warrior Sanemori), on the 18th, *Ukon* (The Poet Ukon) and on the 24th, *Tôru* (Minister Minamoto Tôru; Jûsan dan no mai-variant) and others, were performed. The same special program is being repeated this year with the same five plays performed over five days in January.

The Kongô Noh Theatre in Kyoto which moved from Muromachi-dori to Karasuma-dori ten years ago, offered a program to celebrate its 10th anniversary at the new location on November 24th with Kongô Hisanori performing *Okina* (Junitsuki ôrai-version) and *Hagoromo* (Shôgi no monogi-variant) and Kongô Tatsunori performed *Shakkyô* (The Stone Bridge) among others.

In other parts of the country, the Kita school Ôshima Noh Theatre (Hiroshima Prefecture, Fukuyama City; owned by the Ôshima Family), which has been holding performances on a regular basis, celebrated its 100th anniversary on December 22nd. The theatre has slightly fewer than 300 seats and holds four or five regular programs a year. Ôshima Masanobu performed *Tokusa* (Scouring Rushes), and Shiotsu Akio performed *Shakkyô* among other works.

The Encouragement of the Arts Award from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for the year 2012, went to Kanze school *shite* actor and 26th head of the family Kanze Kiyokazu. Born in 1959, he is the eldest son of Kanze Sakon XXV, and has also been the recipient of the Encouragement of the Arts Award for a New Performer from the Minister of Education. He presides over the Kanze Kai and is a member of the Japan

Nohgaku Association. The award was in recognition of his performances in *Teika* (The Poet Fujiwara Teika; Sodekagura and Tsuyu no himotoke-variant), *Eguchi* (The Courtesans at Eguchi; Hyôjôgaeshi-variant) and *Akoya no matsu* (Akoya's Pine Tree) amongst others.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs' Arts Festival Grand Prize 2012 (Theatre Division) for excellence went to Kanze school *shite* actor Ueda Takuji (Kansai), and Izumi school Kyôgen actor Nomura Mansai (Kanto). At present, the Agency for Cultural Affairs' Arts Festival is held separately in Kanto and Kansai and the awards ceremonies are held on different days. Ueda Takuji is the 2nd son of Ueda Teruya. He performed *Sumidagawa* (Sumida River; at the Teru no Kai). Nomura Mansai, on the other hand, is the eldest son of Nomura Mansaku and performed *Hanago* (Mistress Hanago; at the Kyôgen Gozaru no Za). Both performers are members of the Japan Nohgaku Association.

The Japan Art Academy Prize went to Kanze school *shite* actor Asami Masakuni. He was born in 1941 as the 5th son of Asami Masatake. He studied with his father, as well as Kanze Hisao and Kanze Tetsunojô VIII. He is also a recipient of the Encouragement of the Arts Award from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and The Kanze Hisao Memorial Hôsei University Noh Theatre Award and a Member of the Japan Nohgaku Association. He has successfully performed such specially transmitted roles as *Sotoba Komachi* (Stupa Komachi), *Obasute* (Abandoned Old Woman). The present award was primarily given for his performance in *Higaki* (The Ghost in the Fence).

The Kanze Hisao Memorial Hôsei University Noh Theatre Award was given to Hata Hisashi, a researcher in Nohgaku, and Awaya Yoshio, a *shite* actor of the Kita school; the Saikai Award was given to the Isshiki-chô Association for the Preservation of Nohgaku.

Hata Hisashi was born in 1939, and has been a member of the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, a professor at Musashino University and the head of the Center for Research Materials on the Noh Theatre at the same. At present, he is an honorary member of the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties and a guest professor at Musashino University. He has co-written: *Noh/Kyogen, Composers and Plays* (Iwanami shoten), *Nohgaku daijiten* (*Encyclopedia of Nohgaku*; Chikuma shobô) and others.

Awaya Yoshio was born in 1949, the eldest son of Awaya Shintaro and studied under Kita Minoru. He presides over the Awaya Kai and has performed *Dôjôji*, *Ômu Komachi* (Parrot Komachi), *Shakkyô* and other important works. He is a member of the Japan Noh Association.

The Isshiki-chô Association for the Preservation of the Noh Theatre is an organization located in Ise city (Mie prefecture), and having inherited the Ise Sarugaku tradition, the group takes part in the ceremonial Isshiki Noh that is presented at Isshiki Shrine and also carries out other programs of Noh Theatre.

In the spring decorations ceremonies, the Order of the Rising Sun, Silver and Gold Rays was awarded to Komparu school *shite* actor Honda Mitsuhiro. Born in 1942, he is the eldest son of Honda Hideo. He received tutelage under his father as well as Komparu Nobutaka and is a member of the Japan Nohgaku Association. In the fall decorations ceremonies, the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette went to Kanze school actor Ôtsuki Bunzô. Born in 1942, he is the eldest son of Ôtsuki Hideo. He received tutelage under his father as well as Kanze Hisao and Kanze Tetsunojô VIII. He is also a member of the Japan Nohgaku Association.

Although it has been three years since the Great Kanto Earthquake, programs of Nohgaku for the relief of the earthquake victims

are still being held all over the country. March 9th at the Ôhori Noh Theatre, March 11th at the Yamamoto Noh Theatre, March 13th at Kyoto Kanze Kaikan and July 30th at the Kanze Noh Theatre are some of the programs for the benefit of the reconstruction held during the year and the proceeds of these events were donated as charity.

There were a number of endeavors under the name Shinsaku (new) Noh as well as Sôsbaku (original) Noh, for example Sakurama Ujin performed in *Sengû* (The New Temple; May 26th at the Izumo Shrine), Kanô Ryôichi in *Jeanne d'arc*, (June 29th, Kumamoto Prefectural Theater), Umewaka Naohiko in *Undine* (August 1st and 2nd, Kenchôji-temple) and others. There was also Umewaka Genshō's *Super Noh Zeami*, (September 7th, Nara Prefecture Ôyodo-chô Bunka Kaikan), which was premiered at the National Noh Theatre in April.

In a unique project, the Kanze school *shite* actor Shimizu Kanji, a member of Tessen Kai, organized a program entitled, 'Gojô-Noh' (five 'old man' plays; January 18th, 19th, 20th, 24th, 25th, Tessen Kai Nohgaku Kenkyu jô). A play where the *shite* enters the stage in the form of Jô (old man) is referred as a 'Jô-mono' (Old Man Play) but in these five pieces, one play a day for five consecutive days, Shimizu Kanji played the role of *shite* in all of them. The works were, *Ema* (Votive Tablet), *Michimori* (The Old Warrior Michimori), *Saigyô zakura* (The Cherryblossoms of Saigyô), *Utô* (Rhinocero Auklet), and *Chôryô* (Strategist Zhang Liang), and they were presented in order according to the five categories of Noh plays.

Noh and Kyôgen paintings of the Japanese-Style Painter, Kawanabe Kyôsai (1831-89) were exhibited at the Mitsui Memorial Museum's Special Exhibition (April 20th - June 16th). Along with the Noh paintings there were also paintings of Noh masks and various sketches on exhibit. Associated with that was the event 'Kyôsai Paints

Kyôgen no Kai' held June 1st at the National Noh Theatre. Nomura Mansaku preformed *Sanbasô* and Nomura Mansai performed Kusabira (The Mushrooms) in hakama attire.

Moving on to the performance of the important works, the past year had many performances of *Dôjôji*. Those which were 'hiraki' (first performance of a piece) had much significance for younger actors essaying the challenge to gain recognition of their ability to stand on their own as actors, but on the other hand, there is also a deep meaning for the more experienced performers who return to the role again and again. Performances of *Dôjôji* are listed in order of date (with variant performances omitted).

Mikata Madoka, Kanze Yoshimasa, (March), Kamei Yuji, Honda Fuyuki, Ueda Kimitake, Umeda Yoshihirô, Katayama Kuroemon, Ueno Yuzô, Ueda Takuji, Kanze Yoshimasa (June), Akamatsu Yoshihide, Kanze Tetsunojô, Umewaka Genshô, Kongô Hisanori, Honda Mitsuhiro, Uzawa Hikaru.

Among the so called, 'Naraimono' (specially transmitted works) those that are thought to be the most profound are the Old Woman Plays. The names of the *shite* actors who performed these are given in chronological order.

- Sotoba Komachi* – Ôtsuki Bunzô, Kobayakawa Osamu, Komase Naoya,
Ueda Takahiro, Yamada Sumio, Sakurama Ujin,
Umewaka Genshô.
- Omu Komachi* – Nishide Akio, Uzawa Hisa.
- Obasute* – Kagawa Seiji, Katayama Kuroemon, Tanimura Ikuko,
Umewaka Masaharu, Kanze Kiyokazu, Komparu Yasuaki.
- Higaki* – Kanze Kiyokazu, Katayama Yûsetsu, Nomura Shiro.
- Sekidera Komachi* – Katayama Yûsetsu.

Memorial Noh Programs are presented not merely as offerings

to those who have passed away, but also as an opportunity for their successors or descendants to attempt great works and other especially challenging roles for the first time. The program names (including Kyôgen) are listed in order of date.

Ôtsuki Hideo 23rd Memorial Noh, Okada Rôei 7th Memorial, Kobayakawa Yasushi 23rd Memorial, Umewaka Kichinojô 3rd Memorial, Nomura Matasaburô 7th Memorial, Morimoto Shirô 17th Memorial, Yamamoto Takashi, Shigeyama Sensaku (Nohgaku za Jishû Kôen), Shigeyama Chûzaburô IV, 3rd Memorial. Umewaka Manzaburô II 23rd Memorial, Ômura Takeshi 33rd Memorial, Uzawa Masashi 17th Memorial.

The Noh performers who passed from us in 2013, are listed as follows:

- Hirota Norikazu (March 10th) Kongô school *shite* actor, 89 years old.
- Taniguchi Masayoshi (March 20th), Ishii school Ôtsuzumi performer, 86 years old.
- Shimabara Shunkyo (April 3rd) Komparu school *shite* actor 80, years old.
- Wakebayashi Koichi (April 9th) Kanze school *shite* actor, 78 years old.
- Watanabe Saburô (July 24th) Hôshô school *shite* actor, 95 years old.
- Kunieda Yoshio (August 29th) Kanze school *shite* actor, 79 years old.
- Kakei Koichi (August 30th) Ôkura school Ôtsuzumi performer, 82 years old.
- Adachi Reiko (September 30th) Kanze school *shite* actor, 88 years old.

Persons other than Noh performers, who have passed away, are next listed

- Hoshida Yoshimitsu (January 23rd) Nohgaku Critic, 85 years old.

- Fujishiro Tsugio (February 4th) Editor, 90 years old.
- Seida Hiroshi (May 16th) Nohgaku Researcher, 80 years old.
- Shigeyama Sensaku (May 23rd) Ôkura school Kyôgen performer, 93 years old. He was the eldest son of Shigeyama Sensaku III, and received tutelage under his father as well as his grandfather, Shigeyama Sensaku II. He was the recipient of the Arts Encouragement Prize of the Ministry of Culture, the Agency for Cultural Affairs Arts Festival Prize and the Kanze Hisao Memorial Hôsei University Noh Theatre Award and had been designated an Important Intangible Cultural Asset (National Living Treasure) and a Person of Cultural Merits, he was a Member of the Japan Art Academy and has received the Order of Cultural Merit. Writings include *Sengorô Kyôgen Banashi*.

Nishi, Tetsuo

Nohgaku critic born in 1937, graduated from Saitama University. He was employed at Tokyo-dô shuppan and has held positions as adjunct instructor at Musashino University, Department of Literature and at Bunka Gakuin; Review Board Member of the Agency for Cultural Affairs Arts Festival Nohgaku Department/Theatre Department; Board Member of the Arts Encouragement Classical Arts Department/ Theatre Department; Japan Arts Encouragement Society (National Noh Theatre) Advisory Panel. Co-author of *Nohgaku Daijiten* (Encyclopedia of Nohgaku, Chikuma shobô).

(Translation: James Ferner)

The Kabuki-za, which underwent reconstruction due to its age, reopened in April. The fifth in a line that was first inaugurated in 1889, this newest version of the Kabuki-za appears to be carrying a high-rise building on its back, though in keeping with the design concept: ‘succession through time’ the theatre’s exterior, stage, seats and lobby

have retained all that was good in the older design, which in the new modern framework makes for a wonderful theatre.

Beginning in April and continuing for one full year, a ‘Kokera Otoshi’ program to commemorate the reo-

pening has been underway. From April to June, top stars including Sakata Tōjūrō, Onoe Kikugorō, Matsumoto Kōshirō, Nakamura Kichimon, Kataoka Nizaemon, Bandō Tamasaburō, Nakamura Baigyoku and Bandō Mitsugorō joined forces in a three-part program which featured some of the most popular classical Kabuki plays. Although the best seats were priced at 20,000 yen, the shows enjoyed large audiences and there was a lineup of performances that superbly reflected the stage of maturity that Kabuki has reached at present. Among the pieces performed were in April, *Kumagai jinya* (Kumagai’s Battlecamp) and *Moritsuna jinya* (Moritsuna’s Battlecamp), two stately performances that were in the true style of Kabuki-performances including Gidayū-chanting. In May, *Meiboku Sendai Hagi*’s *Goten* and *Yukashita*-acts (The Disputed Succession of the Date-family, The Mansion- and The Below the Floor-acts) were solid performances, and the glamorous onnagata (actor specialized on female roles), Bandō

Kabuki and Bunraku in 2013

The Opening of the New Kabuki-za Theater,
the 300th Anniversary of the Death of
Takemoto Gidayū and the 360th Anniversary of
the Birth of Chikamatsu Monzaemon

Mizuochi Kiyoshi

Tamasaburô and Onoe Kikunosuke were enchantingly seductive in *Kyôkanoko musume ninin Dôjôji* (The two maidens at the Dôjôji-temple). In June, there was a lineup of pieces with top stars joined by some of the popular rising talents destined to be the key players of the next generation, which included a performance of *Sukeroku yukari no Edo zakura* (Sukeroku's Cherrytrees in Edo), with Ichikawa Ebizô taking the lead, along with Nakamura Fikusuke, Onoe Kikugorô, Nakamura Kichiemon, Ichikawa Sadanji and others. It was a splendidly gorgeous performance.

In July the programs were performed in two-parts, returning temporarily to the three-part schedule in August, but stabilizing in their regular two parts in September. During these three months the programs featured younger popular stars in leading roles. In July, *Kagamiyama gonichino Iwafuji* (The Second Appearance of Iwafuji at Mt. Kagami) and *Tôkaidô Yotsuya Kaidan* (Ghost Stories of Yotsuya); in September, *Shin Usuyuki Monogatari* (The New Tale of Usuyuki) and a new Kabuki play, *Onmyoji* (The Sorcerer) were staged. These four pieces featured the 40 year-old Ichikawa Somegorô along with Onoe Shôroku, Onoe Kikunosuke, Ichikawa Ebizô, Kataoka Ainosuke, Nakamura Kankurô in their 30's, and all of the performances - three great classics and one new creation - surpassed expectations in terms of acting and expression and were testimony to the grand upbringing that the current generation of actors has received and that has come to fruition this year.

Starting in October, two of the three great Kabuki works, *Yoshitsune senbon zakura* (Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees) and *Kanadehon Chûshingura* were performed in their entirety. In October, Onoe Kikugorô playing Tadanobu, Nakamura Kichiemon playing Tomomori and Kataoka Nizaemon playing Gonta

were the lead actors in each act of *Yoshitsune senbon zakura* and they were joined by the Onnagata Sakata Tôjûrô and Nakamura Baigyoku. November and December were devoted to *Kanadehon Chûshingura*: the November performance had Nakamura Kichiemon playing Yuranosuke and Onoe Kikugorô playing both Hangan and Kanbei along with a cast of veteran stars and in December, Matsumoto Kôshirô played Yuranosuke, Bandô Tamasaburô played Okaru with the other roles taken by the younger stars, Ichikawa Somegorô, Onoe Kikugorô, Onoe Kikunosuke, Ichikawa Ebizô, Nakamura Shidô, and Nakamura Shichinosuke. In these consecutive performances of this great work, the veterans and the young stars alike amply displayed their respective talents, which made for an outstanding show both months.

By December 8th, audiences at the Kabuki za topped the one million mark, and considering that half of these spectators were traveling to Tokyo from all over the country, it shows that Kabuki's popularity has indeed risen to a new level.

On the other hand, Ichikawa Danjûrô who had performances scheduled, passed away suddenly in February, and both Bandô Mitsugorô (from September) and Kataoka Nizaemon (from November) were unable to perform due to illness. Nakamura Fukusuke, who was meant to formally take the name Nakamura Utaemon VII in March of 2014 had to cancel his performances from the middle of November due to cerebral hemorrhaging, causing the ceremony of succession to be postponed. Further, Nakamura Kichiemon suffered from a gustatory disorder, though he did manage to carry out his performances. This is a concern to all and one hopes that these unfortunate occurrences are not the result of exhaustion due to overwork.

At the National Theatre in January, an old play of Kawatake Mokuami, *Yume no ichi otokodate kurabe* (The Competition of

Gallant Men on the Market of Dreams), was staged with Onoe Kikugorô in the lead, newly arranged with a modern look. In October, Matsumoto Kôshirô, Ichikawa Somegorô performed the lead of the great classic acts *Jinmon* (The Enemy Gate), *Kumiuchi* (Battle) and *Kumagai Jinya* from the play *Ichino-tani futatabi gunki* (War-records of the Second Battle at Ichi-no-tani). In November, Sakata Tôjûrô, Nakamura Kanjaku and Nakamura Hashinosuke played the central roles in *Igagoe dôchû sugoroku* (The Vendetta at Iga Pass) and in December, three rare works relating to *Chûshingura* were presented in a program entitled *Shirarezaru Chûshingura* (The Unknown Treasury of Loyal Retainers). All of these projects were worthy accomplishments, suited to the National Theatre.

Also in January at the Shinbashi Theatre, there was the memorial performance to commemorate the one-year-day of the death of Nakamura Jakuemon. His son, Nakamura Shibajaku performed Otoku in *Keisei Hangan kô* (The Courtesan of the Hangan Incense), and Okaru in act seven of *Kanadehon Chûshingura*, roles that his father was famous for, displaying the remarkable progress he has made as a performer.

The popularity that Kabuki has enjoyed in Tokyo has apparently spread all around the country. Programs at Osaka's Shôchiku za have increased with Kataoka Ainosuke active there throughout the year. The announcement of the succession of the stage-names Ichikawa Enô, Ichikawa Ennosuke and Ichikawa Chûsha were celebrated with performances which began last year at the Shôchiku za and from there moved to Nagoya's Misono za, Kyushu's Hakata za and finally to Kyoto's Minami za during 2013. Ichikawa Enô only performed when he was feeling physically up to it, but Ichikawa Ennosuke was full of vigor in *Yoshitsune senbon zakura* and *Kurozuka* (The Demon at

the Black Hill), appearing not only at large theaters, but touring all over the country. Nakamura Kankurô brought down the house at the Hakata za's large stage. Ichikawa Ebizô embarked on a rigorous performance tour starting in January with Asakusa Kabuki, then in February with a strenuous program at Le Theatre Ginza, and afterwards vigorously staging various programs of his own. These are the positive aspects of 2013, but on the down side, the Misono za, that had been an important home base of Kabuki with a long history, closed temporarily in March. There is talk of reconstruction but no details are forthcoming.

In 2013, Kabuki enjoyed a rich, full year, but there were also frequent problems, and one had a strong sense that the changing of the guard in the actors corps from the old generation to the new progressed rapidly.

In Bunraku, the art of Jôruri Puppets, last year marked the 50th anniversary of the Bunraku Association, the 300th memorial of Takemoto Gidayû, the creator of 'Gidayû bushi' - the chanting style in use today - as well as Chikamatsu Monzaemon's 360th birthday. As a result, there were a number of pieces connected to these two personages performed in both Osaka and Tokyo.

The Osaka Bunraku Theatre, the home base of Bunraku, staged five programs over the course of the year. In January, both to celebrate the New Year and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Bunraku Association, the program began with a performance of *Kotobuki shiki Sanbasô* (The Ceremonial Sanbasô Dance of Longevity), and then in the day and evening shows there was a lineup of popular festive pieces with mass appeal such as *Yoshitsune senbon zakura*, *Hiragana seisuiki* (The Records of the Rise and Decline of the Heike Family), and *Honchô nijûshi ko* (Twenty-four Dutiful

Children). In April, the day performance featured the acts *Yukashita* and *Nozakimura* (At Nozaki Village) from *Meiboku sendai bagi*, as well as the piece, *Tsuri Onna* (Fishing for wives). The evening show was a complete performance of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's great work *Shinjû Ten no Amijima* (The Love Suicides at Amajima). Both programs had audience numbers surpassing those of last year. The June program, aimed primarily at high school students with its Bunraku Appreciation Workshop, had performances of *Hidakagawa iriai zakura* (The Cherryblossoms at the Crossing of the Hidaga River), a lecture entitled 'Welcome to Bunraku', and a performance of *Ehon taikôki* (The Tycoon's Exploit) both in the morning and afternoon. The lecture was assisted by younger Gidayû-chanters, shamisen-players and puppeteers, who gave a clear demonstration of how the narration, music and puppets work together to create the fascinating expressiveness of Bunraku. The same program was held on the tenth and the 19th in the evening starting at six o'clock under the title, 'Bunraku Appreciation Workshop for Adults'. These lectures had a great significance for making Bunraku known to an audience that was mostly composed of members of the younger generation in thier 20s to 30s (80.4%).

In July, the 'Special Bunraku Program for Summer Vacation' was held in three parts. Part one (11:00) was for parents and their children and featured *Kintarô no Ôgumo taiji* (Kintarô Subdues the Great Spider) a work based on a popular fairy tale, and a lecture entitled 'What's Bunraku?'. Also a performance of *Urikohime to Amanjaku* (The Melon Princess and Amanjaku the devil), a play based on a folk tale, was staged. Part two (14:00) was a performance of act four from the masterpiece, *Imoseyama onna teikin* (The Teachings for Women at Mt Imose) and part three, the 'Summer Late Show' (18:00) was

Natsumatsuri Naniwa kagami (Summer Festival at Naniwa). The family show had an increase in audience numbers from last year. In November, the work *Igagoe dôchû sugoroku*, previously performed in Tokyo in October, was staged in its entirety over both the day- and evening shows. The day-time show began at 10:30 am and included *the Tsurugaoka* prologue which had not been performed in Tokyo.

In Osaka, we saw audience numbers rise from last year but, in comparison to Tokyo, the economy has been languishing for some time and ticket sales have been suffering.

There were four Bunraku performances held in Tokyo at the National Theatre's Small Stage. Because of the large population of Tokyo with its neighboring cities as well as its large number of classical theatre fans, Bunraku programs have continued to enjoy full houses there. The influence of the Great Tôhoku Earthquake had cast a shadow on theatergoing the last two years, but things seem to be recovering this year with attendance at any given performance up to over 90%.

The February program in Tokyo was in three parts: Part one featured the last part of *Sesshû gappô ga tsuji* (Meeting at the Crossroads in Settsû), part two *Kokaji* (The Swordsman), *Kuruwa bunshô* (Letters from the Pleasure Quarters), and *Sekitori senryô nobori* (The Sumo Wrestler's Banner of a Thousand Gold Coins), and finally part three, act four of *Imoseyama onna teikin*. The May program, in honor of the 360th Anniversary of the birth of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, featured *Sonezaki shinjû* (The Love Suicides at Sonezaki) and *Kumagai jinya* during the day and *Shinjû Ten no Amijima*, and *Kotobuki shiki Sanbasô* in the evening. The September program was a complete performance of *Igagoe dôchû sugoroku* held in conjunction with Osaka's Bunraku Theatre. This work, which is no longer performed in its entirety as a Kabuki play, received so much notice that tickets practically

sold out in advance. In December, both morning and evening shows were the ‘Bunraku Appreciation Workshop’ for the benefit of beginners and included a performance of *Dangô-uri* (The Dumpling Peddlers), the lecture ‘The Fascination of Bunraku’, and a performance of *Terakoya* (The Temple School). The evening program featured some of the leading younger performers in: *Ôtônomiya asahi no yoroi* (Ôtônomiya’s Armour) and *Koimusume mukashi hachijô* (The Love Inspired Murder). *Otonomiya asahi no yoroi* is a piece that was reconstructed by the shamisen player Tsurusawa Kinshi over a period of three years, using what was left of the original score. This was the piece that made the career of the famous puppeteer, Takeda Izumo I. With its interesting content and puppet work worthy of Bunraku, it was one of the top picks of the year. In addition, in the spring and fall there was a tour all over Japan.

Of this year’s performances, *Shinjû Ten no Amijima* and *Igagoe dôchû sugoroku*, staged in both east and west, with the appeal of its real Bunraku-style narrative, were the year’s all around best achievements. In addition, *Imoseyama onna teikin*, *Terakoya* and *Natsumatsuri Naniwa kagami* were all good, solid performances with all three artistic components in top form.

Among the Gidayû chanters, the eldest: Takemoto Sumitayû and Takemoto Gentayû both had to cancel a number of performances due to their age. Toyotake Sakitayû who has become the backbone of the chanting corps was active throughout the year. Next in line, Toyotake Shimatayû, Toyotake Hanafusatayû, Takemoto Chitoseyû and Takemoto Mojihisatayû provided solid chanting. The younger Toyotake Rosetayû and Toyotake Sakihotayû showed promising development and have become able to take on some of the bigger works. However, on the whole, one can’t deny that there is a shortage of

personnel in Bunraku today.

Tsurusawa Kanji, the elder of the shamisen-players is in good health, but also Tsurusawa Seiji, who tops the list in ability, followed by the middle ranked Tsurusawa Seisuke, Tsurusawa Enza, Toyosawa Tomisuke, Nozawa Kinshi and Tsurusawa Tôzô all had their abilities on display this year.

Indeed, of the three artistic components of Bunraku today, the shamisen is in the best shape and even among the younger players there are quite a few up and coming prospects.

Amongst the puppeteers, Yoshida Minosuke and Yoshida Bunjaku are healthy, but, in terms of physical condition, were not expected to perform as much as before and so Kiritake Kanjûrô, Yoshida Tamame and Yoshida Kazuo have been entrusted big roles. Kiritake Kanjûrô has a wide repertoire, being able to handle leading male (*tachiyaku*) and female (*onnagata*) roles as well as aged characters. Yoshida Tamame excels at the larger-than-life male roles and Yoshida Kazuo has displayed his expertise at the Onnagata roles. Also Yoshida Tamaya and Toyomatsu Seijûrô have shown their skills, while the younger Yoshida Ichisuke, Yoshida Kôsuke and Yoshida Tamaka have been developing.

Mizuochi, Kiyoshi

Born in 1936. Graduated Waseda University Department of Literature specializing in Theatre. In charge of the Mainichi Shinbun's Arts and Cultural News Department from 1970, Mr. Mizuochi also served as that department's vice-chairman, a member of the Editorial Board and Special Committee Member before his retirement. Affiliate member of the Editorial Board. From 2000, Professor at Obirin University, retiring in 2007. Professor Emeritus. Writings include: *Kamigata Kabuki*, *Bunraku*, *Heisei Kabuki haiyû ron* and others.

(Translation: James Ferner)

The numbers of musical performances in Japan are increasing year by year and there were many musicals produced in 2013 as well. Other than the old and new musicals that originally started on Broadway and in London's West End, there were Viennese musicals, musicals from Paris and South Korean musicals from Seoul, which were translated and presented in

Japanese, and also original musicals mounted by both large and small production companies. On top of that, there were many revivals of translated musicals that have ongoing popularity.

When you look around the world, it is probably only in Tokyo, that there is such a wide variety in the musical lineup, and to have so many options to choose from is a welcome situation for the audience.

A Retrospective of Musical in 2013

Even More Variety in the Musical Scene

Hagio Hitomi

The Fruits of Original Musical

Among the several musical productions in 2013, *Les Misérables*, as was expected, drew most attention. As is well known, it is a West End musical that has remained popular since its Japan premiere in 1987. This time, based on the new version that started off in London back in 2009, drastic revisions were made in the staging and it was presented to the Japanese audience for the first time. Due to the expectations from the musical fans and the extraordinary hit of the film version of *Les Misérables* in December 2012, the new version aroused the interest of people who usually do not go to see musicals. Thanks to these factors, the performances at the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo between May and July, and the following tour to Hakata-za Theatre in Fukuoka, Festival

Hall in Osaka and Chunichi Theatre in Nagoya, and the triumphant return to the Imperial Theatre were all enormously successful.

Laurence Conner and James Powell directed the new version of *Les Misérables*, and it was a visual production that drew fully on projected images (designed by Matt Kinley). It took a concrete and clear-cut approach that stimulated the audience's imagination through the usage of minimal set and dramatic lighting, which was exactly opposite to the old version. It was accessible to the audience who came to see the show after seeing the film version. On the other hand, considering the feelings of the longtime fans of '*Les Mis*', the co-directors added detailed directions that were unique to the Japanese version, and this effort turned out to be effective. It reminded us that musicals are live stage performances and therefore they evolve by receiving influence from the audience.

As for musicals with theatrical achievements, *The Cat That Lived A Million Times* was very impressive (January-February). It was produced by Horipro, which now has a strong presence following the Shiki Theatre Company and Toho, the two major production companies of musicals in Japan. It was based on Sano Yoko's picture storybook, which had been dramatized into a musical in the past (by Philippe Decouflé) and this time it was a new production by the Israeli directorial duo, namely Inbal Pinto and Avshalom Pollak (who also choreographed and designed the show). It was a vivid stage production.

Besides the simple structure and beautiful colours of the scenic design, we were reminded anew that the stage is indeed a three-dimensional space by how the stage was used in this production. The

characters suddenly appeared not only from below the stage but also from the ceiling and the walls, which surprised the audience and was also persuasive in the dramatic sense. By necessity, the actors were required to have physical capacity to do all such movements and I was fascinated by the acting, singing and dancing ability of Moriyama Mirai, who played the wayward cat character naturally and at ease. The performance of Mitsushima Hikari, who played the parts of the white cat and also the girl, was also wonderful, as she danced sinuously and sang with her transparent voice. It was indeed a lively and beautiful production.

For that matter, I would also like to mention that Horipro has been partnering with Komatsu-za Theater Company to present plays with music written by Inoue Hisashi, and this year, to my delight, they presented one of Inoue's early works under the title of *Boon and Phoon*. It was revived for the first time since its premiere in 1975, and it was as if we had found a new work by Inoue although he is not with us any more to write new plays.

A New Production Originating Outside Tokyo

Although it was presented in Tokyo for only three days, *Hello, Dolly!*, produced by Aubade Hall in Toyama Prefecture, thrilled the audience. It was a production that premiered in Japan in 2012 at the same theatre. This year, after the revival at Aubade Hall, it toured to Tokyo for the first time (in August). *Hello, Dolly!* was a great hit on Broadway back in 1954 and it was also made into a film. When it opened in 2012, the fact that the Japan premiere of such a successful title was realized in Toyama was surprising. In the past, there had been an attempt to produce the translated version of *Hello, Dolly!*, which

was, however, not realized. In other words, it had turned into masterpiece that was never presented to the public in Japan with Japanese cast, and for that reason, to have premiered the Japanese version at a regional theatre was even more surprising.

The production of *Hello, Dolly!*, which is based on a story about marriage-related confusions caused by a cheerful widow and portrayed with an array of famous numbers, was amusing and filled with the sense of happiness, making the audience relish the joy of watching musicals. The company was comprised of experienced actors such as Tsurugi Miyuki and Honma Kenichi, who played the main roles, and an ensemble that was chosen locally through auditions, which is often the case with musicals that originate in regional areas. There were some amateurs among the cast but they did pretty well on technical levels too. Above all, it was quite moving to see the highlight scene, in which the performance of the brass band of the local high school was incorporated into the storyline without making it sound contrived. The enthusiasm of making a high-quality production based in the local community could be felt. Time and money is required to produce musicals, usually making it difficult for regional theatres to carry out independently. The example of *Hello, Dolly!* will probably become a good guideline in the future for having managed to realize the production while manifesting the local identity.

The Japan Premiere of Fresh Productions

One example of an old Broadway musical that was produced in Japan for the first time, many years after its original premiere, was *Merrily We Roll Along —We Still Move On* (presented in November) and it was quite impressive. It first opened on Broadway back in 1981.

It is based on a play that was premiered in 1934 and Stephen Sondheim wrote the songs and lyrics for the musical. It may be because the show did not get good reviews when it premiered on Broadway that it was not translated and presented in Japan. After many years, it was finally presented in Japan, which may perhaps be because in recent years the musical had been reviewed anew in London and on Broadway too.

The story begins in 1976 when three young men, who used to talk about their dreams, reach middle age. The states of the three men, who have taken different paths in their lives, are depicted, and in the end, they land in 1957 and talk about their original intentions. The setting of 1957, which was when the first artificial satellite in the history of mankind was launched, effectively highlighted the fresh dreams and bonds of the three men. The refreshing feeling of the production owed to Miyamoto Amon's direction and the fresh cast. In other words, it was the triumph of the direction.

Actually, when I saw the off-Broadway performance of the title in the past, I was not very impressed. It may have been because veteran actors were cast based on their acting and singing skills or perhaps because it had problems in the direction that created a strong sense of nostalgia and left a negative impression. However, in the Japan premiere version, a positive approach was taken, going back to the characters' starting line and re-examining their dreams and bonds. Such intention was implied in the subtitle and it was indeed a stage production full of freshness.

The Japan premiere of *Little Mermaid* was another production that was full of fun. It premiered in Japan to commemorate the

sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Shiki Theatre Company. For Shiki Theatre Company, it is their third Disney musical following *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*. It is a musical adaptation of the successful animation film that premiered on Broadway in 2008. It required a huge budget but fell behind expectations. Therefore it was not produced in Japan straight away but was finally introduced to Japan after it was revived in Europe in 2012. It consisted of two picture-book-like acts, of which one had the background set underwater where the mermaid swam using a flying system and the other was the background that had shifted onshore, and thus it was a very visual production. It was an enjoyable production and the audience was able to enjoy Alan Menken's rhythmical musical numbers. Incidentally, Shiki Theatre Company also revived *Ri Koran*, *Foreign Hill* and *Southern Cross* one after another under the program titled *Historical Trilogy of the Showa Era* to commemorate its sixtieth anniversary and moreover repeatedly presented musicals from its repertoire.

In terms of new productions, *Next to Normal* was another musical that had a great impact. It was based on the subject matter of depression, depicting a family of today. It originated off Broadway and was premiered on Broadway in 2009. It won the Pulitzer Prize and to be honest, the theme was very heavy. When I saw the premiere, I thought about the pride and the big capacity of the creators of American musicals to have realized such a production. I had imagined, however, that it would be difficult to present the title in Japan and therefore I was all the more impressed when it was actually translated and presented in Japanese as well. The caliber of the actors who managed to sing the difficult numbers and perform difficult roles indicated that the level of Japanese musical actors in general had improved.

Multinational Musicals and the Spillover Effect From Korea

The originating country of musicals is becoming more and more multinational. Since *Elizabeth* was premiered in Japan (1996), *Mozart!*, *Dance of the Vampires*, *Rebecca* and *Rudolf*, *The Last Kiss* have been presented, and Viennese musicals have taken root in Japan. *Romeo and Juliet*, which toured to Japan after its successful run in Vienna, originated in Paris, as did *Mozart*, *The Rock Opera*, which premiered in Japan in 2013. Additionally, *The Count of Monte Cristo* by the same writer-composer duo as *Rudolf*, *The Last Kiss*, which originally started in Switzerland, also premiered in Japan in 2013.

The benefit of having musicals from various parts of the world is that after acquiring the rights to the music and script, the staging can be changed freely. There may be nothing surprising about it but actually it has not been possible with the big hits from Broadway and London of recent years. As seen in the success of *Elizabeth*, if there were good musical numbers and the directors understood the sentiments of the Japanese audience when they directed the musicals, there were chances that they would become popular successes. The Japanese musical producers are making their antenna go up around the world, searching for potential hit musicals presently.

Such situation of Japanese musicals may seem quite amazing but there have also been quite a lot of repercussions from South Korea. The capital Seoul has become a huge hub of musicals over the past ten years and the number of musicals presented in Korea has surpassed that of Japan. In an article published in the New York Times at the end of 2013, a producer from Broadway wrote, "South Korea has now become an important buyer of Broadway musicals." In fact, *A Tale of*

Two Cities (premiered on Broadway in 2008) and *Next to Normal* as well as *The Count of Monte Cristo*, that originated in Switzerland, were all presented in Seoul before coming on the Japanese musical scene.

There have also been an increasing number of cases in which original musicals from small theatres in Seoul are translated and presented in Japanese. The original Korean production of *Chonganne-Oishii Jinsei Otodokeshimasu* (We Will Deliver Your Life) was also presented in November (the Japanese version was presented in April). It was presented at Amuse Musical Theater opened in April 2013 as a resident theatre for Korean musicals, where seven productions have already been presented during the opening year.

I also wanted to write about original musicals by The Musical-za and ATELIER DUNCAN but I have run out of space. It seems that the Japanese musical scene is still in the making.

Hagio, Hitomi

After her career as a newspaper journalist, she became a film and theatre critic. She writes theatre reviews for Tokyo Shimbun and running columns for musical magazines. She is the author of *Take Me to the Musicals*, *A Hundred People of Les Misérables*, etc. She has also written and edited books such as *Broadway Musicals—All About the Tony Awards* and *My First Musical Film—Hitomi Hagio's 50 Best Selections*.

(Translation: Sumida Michiyo)

More than two years have now passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake but the marks left by the earthquake and tsunami still run deep, and no end is in sight for the ongoing Fukushima nuclear crisis. Following the general election at the end of 2012, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo has made a comeback and the economy has improved somewhat due to drastic monetary easing. Nonetheless, economic disparity remains as grave as it was before, as the government eyes the re-starting of the nuclear power plants and aims to pass a resolution on the

right to collect self-defense. Meanwhile, diplomatic relations with China and South Korea have soured, and the Special Secrecy Law forced through parliament at the end of the year has been widely criticized as a serious erosion of the public's right of access to information. The theatre world also protested against the law in a joint statement by theatre companies, including Engeki Shudan En, Zenshinza, Haiyuza, Bungakuza, Mingei and Mumeijuku, while the International Theatre Institute-Japanese Centre, Japan Playwrights Association and AICT-IATC Japan issued a statement calling for a measured debate.

Contemporary Theatre in 2013

Theatre Artists in their Thirties, Leading the Way in Examining the Post-3.11 Reality

Yamaguchi Hiroko

Young and Mid-Career Artists Confronting Reality

In such a society of stagnation and such festering ugliness, what stood out in 2013 were the works by artists in their thirties that boldly confronted the world today.

One of the highly acclaimed works was mum & gypsy's *cocoon*. Adapted from the manga by Kyo Machiko (b. 1980), it was written and

directed by Fujita Takahiro (b. 1985). Although not specified per se, the setting was Okinawa in 1945. It told the story of young girls, based on the Himeyuri students (the so-called Lily Corps), and who experience the horrors of war. Rather than studying the war as history, though, the play succeeded in winning audience empathy through vividly employing the bodies of the young actresses living in the here and now.

Horai Ryuta (b. 1976) gave us two plays that left a strong impression. The first was *Ki no ue no guntai* (The army on a tree) (Komatsu-za, HoriPro), which was adapted from a work of the same title left by the late Inoue Hisashi. It is the story of two soldiers who, not knowing the war has ended, hide for two years in a banyan tree on Okinawa. The other was *Shinde, iru* (Be Dead), written and directed by Horai at the end of the year for his own theatre company, Modernswimmers, and which examined the “absence” of a Fukushima female high school student who runs away while staying at her aunt’s house as an evacuee from the Fukushima accident.

Okada Toshiki (b. 1973) and his company chelfitsch have participated in many overseas theatre festivals, and in *Genzaichi* (Current Location; premiered in 2012) and the new play *Jimen to yuka* (Ground and Floor), both of which he wrote and directed, he expressed the tensions of living in the wake of the Fukushima disaster. *Jimen to yuka* also incorporated issues of income disparity, revealing a cross-section of society.

In *Kemono no hashira* (Beast Column), written and directed by Maekawa Tomohiro (b. 1974) and staged by his company Ikiume, a mysterious column falls down on a city, preventing people from thinking or feeling happiness. This column is a metaphor for nuclear power and radiation, connecting sci-fi narrative with reality today.

Ryuzanji's *Atomic Storm* took Tsukuda Norihiko's play, written in 1992 when he was 28, and radically revised it into a musical. Directed by Nakayashiki Norihito (b. 1984), the musical presented with ribald energy, anger and humor a near future where new nuclear power plants are being built thick and fast, meaning a plan is made to dispose of the used nuclear fuel monthly. Meanwhile, Nakatsuru Akihito (b. 1973) wrote and directed *Raihosha* (Visitors) for his company Trashmasters, dealing with the issue of the Senkaku Islands.

Plays confronting modern history also attracted attention. Ori Kiyoshi (b. 1972) wrote *Kokugo no jikan* (Japanese Language Class) for fukinkobo, which considered language and human identity through the enforcing of Japanese language education on the Korean peninsula when it was governed by Japan. In *Chi wo wataru fune—1945: Achikku muuzeamu to kijutsushatachi* (The Ship that Crosses the Earth: The Attic Museum and the Describers), Tegamiza's Osada Ikue (b. 1977) explored the ethnology research institute created by businessman Shibusawa Keizo in his home, and the fates of the people who gathered there. Scriptwriter Ishikawa Ken (b. 1978) and director Hisawa Yusuke (b. 1976) of the troupe Chocolate Cake revived *Tate, uetaru mono yo* (Arise, ye prisoners of want), a portrayal of the United Red Army incident, and also staged a new play, *Chiten no kimi* (The Lord Who Rules), with the Taisho Emperor as its protagonist.

And not just playwrights, the work of directors from this generation was also singular.

Mori Shintaro (b. 1976) staged Jean-Paul Sartre's *Dirty Hands* (Subaru) and Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* (New National Theatre, Tokyo), plays rarely seen in Japan today, brilliantly resurrecting their universality. With productions of Martin McDonough's *The Pillowman* (Natori Theatre Office), Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming*

(Runs First), Michael Hollinger's *Opus* (New National Theatre, Tokyo), and David Mamet's *The Cryptogram* (Setagaya Public Theatre), Ogawa Eriko (b. 1978) exhibited her masterly finesse in directing contemporary British and American drama (and, with the exception of *Opus*, her translating as well). Tani Kenichi (b. 1982) was also acclaimed for his translation and direction of Mark St. Germain's *Freud's Last Session* (Dull-Colored Pop).

Miura Motoi (b. 1973) broke down and restructured Chekhov's plays using his unique verbalized stage language. With his troupe Chiten he constructed Under Throw, a new theatre space in Kyoto City, opening with *Chiten no kinmiraigo* (Chiten's Near-Future Language), which staged a text made from a collage of a sci-fi narrative and newspaper articles from the day of the performance.

Veterans Still Strong

Those long working at the forefront of the theatre world in Japan also left a strong mark this year.

Director Ninagawa Yukio has now turned 78 but staged hit productions one after the other with star actors in the lead roles, from Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *The Merchant of Venice* to Kara Juro's *Modoken* (Guide Dog) and *Kara-ban take no shiraito* (The Water Magician, Kara-Version). On the other hand, at the Sai-no-Kuni Saitama Arts Theater in Saitama Prefecture where Ninagawa serves as artistic director, he develops work with two groups: Saitama Gold Theatre, with senior performers, and Saitama Next Theatre, with younger performers. He staged brilliant theatre with unknown actors. In particular, with the Saitama Gold Theatre he produced *Karasu yo, oretachi wa tama wo komeru* (Raven, We Shall Load Bullets) (written by Shimizu Kunio), where elderly women took over a courtroom.

This radical piece of theatre that swayed established authority overwhelmed audiences through the vigor and potency performed by the actually aged bodies of the women. The Paris run was also acclaimed.

Noda Hideki, based at the Tokyo Metropolitan Arts Theatre where he is artistic director, performed the lead role for the first time in a play he did not write, *Onore napoleon* (L'honneur de Napoléon) (written and directed by Mitani Koki), as well as writing, directing and starring in *MIWA* by his own company NODA MAP. The meeting of these two popular writers for *L'honneur de Napoléon* made a big stir. In *MIWA*, Noda deftly created a kind of biographical play based on Miwa Akihiro, the actor and singer still working today, with the role shared by two performers, Miyazawa Rie and Furuta Arata. Miwa is from Nagasaki and experienced the atomic bombing of the city. He is openly homosexual and has weathered the ups and downs of working in the entertainment industry. He sang a self-penned song symbolizing his unwavering way of living at the NHK *Kohaku Uta Gassen* New Year singing contest TV show at the end of 2012 and it was a sensation. Though it might just be coincidence, Noda's play thus appeared in the midst of the umpteenth surge in Miwa's popularity. Mitani also wrote and directed another successful new play, *Horobwittsu to no taiwa* (Dialogue with Horowitz).

Among revivals of older work, there were also productions that attracted attention for re-interpreting the present.

Bungakuza staged a Brecht play for the first time with *Life of Galileo* (directed by Takase Hisao), accusing a scientist who is silent in the face of the truth. The realism that this theatre company has made its forte connected the theme more strongly with our daily life in the wake of the nuclear disaster. With his own troupe Nagatsuka Keishi (b. 1975) directed Miyoshi Juro's *Okashita mono* (Risk-Takers) (1952),

an acute condemnation of nuclear weapon and which also resonated with the present day. And in Fukuda Yoshiyuki's *Nagai bohyou no retsu* (The Long Row of Grave Stones) (first produced in 1957), staged by Miyata Keiko, artistic director of the New National Theatre, Tokyo, the tale of a university which finds its autonomy and freedom of scholarship suppressed in 1938 reverberated in our current society.

2020 and Changes in the Support Environments for the Arts

Since the inauguration of the Japan Arts Fund in 1989, public support for the arts has greatly expanded. Although issues still remain, such as the immaturity of the operating environments and the paucity of subsidy compared to overseas, discussion has been growing in a range of places, including local government, over how to give public support to theatre and artistic activities, and the kind of contributions that the arts can make to society.

What has attracted attention here is the framework of the arts council, the system for supporting the arts started in the UK that maintains a fixed distance from the state. Not simply allocating subsidies, experts also appraise results and offer suitable advice and suggestions. Drawing on this as a model, arts councils have now begun to roll out through the Japan Arts Fund (national), and in Tokyo, Osaka Prefecture and Osaka City, and Okinawa Prefecture. The structures and functions are different but all has begun, embracing the same problems that face the arts in Japan: staff positions, ambiguities of jurisdiction, understaffing of experts, and deficiencies of budget. It will surely take more time until each organization is functioning fully, but we can expect them to build connections between society and the arts.

A case study might be the Saison Foundation. It was founded in 1987 out of private investment by Tsutsumi Seiji, who passed away

in November 2013. In the 2012 fiscal year it provided a total of 60 million yen in subsidy to 47 applicants, mainly in theatre and dance. But not only funding, the detailed counseling from its full-time staff with knowledge and connections also provides much assistance to young and mid-career artists.

There was also a new development with the establishment of the Open Network for Performing Arts Management (ON-PAM) for stage producers to talk proactively. Aiming to gather industry people together in a private capacity and upgrade the environments for the arts, it has started to run symposia and meetings. Here too core membership is made up of theatre producers in their thirties.

Tokyo was awarded the 2020 Summer Olympic Games and Paralympics. Cultural events will accordingly be coming under review from now. It is forecast that in connection with the Olympics Tokyo will see its cultural budget expand. The wisdom and motivation of theatre people will then be tested when it comes to how to use this effectively and play a part in creating a rich cultural city.

Amongst this, the drift of international performing arts festival Festival/Tokyo (F/T) has drawn attention. F/T13 was the sixth time the festival had been held and took place for one month over November and December with the theme “travels with narratives”. After the festival had closed, though, it was announced that program director Soma Chiaki (b. 1975) was being replaced from 2014 by Ichimura Sachio (b. 1949).

While diplomatic relations turned frosty, the performing arts nonetheless created strong ties with East Asia. BeSeTo, the theatre festival started by director Suzuki Tadashi with Chinese and Korean theatre people, was held for the twentieth time, and for the first time in Japan in three years. Co-presented by the Japan Foundation and

Aomori Museum of Art, *SHUGEN - Celebration/Expression* (written and directed by Hasegawa Koji) was a Japanese-Chinese-Korean co-production, staged in all three countries.

Osaka theatre company Ishinha staged the epic *MAREBITO** (directed by Matsumoto Yukichi) on Inujima, an island in Okayama Prefecture, as part of the Setouchi Triennale, a contemporary art event. Incorporating the actual sea into the play, the stage on this small island connected through the intermediary of water out to Asia and the world.

* *Marebito* is an ancient Japanese word referring to a divine spirit or being that brings a gift from afar.

Yamaguchi, Hiroko

Born in Gunma Prefecture in 1960. Graduated from the Department of Science at Ochanomizu University. In 1983 she joined the Asahi Shimbun newspaper, working at its Tokyo and west Japan (Fukuoka) branches, and Osaka head office. She worked mainly as a reviewer and reporter on cultural news, in particular for theatre. After working on the editorial board, she is now a leader writer.

(Translation: William Andrews)

For several years now, the trend has continued of fewer children being born and this year is no exception. In depopulating areas, due to the consolidation of elementary and middle schools, the number of schools is declining. This is tied to a reduction in the number of people to see children's and youth theater and has an influence on the activities of theater troupes.

According to the data up to 2009 compiled by the Nihon Jidô Seishônén Engeki Gekidan Kyôdô Kumiai (Japan Children and Youth Theater Troupe

Association) or Jienkyô for short, elementary school performances are down to 25.29%, middle school performance are down to 16.50% and high school performances are down to 27.06% compared to the peak figures. Productions like "Oyako Gekijô (Parent and Child Theater)" and "Kodomo Gekijô (Children's Theater)" which were meant to expose children to top-quality culture are particularly low and are down to 13.12% of their peak. Schools are losing the ability to invite theater troupes to give performances and with performances that charge admission, putting the burden on the parents and guardians of the children to carry the cost, there are an increasing number of households that have difficulty surviving economically and an increasing number of household that are unable to spare money for admission fees to theatrical performances. In the 2011 fiscal year, the percentage of students in elementary and middle school that require financial assistance has risen to 15.6%.

The "Jidô Engeki Chihô Junkai Kôen (Children's Theater Regional Tour)" sponsored by the Nihon Jidô Engeki Kyôkai (Japan

Children's and Youth Theater and Puppet Theater in 2013

A Summer Full of Family Festivals

Yokomizo Yukiko

Children's Theater Association) aims at showing fine quality children's theater to the children in places with declining populations and this is its 54th year. In spring, 13 theater troupes toured, including "Puppet Theater la Clarté" and "Gekidan Urinko Theater Company" and in autumn 17 troupes toured, including "Poplar Theatre Company" and "Gekidan-Angel." Even though these tours have the support of arts foundations, they charge admission. One of the results is that due to budgetary restraints the theater troupes present small-scale plays with small casts.

By contrast, the "Tour of Authentic Cultural Arts for the Children that will Support the Following Age to Experience (formerly known as 'Performances of Authentic Stage Arts'" sponsored by the Japanese National Cultural Agency is beginning to be very influential. It sponsors free performances in elementary and middle schools throughout Japan of music (including opera, orchestral and choral music), children's theater (including puppet theater), dance (ballet and other forms), and traditional Japanese performing arts (including Kabuki, noh and kyôgen). The budget is 4.784 million yen, an increase of 282 million yen over the previous year. Dividing the country into 9 blocks, there were a total of 1,500 performances by a total of 106 groups including Puppet Theater "Puk", Gekidan "Kaze-no-Ko (Children of the Wind)", Gekidan "Nakama (Friends)", Tokyo Engeki Shudan "Tokyo Theatre Company Kaze (Wind)", Nihon Philharmonic Orchestra, Ôkura School Shigeyama Kyôgen Kai, Kobayashi Noriko Ballet Theater and Wanpaku Yose (Children's Rakugo Theater)." These performances included workshops and artists were sent to a total of 2,500 separate venues. As a rule, there are supposed to be 2 performances in 6 years for elementary schools and 2 performances in 3 years for middle schools, but the schools themselves apply

every year for performances by different genres. Since the performances are free, this has had the undesirable effect of making schools only want these performances and avoid the performances sponsored by private organizations that must charge for the performances. The schools apply to local municipal and prefectural governments and these institutions select what schools get what performances so at present, the role of the Japanese Cultural Agency is simply to provide financing.

Performances aimed at children are concentrated in the summer. This year was the 41st “Summer Vacation Children and Youth Theater Festival” (July 20 – August 7 at the Zenrosai Hall and Puk Theater) sponsored by Jienkyô. In addition to *Hoshi no Ôji-sama* (The Little Prince) and *Boku wa Afurika ni Sumu Kirin Desu* (I am a Giraffe Living in Africa)” by Gekidan “Nakama,” there were 22 theater troupes performing 24 different pieces plus 6 workshops.

One of the most prominent international festivals, the “Kijimunaa Festa 2013,” the popular name for the “2013 Kokusai Jidô Seishônien Engeki Fesutibaru Okinawa (2013 International Children and Youth Theater Festival Okinawa),” was held for the eighth time. Sponsored by Okinawa City and ECO Okinawa, it was held from July 20 to 28 with events at 7 venues. There were 17 groups invited from abroad that gave a total of 58 performances and 13 groups invited from Japan that gave a total of 52 performances. For pieces sponsored by the presenting groups themselves, there was one group from abroad with 3 performances and 8 groups from Japan with 24 performances. There were 32,000 total audiences. There were many notable groups including the superb acrobatics of “Funmo,” a group from China and a silent piece from the Russian group “Handmade” with a new genre of dance using arms, legs and fingers. The Kijimunaa

Festival has grown into a festival that is now highly regarded abroad. For his achievements with this festival, Shimoyama Hisashi, the overall producer of the festival was recognized by the Japanese government, which gave him the Arts Prize of the Minister of the Ministry of Culture and Science.

The Osaka International Children and Youth Art Festival "TACT/FEST" (July 29 - August 11) had 9 groups from abroad performing 9 pieces, including *Aston's Stone* from Sweden and *Mr. Adam and Mrs. Eve* from Denmark. The performance venues were scattered and included the Osaka Abeno Kumin Center and libraries and combined with the relatively weak local connection, there were only audiences of 3,000. However there was high regard for the hard work of artistic director Nakadachi Kôhei who persisted with holding the festival despite almost no public financial support.

The Nissei Theater Family Festival (July 20 - August 25) commemorated its 20th year. This also corresponds to the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Nissei Theater and was a lavish presentation with five pieces from genres as varied as concerts, opera, ballet, Kabuki and musicals performed on weekends. This festival intended to allow parents and children to enjoy theater together in a luxurious location began in 1993. In addition to *Alice's Wind Instrument Concert*, a musical puppet play by the Ningyô Gekidan "Hitomi-za" entitled *Tobidase ☆ Songoku* (Go! Go! the Monkey King), the opera *Hansel and Gretel*, the Tani Momoko Ballet Troupe's *Swan Lake*, and for the first time in five years, there was a performance of Kabuki. Onoe Kikunosuke and Onoe Ukon presented the comic Kabuki dance, *Bô Shibari* (Tied to a Pole) and Kikunosuke presented the solo dance, *Sagi Musume* (The Heron Maiden).

There were many musicals aimed at children. The Gekidan Shiki

theater troupe presented a dramatization of a novel by the American writer of literature for children and young adults Lloyd Alexander, *Ningen ni Naritagatta Neko* (The Cat Who Wished to Be a Man), and a dramatization of a novel by mystery writer Akagawa Jirô, *Yume Kara Sameta Yume* (Waking Up From a Dream Into a Dream). The musicals *The Lion King* and *The Little Mermaid* are continuing their long runs. It is now 33 years since the first presentation of *Peter Pan* in Japan. The first Peter Pan was Sakakibara Ikue and this year Yuzuki Fuka made her debut, making her the 9th actress to play Peter Pan. The musical *Happa no Furedi*- (Freddy, the Leaf) production and original concept by Hinohara Shigeaki, showed the preciousness of life through the story of the life cycle of a leaf. Among the many presentations this year, there was also the silhouette play *Yasashii Rion* (The Gentle Lion) by the Kage-e Ningyô Gekidan (Shadow Play Puppet Theater Troupe) “Tsunobue” which is commemorating the 50 anniversary of its founding.

First in the best 3 productions of theater directed at children and youth was *Tsumi to Batsu* (Crime and Punishment) by Gekidan “Urinko” (original by Dostoevsky, script and direction by Yamazaki Seisuke). This was a very moving production that boiled down this very long novel into a two-hour play directed at young people and while remaining true to the difficult to understand world of the original and its themes, could be sufficiently understood by young audiences. The second was *Iede de Densha* (Running Away From Home by Train) by “Clarté” (original by Asano Atsuko, script by Matsumoto Akiko and directed by Miyamoto Atsushi). Sakurako is a young girl who has a fight with her mother and gets on a train to run away from home. It was an entertaining puppet play that used a giant set representing a train and that clearly showed the changes in her feelings and

the ultimate reconciliation of Sakurako and her mother. The third was *Mezase! Himitsu no Koppajima* (Wake Up, Secret Koppa Island!) by Gekidan "Tanpopo (Dandelion)" (original by Shirogane Yumiko, script by Matsushita Tetsuko and directed by Fujita Asaya). It used projections and concisely showed the way that the protagonist matured as he went through various adventures.

During the winter vacation, performances of children's theater by established modern theater companies were particularly striking. These included musicals like *Futari no Rotte* (Das dropplte Lottchen=Lottie and Lisa) by Gekidan "Shiki," and *Scrooge* by Hori Pro and plays like *Ginga Tetsudo no Yoru* (The Night of the Milky Way Express) by the Tokyo Engeki Ensemble, a dramatization of Marshak's *Mori wa Ikite Iru* (The Twelve Months) by Gekidan "Nakama" and a staging of the poet Tanikawa Shuntarô's *Obake Ringo* (Just One Apple) by Engeki Shudan "En."

For puppet theater, the annual "Iida Puppet Theater Festa" (August 6 - 11) is the largest puppet theater festival in Japan. It is held in the city of Iida in Nagano Prefecture and is commemorating its 15th year. This year the period was extended from 4 days to 6 days. It was held together with the "Asia Puppet Theater Festival." In addition to puppet theater troupes from South Korea and China, the "Ty Chien Troupe" from Cambodia, the theater troupe "Khao Niaow" from Laos and the "Yakshagana" puppet theater from India came to Japan and in addition to performances held joint workshops. From 5 Asian countries there were 11 troupes including both traditional and modern troupes. Of the troupes giving performances, there were 108 professional troupes and 162 amateur troupes and including troupes only watching performances, the number of puppet theater people participating numbered 367 troupes and 1884 people. The total

number of audiences was 47,033 and it was supported by a volunteer staff of 2,573. The city of Iida was very lively with performances in places ranging from cultural halls and municipal centers to parks.

In Japan, small puppet theater troupes with only one or two members are very numerous and among them, the puppeteer Taira Jô stands out as a star. It is said that there are 2,000 troupes, but how accurate this figure may be is unclear.

One example of a puppet theater troupe is Gekidan “Puk.” It has its own Puk Theater (capacity 100) and has 72 members in the troupe which usually move in two groups. In order to guarantee a supply of artists, the troupe has begun a training school and of the graduates of the short course, 4 have entered the troupe, increasing the organization’s fighting power.

The major summer production *The Wizard of Oz* (Tokyo, Kinokuniya Hall) also toured all through Japan. There were also creative touches with the puppets; Dorothy was small and cute, but the Cowardly Lion and the Tin Man were almost life-size. The traditional performance at the end of the year was *Juni no Tsuki no Takibi* (The Torchlight of the Twelfth Moon) at the Puk Theater which was full. By contrast to Marshak’s *Mori wa Ikite Iru*, this piece was a staging of a Slovakian folk story (script and production plan by Kawajiri Taiji).

There is also the “La Pupa Teatro” series, which is billed as, “puppet theater that adults want to see.” In October this series presented a modern version of Aesop, *Yakusoku* (The Agreement) and *Kachikachi Yama* (Crackling Mountain: The Rabbit’s Revenge on the Badger). At the same time, in response to a request from a theater going group to create a play for children aged 0 to 3, *Ara, Doko da* (Where is This?) (by Kanzawa Toshiko). The theater troupes “Clarté,” “Hitomi-za” and “Musubi-za” also created pieces in response to this request.

The Japanese National Cultural Agency sponsored the “Jidai o Ninau Kodomo no Bunka Geijutsu Taiken Jigyô (The Project for the Children that will Support the Coming Age to Experience Culture and the Arts)” selected as puppet theater troupes: “Puk,” “Gaishi Sokkyô Ningyô Gekijô (Mr, Guy’s Improvisatory Puppet Theater),” “Kawasemi-za,” “Edo Ito Ayatsuri Ningyou-za,” Edo Ito Ayatsuri Ningyo “Youkiza” and Kage-e Ningyô Gekidan “Minwa-za” and had them tour and give performances throughout Japan. As part of this project, “Puk” presented *Tebukuro o Kai ni* (Going to Buy Gloves) (original by Niimi Nankichi, script and direction by Shibasaki Yoshihiko) and *The Nutcracker* (original by Tchaikovsky, arrangement and production plan by Kawajiri Taiji, directed by Hase Akio) and spent one year touring Hokkaido and the areas in Tohoku affected by the earthquake and tsunami, with 99 performances in 86 days.

The “Puk” troupe has a large group and a small group and this year there was a great increase in performances. In 2013 there were 27 pieces, and 406 total performance days and a total of 494 performances (in 2012 there were 310 performance days and 373 total performances). It was a very busy and fulfilling year and the new productions were *Odango Kororin* (The Dumpling Goes Falling)”(by Kawajiri Taiji, directed by Kurihara Hiromasa) and a Ukrainian folk story *Tebukuro* (The Gloves) (script by Nishimoto Katsuyoshi, directed by Ii Haruhiko).

“Youkiza” presented *Aoi no Ue* and *Kantan* from Mishima Yukio’s *Modern Noh Plays* directed by Matsumoto Susumu (June 19 – 23, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre East). It was advertised as a production on the eve of the commemoration of the 380th year since the founding of the troupe.

When “Hitomi-za” appeared as part of the “Nissei Family

Festival” they introduced several innovations including large puppets suitable for a large theater like the Nissei Theatre.

The O Fujin Prize for Children and Youth Theater is given to a female theater professional for long time contribution to children and youth theater (awarded by the Nihon Jidô Engeki Kyôkai) and the 23rd prize was awarded to Izumi Rin.

Yokomizo, Yukiko

Theater critic. Regular Director of the Japan Theater Association, member of Tomin Gekijô series evaluation committee, member of Kabuki Circle Productions. After being an editorial executive at the Jiji Tsûshin communications company, she has been a judge for the arts festival sponsored by the Japanese National Cultural Agency, a member of the theater committee of the Geijutsu Bunka Shinkô Kikin (Arts Culture Foundation) and a lecturer in the Arts Division of Nihon Daigaku University. She is a member of the Buyô Hihyoka Kyôkai (Dance Critics Association), Saitama Bungeika Kyokai (Saitama Prefecture Writer's Association) and the Kokusai Engeki Kyokai (International Theater Institute). Her published translations include *Practical Stage Make-Up* (joint translation) and her books include *Yume o Kataru Yakusha-tachi* (Actors Talk of What They Dream of Doing).

(Translation: Mark Oshima)

Japan has arrived as a modern nation and in light of its unstable tendencies, the need for education in traditional culture has begun to be elucidated as a matter of national policy. But when we say, 'traditional culture', it must be acknowledged that traditional nationalist spirit or love of one's hometown which were current in the Meiji Period and

had their own basis in the Meiji Restoration's return to the traditional view, which became the prerogative of the late modern nation, must never be confused with the independent

A Look Back at Nihon Buyo in 2013

Expectations of an Artistic Creativity from a Hybrid of Traditions

Hirano Hidetoshi

view of traditional culture held by the people.

In considering Japan's modern cultural arts, the first thing that comes to mind is the rise and establishment of western music within the 150 year history of music of the modern era that connects the end of the Edo Shogunate with the Meiji, Taisho, Showa and Heisei periods. This is reflected in the strongly rooted and continuing love the Japanese people have for village festivals, and at the higher, national level for Gagaku, Nohgaku, Kabuki and Jôruri Puppet Theatre, all a part of the culture of the townspeople in Edo. However, from the perspective of local culture, these performing arts were domestic culture imported from the cities. So what we refer to as modern local culture was three-layered, mixing the local cultures of the villages, the culture imported from the cities with western culture that was just being introduced.

Last year's catchwords would have to be 'baigaeshi' (double pay back) represented spiritually in the *Chûshingura* (Treasury of Loyal Retainers), the tale of the masterless Samurai of Akô and made

popular last year by a TV series 'Hanzawa Naoki', a tale about a bank clerk who seeks revenge today. Another would be 'omotenashi' (selfless hospitality) represented by the modern culture of the pleasure district and made relevant in connection with the addition of sign-language interpretation to the speeches at the election of Tokyo as the Olympic city 2020, and 'jejeje' finally (exclamation of surprise), which represent the culture of the village and was made popular through the popular TV series 'Amachan' last summer. The traditional culture pulses through the minds and bodies of the Japanese people and the educational community needs to lower the threshold and pass on the traditional view to children.

The cultural history of Japan, being an island nation, is a continual introduction of things foreign which are digested into a unique Japanese form, thereby creating something new and original. The beauty that results from this is something that we can call a 'hybrid culture'. But if, for example, this hybrid culture should become uniform with the ancient classical culture, it would turn into something exclusive and isolated and fraught with a danger of becoming savage.

The view of traditional culture of the nation in the Meiji era, having shifted from the ancient imperial system to a constitutional monarchy, began - learning its lesson from western culture - to educate the people in democratic ideas, and what we refer to as 'Japanese music of the late modern era' stands in the same position as democratic education. The history of Japanese physical expression in the modern era too was reflected against the flourishing Kabuki culture and the culture of the entertainment districts, which fundamentally supported Kabuki. The present Japanese Classical Dance (along with Japanese traditional music) finds its existential value at this point of convergence between western and traditional culture.

1. The Forms of Expressiveness – ‘Suodori’ and ‘Onnagata’.

Last year, the Ballet dancer Morishita Yôko performed the role of Clara in *The Nutcracker*, even though she was 65 years old, and brought the house down. This was an event of global proportions. This kind of reception of an artist, that leaves them completely exposed to the audience, has the same sense of values as Suodori, in which the performer is connected with the audience. Wakayagi Kichikoma in ‘Kyûjussai no Recital’ (Recital to commemorate the 91st birthday, June 15th, National Small Theatre), performed the Kiyomoto piece, *Hyôtan* (The Gourd) and received a standing ovation which went on until she took a curtain call which is unusual for Nihon Buyo. Three years earlier, Kichikoma had a vertebral compression fracture and it was thought impossible for her to make a comeback. However, those around her recalled her mother, Kichikoma II at the age of 90 and made the preparations to see the recital through. Perhaps the feeling of oneness with the audience resulted from this joint effort. Although advanced in years, she was able to present the audience with the fruit of her blossoming art. Fujima Shûtarô performed the Nagauta piece, *Kurui-jishi* (The Crazy Lion; March 31st, National Large Theatre) together with Shûnosuke, and the audience could enjoy both the spirit of the Shishi (lion) and flowering discipline and dedication of the performers. This piece is based on the Noh play *Shakkyô* (The Stone Bridge) done in a Kabuki style, transplanting the original piece to an indoor space and imitating the lion’s movements created a marvelous atmosphere.

Bandô Mitsuteru’s original piece, *Seshûmu - Cesium* (Eternity – Cesium; September 21st, National Large Theatre, Celebration of Mitsuteru’s 65 years as an artist, composition and choreography by Mitsuteru) deserves praise as contemporary Suodori. The previous,

Kuro-on Clone (Black Sound – Clone) was also an attempt at a contemporary theme, but this piece, performed as the culmination of a life of 65 years as an artist of expression, made a sincere effort to deal with the issue of the Great Kanto Earthquake, and was a wonderful attempt to take responsibility for future life.

Artists impersonating women are often appearing on variety shows on television lately, probably due to the import of western wigs and cosmetics. In Taisho and Showa periods brilliant New Female Impersonators (Shinpa Onnagata) were so successful, they were designated Intangible Cultural Assets. They were fascinating and lost nothing to the appearance or popularity of modern female actresses, in fact they had more impact on the viewers than a female actress, expressing a sense of gender transcending sexuality. Perhaps this art developed because the female impersonator as such, is a piece of Japanese originality derived from Buddhism. Two endeavors, which were not produced by the 'Onnagata' of Kabuki, but were original means of artistic expression in the form of a female impersonator-dance stood out during 2013. One was Saruwaka Seizaburô's Yamato-gaku piece, *Kashiku Dôjôji* (The Courtesan Kashiku visits the Dôjôji-temple; March 5th, National Small Theatre, the 67th Saruwaka Program). His grandfather, Saruwaka Kiyokata I wrote and choreographed the work and Saruwaka Kichiyo performed this wonderful piece displaying the art of the classical Geisha translated into the art of the Onnagata. In this world of the New Female Impersonator, something different from the Kabuki Onnagata, was skillfully expressed. The other endeavor to enter a new realm that was not Kabuki Onnagata, was made by Fujima Kiyotsugu at the 'Hanatsugu kai Fujima Kiyotsugu Buyo Recital' (November 2nd, Kioi Small Hall Agency for Cultural

Affairs Arts Festival Grand Prix Winner). The recital included the two works *Higuchi Ichiyô* (Higuchi Ichiyô, Woman and Author) and *Oriki* (The Weavingloom), both Yamato-gaku compositions from the New Theatre Style adapted to Buyo. In addition, in *Yozakura shibai banashi* (Talks about Kabuki under the Cherryblossoms at Night) which Kiyotsugu both wrote and choreographed, he portrayed a Taiko-mochi Geisha from the Yoshiwara brothel districts of the early Showa period, brilliantly transplanting a favorite role of the Kabuki actors he admires to Buyo

2. The Law concerning the Activation of Theaters and Music Halls and the Present Nihon Buyo.

The law enforced last June concerning the activation of theaters and music halls (abbr. "Theater Law") was aimed at correcting the flaws of the so called 'hako-mono' government policy responsible for planning the activation of the cultural arts in local areas through the construction of public buildings. Not relying on municipal projects to put local cultural centers into use, it encourages independent projects. In recent years, following the footsteps of the Unit Nihon Buyo Group 'Ko no kai', their elder sibling 'Goyô kai' was also picked up last year by a local cultural center.

Speaking of theaters, the Kabuki za in Ginza has reopened after its renovation, and is a topic of interest not only reactivating Ginza and Tokyo, but having an impact on the whole country. 'Shôchiku Grand-Kabuki', which has been touring the country hitting the public cultural centers, has enjoyed great success and the long arm of the media, reaching every part of the country, has been a great help to the local management.

The 'Kabuki-za Special Programme of Buyo in Commemoration

of Reopening' (September 27th) contained performances of *Kotobuki shiki Sanbasô* (The Ceremonial Sanbasô Dance of Longevity; performed to Gidayû chanting and Hayashi music by Fujima Kanemon and Fujima Kanjûrô); *Naginata Yashima*, (Yashima's Naginata-sword Dance; performed to Jiuta singing by Inoue Yachiyo); *Shôjô* (Shôjô, the Sake-drinking Seaspirt; performed to Hayashi music by Onoe Bokusetsu); and *Maboroshi Wankyû*, (The Vision of Wankyû; performed to Kiyomoto music by Hanayagi Jusuke). The musicians and dancers performing are connected to the world of the entertainment districts and value their fans highly, and one could say this program strongly exuded the spirit of 'selfless hospitality' - 'omotenashi'.

The catalyst that set the wheels in motion leading to the introduction of the Theater Law - beginning with the demand of the performing arts groups - was the introduction of arts management methodology from western culture. We need to investigate the link between the traditional and modern arts, the rural areas and the cities as well as the connection between folk performance, Kabuki and the present Nihon Buyo, and in particular, performances in smaller theaters and spaces.

A number of years have passed since Hasegawa Kôji of the Hirosaki Theater Company, which was a forerunner of local theatres, became the Artistic Director of Performing Arts at the Aomori Museum of Art, and last year he organized an international joint project between artists from Japan, China and South Korea, sponsored by the International Monetary Fund and the Aomori Museum of Art: *SHÛGEN - Celebration/Expression* (text and direction by Hasegawa Kôji), and was performed in the three countries at eight locations during October.

South Korea's International performance group was outstanding

and overwhelmed the audiences, Nakamura Toyonojô, a Japanese Classical Dance Performer and resident of Hirosaki also exhibited a visible stage presence. In addition to his dancing, he included a sketch of a wedding manager suddenly demanded to play piano at a reception, superbly executed. He is privately both pianist and professor at Hirosaki University, a man with many talents.

With this project, Hasegawa brought something splendid to a local area, something which wouldn't happen at the center of Japanese culture.

3. Training of Traditional Arts Performers in the Midst of Globalization

The symposium held by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, 'Encouraging Children's Talent through Art - Considering Methods of Facilitation Through the Cultural Arts' (July 16th, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies - GRIPS, Sôkairô Hall) was a project which was a parting gift of former Cultural Affairs Agency Chairman Kondô and was meant to be "...an examination of the potential of what education in the cultural arts can accomplish and of methods of utilizing facilitators in the days ahead." Although the focus was on classical music and fine art, the inclusion of traditional performing arts was significant.

The Japanese Classical Dance Association's 'Cultural Arts Experience Project for Children who will Lead the next Generation' (sponsored by the Agency for Cultural Affairs) which tours elementary schools each year, has recently adopted the code of courtesy of traditional performing arts lessons: Bowing in greeting at the beginning and at the end, an imposition, which, though not exactly in accord with this global age, has been attracting students. It is the same greeting procedure as in the training of professionals. In contrast, the

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has recommended the Department of Health Education and Welfare Dance Education take an opposite direction; introducing Hip-hop dance into its physical education and dance curriculum. What we need is some theoretical support to help bridge the gap between Nihon Buyo and dance education in schools.

If one wants to establish Nihon Buyo in the way that ‘Nihon-ga’ – Japanese painting – was established through Okakura Tenshin and other artists in the Meiji period, the 2000-year history of Japanese physical expression would need to be untangled. I here, present six key general ideas related to the art of expression used by Japanese Classical Dance Performers.

An education of the art of physical expression that could shine amid the history of Japanese physical expression would include the following elements:

1. Performing with ‘empty body’ technique – expression by means of: tiara/celestial crown/ head-covering masks/ mask/ white painted face/red painted face/ costumes.
2. Dance with song – the Kuniburi no Utamai dance of the Gagaku tradition, Imayô/Rôei with its Hyôshi Mai (rhythmic dance) - Shirabyôshi Mai of the Heian Period/ Kusemai/ Buga (dance with chanting) from the Noh of Zeami/ rhythmic dance from Kabuki etc.
3. Dance with Hayashi-instruments – Tamai/Gosechi no mai (festival dance), Dengaku traditional song and music in rice cultivation/ Hayasu arts. Nohgaku, Goninbayashi, Kabuki, Debayashi style.

4. Gakubu music/dance – Samai and Umai (left and right dance) from Gagaku, Jô, Chû and Kyû no Mai from Nohgaku and other dances, Kabuki rhythmic pieces, dancing to instrumental music.
5. Shinkui (action/speech/thought) including the use of the body accompanying Buddhist Shômyô and other chants, physical expression derived from Sarugaku and Nohgaku in Kabuki.
6. Standing, imitative styles of the Jôruri Puppet Theatre and the physical expression of Kabuki.

With these key ideas as its basis, the National Theater and Music Hall Art Management Kenkyû Kai 2014' workshop will be held February 6th , 2014.

'Suodori Costumed Dance', dressing up in traditional Japanese attire and danced to a '1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3...' beat, is where the mainstream present Sôsbu Buyo (original Buyo) of Nihon Buyo is at present, but they shouldn't get stuck there. If the culture of local festivals, culture during the late modern period as well as western culture could come together and form a hybrid, what an awakening for the Japanese arts of physical expression that would be!

We would like to look forward to the cultural originality that our nation, because it is an island, is capable of.

4. Summary

Last year Kabuki Dance, which has been designated an 'Important Cultural Asset' and falls into the genre of the present Japanese Classical Dance, had its customary full schedule of programs including the Dance Association program of the Japanese Classical Dance

Association at the National Theater as well as others. Also, last year, programs remembering the departed ancestors of the Hanayagi school, Onoe school, Fujikage school and others were remarkable. In Kyômai and Kamigata mai, both designated 'Important Cultural Assets', the iemoto of the Inoue school Yachiyo with her daughter Yasuko and the Yamamura school iemoto Waka with her son Yû made their debuts at the National Theatre. The 5th iemoto of the Yoshimura school Kisho was awarded the Agency for Cultural Affairs' Prize for Arts Encouragement. On the down side, former iemoto Yûki has regretfully had both his art and his pupils, Kiyo, Keiin, Chihiro dissipate. Failing to win the Grand Prix at the Cultural Affairs Agency's Arts Festival, the Prize for Excellence went to the Tamayû no Kai (Izumi Hiroki and Hanayagi Tamaito) and Saruwaka Eikô.

Hirano, Hidetoshi

Classical Japanese Dance critic, born in 1944 in Sendai City, graduated from Waseda University at the Theatre Institute of the Literature department, specializing in Kabuki. He worked at a publisher, and was responsible for the editing of *Okinawa Performing Arts*, *Kikan*, *Folk Performing Arts*, *Gekkan*, *Japanese Music and Classical Dance* and others. Seeking to investigate the art of physical expression, he became a critic. He is an expert committee member of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan Arts Council.

(Translation: James Ferner)

During 2013, the general mood in Japan seemed to have become slightly more positive due to the price increase and the depreciation of the yen under the easy-money policy of Abenomics, which is the economic policy carried out by the Abe Cabinet that was inaugurated in December 2012, as well as the fact that Tokyo was selected as the

city to host the Olympics Games in 2020. In reality, however, the situation still remains severe when looking at the slow progress of the recovery and reconstruction works after the

Ballet in 2013

High-Quality Activities around Japan despite Difficult Circumstances

Urawa Makoto

Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred in March 2011 and the following accident at the nuclear power plant in Fukushima along with the decreasing population caused by the declining birth rate.

The world of ballet in Japan was also influenced by this situation. The number of ballet schools and ballet classes are on the decline, and therefore the ballet companies and ballet studios that rely on operating schools and classes as their source of income are facing financial difficulties. This trend, however, is more significant in rural regions - in the large city areas, many performances are still being held.

Ballet in Japan is not based on the activities of ballet companies contracted to public theatres that receive public subsidies as in other countries, especially Europe. With the exception of the National Ballet of Japan, there are a number of private companies, which are not attached to theatres and are independently managed. Although some of the companies do receive public subsidies, most of them carry on with their high-quality activities based on earnings from teaching student dancers.

Let us take an overview of ballet activities in Tokyo during December 2013 as examples clearly indicating the characteristics of ballet in Japan. December is known as *The Nutcracker* season worldwide. In Tokyo alone, more than ten companies mounted productions of this title with the cumulative total exceeding forty performances. Most of the productions were performed with a live orchestra and used a chorus in the snow scene. Moreover, in each production, revisions were added to innovate the staging and choreography while taking on the classical style. In 2013, Kubo Koichi, who is the artistic director of NBA Ballet Company, which is the first incorporated non-profit organization in Japan, choreographed a production of *The Nutcracker* with contemporary spatial background by incorporating new attempts in the scenic art and projected images. Other companies have also presented *The Nutcracker* during the last couple of years such as the National Ballet of Japan's Vasili Vainonen-version directed by Maki Asami, Star Dancers Ballet's Peter Wright-version directed by Suzuki Minoru, and Noriko Kobayashi Ballet Theatre's Vainonen and Kobayashi-version, directed by Kobayashi Noriko, which were respectively new productions based on conceptual revisions of the long-lasting versions. Still further ballet companies presented *The Nutcracker* directed and choreographed by its representatives, such as Shimizu Tetsutaro of The Matsuyama Ballet, Mitani Kyoza of Maki Asami Ballet and Kumakawa Tetsuya of K-Ballet Company, each of them having their own original highlights and appeals. Ballet Piccolo, a mid-sized ballet company, also presented *The Nutcracker* inviting Japan's top-level dancers Shimomura Yurie and Sasaki Dai. Furthermore, Tani Momoko Ballet, which is one of the major companies, presented *The Nutcracker* in January and The Tokyo Ballet has Bejart's version of the title in its repertoire. In January, Sadamatsu-Hamada

Ballet company based in Kobe came to the New National Theatre, Tokyo and presented the company's own version of *The Nutcracker* choreographed by Sadamatsu Shoichiro.

Although not as often as in Tokyo, *The Nutcracker* has been presented annually by companies such as Sadamatsu-Hamada Ballet in the Kansai area as well as by the Ochi International Ballet in Nagoya, and the situations in these regions are not much different from Tokyo. However, in the rest of the country, it is extremely difficult to put on ballet performances not just in December but also in general.

On the other hand, in the large city areas, many ballet companies carry out their activities based on their own particular policies as referred to above in the examples of productions held in December.

In 2013, there were no major changes in the general situation of ballet in Japan compared to previous years but I would like to refer to some distinctive activities.

First of all, let us take a look at commemorative projects in 2013.

2013 was the hundredth anniversary of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky) premiered by Ballets Russes back in 1913. The National Ballet of Japan did not take up this title but instead presented *The Firebird* (choreographed by Michel Fokine), *Apollo* (choreographed by George Balanchine) and *The Wedding* (choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska) under the Stravinsky Evening program. As for *The Rite of Spring* itself, Maurice Béjart's version was presented by The Tokyo Ballet at the Spring Festival in Tokyo. *The Rite of Spring* was choreographed by Yamada Un and presented in the field of contemporary dance as well. To commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of Giuseppe Verdi's birth, Maki Asami Ballet revived *The Lady of the Camellias* co-choreographed by Azari Plisetski and Asami Maki. The Kyoto-based Higaki Ballet Company

also presented the upgraded version of *The Lady of the Camellias* choreographed by Konishi Yukiko, which was favourably received in Europe. Yukari Ballet and Chika Goto's Step Works Ballet, which are both based in Nagoya, also revived the compact versions of the same title that were choreographed by Mochizuki Norihiko and Nakajima Nobuyoshi respectively.

The major ballet companies in Japan are continuing their performance activities by presenting standard classical ballet that are popular such as *Swan Lake*, *Giselle* and *Don Quixote* as well as modern works by Japanese and foreign choreographers in their repertoires. The same tendency goes for mid-sized companies. However, you often see the phenomenon of the same title (other than the ones mentioned above) being presented intensively by both large-scale and middle-scale companies during the same year. In 2013, it was *Coppélia* and *Cinderella* that were frequently performed, and this is a trend that has continued since 2012.

Among the noteworthy *Coppélia* productions last year, there was a new version by Tetsutaro Shimizu of The Matsuyama Ballet, which was produced as a requiem for the 11.3 earthquake and tsunami disaster, and it was revised and remounted in May. In July, the Kyoto-based Kamiya Michiko Ballet company presented *Coppélia* directed and choreographed by Shinohara Seiichi, who paid attention to every detail of the production. Noma Ballet based in Sakai City in Osaka (Directed and choreographed by Noma Kei) and Sapporo Buyo kai (Directed and choreographed by Chida Masako) also presented *Coppélia* in September, respectively adding unique ideas. When counting the productions only staging the third act of *Coppélia*, many more companies can be added to the list. As for *Cinderella*,

K-Ballet Company, Ballet Chambre Ovest and Star Dancers Ballet revived their productions of the title during the first half of the year. In November, Jinushi Kaoru Ballet Company based in Osaka produced *Cinderella* choreographed by Jinushi Kaoru, who explored the original choreography of the Prokofiev/Zakharov version, and it was premiered at Festival Hall that was reopened after renovation and expansion. In April, Codemari Ballet Studio led by Otake Mika produced the Kaitani Yaeko version that was premiered in 1951 (six years after the premiere of the original Zakharov version) by putting together the essential parts. In July, Yuki Morita Ballet Studio based in Shizuoka presented *Cinderella* choreographed by Morita Yuki and Yuri, and in autumn, the Shimura Masahiro Yuko Ballet Studio, based in Saitama, presented the title choreographed by Yamamoto Kosuke, who used to dance for Birmingham Royal Ballet. Middle-sized companies that have stayed active, such as Yamaji Ballet Shinjin-no-kai (Kuretake Nobuyuki) and other companies around the country, also presented *Cinderella* and in each production, attention was paid to the dramatic expression. Besides the popular titles already mentioned, a memorable production was *The Fountain of Bakhchisaray*, presented by Sasaki Michiko Ballet to commemorate the thirty-fifth anniversary of the company. It was a remarkable production with depth through the wonderful performance of the perfectly-cast Shimomura Yurie, Noma Kei, Sasaki Dai, Yamamoto Takayuki amongst others.

Looking at original works or premieres of existing titles, not many were presented in 2013, which may perhaps reflect the harsh economic situation. Japan Ballet Association, which is an organizing body of people who are involved in ballet activities, has been putting emphasis on cultivating new choreographers through Ballet Creation,

a performance project commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. It is difficult to produce full-length ballet productions and dramatic ballet productions nowadays due to economical constraints and the situation is the same worldwide. Under such circumstances, productions that drew attention were the premiere of Mats Ek's *Carmen* by The Tokyo Ballet (November), to which Sylvie Guillem was invited. Also *Beethoven's Symphony No.7* choreographed by Uwe Schulz and presented by the Tokyo City Ballet and Matthew Bourne's *Dorian Gray* (produced work) were staged. They were all Japan premieres of already-existing pieces, performed by Japanese dancers. Only very few new large-scale productions were presented during 2013. Among them, *Femme Fatale* drew the greatest attention for its ambitious endeavor. It was choreographed by Shinohara Seiichi and presented at his recital. Shimomura Yurie danced the parts of the women of fate, namely Carmen, Marguerite (*The Lady of the Camellias*) and Salome, and Sasaki Dai, Yamamoto Takayuki as well as Kasai Mitsutake, from the world of butoh dance, performed the roles opposite to her. There were also two promising choreographers in the genre of dramatic ballet, namely Kanbe Juri, who choreographed *Love and Revolution* based on *Les Misérables* that was presented by Michiko Sasaki Ballet in Nagoya, and Ito Noriko, who choreographed *I Pagliacci* for Tani Momoko Ballet based on the opera although it was not a full-length ballet.

As for choreographers who already have track record, the above-mentioned Shinohara Seiichi choreographed his original version of *Romeo and Juliet* for Matsuoka Reiko Ballet based in Nagoya and Fukagawa Hideo choreographed original works or re-choreographed classical ballets for various companies around Japan, such as *The Firebird* for the Nagoya-based Théâtre de Ballet company. Moreover, Kawaguchi Setsuko in Nagoya revived *Yerma* and Tago Suwako in

Tokyo revived *The Scarlet Letter A*, both past works well received. However, in Japan, no matter how good the production may be, they generally disappear with the choreographer. Unlike in the West, there is no system for taking record of the works through notation so that anyone can revive it at anytime. At the same time, there is no system to transfer the copyright and performing rights properly either. Establishing such systems are important challenges for the future of ballet in Japan - besides establishing the profession of choreographers.

I will briefly consider some of the incidents in the ballet world that deserve special mentioning. On July 25th, Shimada Hiroshi, who has held important posts such as the head of the Japan Ballet Association, and on August 5, Matsuo Akemi, who led Matsuo Akemi ballet, passed away. It is said that ballet in Japan started for real after the Second World War. To be more precise, when The Tokyo Ballet (different from the current Tokyo Ballet) presented the full-length ballet of *Swan Lake* in 1946, one year after Japan's defeat in the war, it became the starting point in the true sense. In this memorable performance, Shimada danced the part of Prince Siegfried and Matsuo played Odette/Odile. Kaitani Yaeko and Azuma Yusaku, who were the counterparts of the double cast, and Komaki Masahide, who directed and choreographed the production, have already passed away, and the death of Shimada and Matsuo meant that all the central figures that established the foundation of ballet in Japan have deceased, making it an unforgettable year for the ballet world.

Another point that I would like to mention is foreign companies visiting Japan in 2013. World-famous ballet companies such as Béjart Ballet Lausanne, The Paris Opera Ballet, The Royal Ballet, The New York City Ballet and La Scala Theatre Ballet as well as an array of

prominent dancers such as Manuel Legris and Vladimir Malakhov came to Japan. However, the value of the Japanese yen to the U.S. dollar and Euro dropped almost 40% during this year. If the exchange rate remains at this level, it will become difficult to invite foreign companies. We must carefully observe how the monetary situation will influence the ballet world and ballet lovers in Japan.

Urawa, Makoto

Autonym is Akira Ichikawa. He is Professor of Management Culture at Shoin University and dance advisor of The Association of Public Theaters and Halls. He has written articles for various newspapers and magazines as a dance critic. He has served as the member of numerous committees of organizations such as the Agency for Cultural Affairs and has also sat on the jury of a number of dance competitions.

(Translation: Sumida Michiyo)

“Contemporary dance is no longer interesting.” “The craze is over.” People have been talking like this for a while. With the final edition of composer Sakurai Keisuke’s Azumabashi Dance Crossing (August, Asahi Art Square) in 2013, it felt like the booming dance scene in Japan had converged. The popular event showcasing trendy and edgy

Contemporary Dance and Butoh in 2013

From the End of the Boom to Reinterpreting History and the Rise of the Next Generation of Choreographers

Tsutsumi Hiroshi

arts across multiple genres had been held 12 times, featuring a total of 130 artists and groups since 2004. However, the proportion of art, music and theatre increased with each edition, leaving just token elements of dance in recent years.

This also linked in to the general tendency to stop inquiring into what dance is and what is particular to the Japanese contemporary dance scene. Critics were excluded from the selection committee and jury for the Toyota Choreography Award; it has ceased to be a platform for re-defining the concepts of dance and choreography, and instead turned towards showcasing accessible dance that is understandable to anyone as “dance.” Even so, artists continue to question existing dance and still display energy in their work.

Teshigawara Saburo staged *Dancer R’s Cell* (January, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre), the result of dance workshops teaching his unique method to young people aged between 13 and 18. At Theater X, Teshigawara also staged *Spring, in one night* (Haru, hitoyo ni shite; March) and *Dodo* (Dodo to kichigai-tachi; June), based on the works of writer Bruno Schulz. Teshigawara collaborated actively with music

artists, working with Suzuki Masato for *Mugendai paipu orugan no uchu* (Infinity: Pipe Organ Universe) at Geigeki dance (April, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre), and with the Vox Clamantis choir at La Folle Journée au Japon 2013 (May, Tokyo International Forum). In August, he opened the art space Karas Apparatus in Ogikubo, holding workshops and exhibitions, as well as starting the *Hibi appudeito suru dansu* (Daily Update Dance) series which has a public creation process, leading up to a full performance, *Dai 2 no aki* (Second Fall; September, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre). He topped off his phenomenal year of work in October by choreographing a world première for the Paris Opera Ballet, *Darkness is Hiding Black Horses*.

Kurosawa Mika & Dancers search for the dance-like instinct inside their bodies through highly improvised performances. In 2013, the troupe staged *Big River* (Japanese title: *Ookina onna no odori* = Dance of the Large Girl; February, Theater X) and *Shokuji no keikaku* (Meal Plan; September, Okurayama Memorial Hall, Yokohama). Kurosawa also choreographed *Kakeru onna* (Gallop Women; April, Spiral garden), a dance duet by Uemura Naoka and Morishita Maki.

Dance company CONDORS staged *Apollo* (May, Sai-no-Kuni Saitama Arts Theater) and *Time Is On My Side* (August, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, national tour). CONDORS leader Kondo Ryohei also choreographed the New Bon Odori Dance Festival (July, Ikebukuro Nishiguchi Park) and *Mirai kara kita tegami* (Letter from the Future; September, Ajinomoto Stadium), the pageant for the opening ceremony of the 68th National Gymnastics Tournament. AKATZKI, a unit formed by members of CONDORS, staged *Sakura no mori no mankai no shita de kisu shite* (Kiss me under the full-bloom cherry blossom forest; March, Theatre Tram), while CONDORS dancer Fujita Yoshihiro created solo work and CONDORS colleague

Hirahara Shintaro also produced his own solo and ensemble dance pieces during the year.

With *Mabi hikidashi shitto* (Paralysis, Elicitation, Envy; October, Kanagawa Arts Theatre [KAAT]), Ide Shigehiro's Idevian Crew exhibited greater deft as they interweaved humor and pathos in a drama about a family living in a house and the youth adopted into it.

Morishita Maki also created a dance work with artist Tabaimo, *Sabi kara deta mi* (Fruit From Rust; October, Aoyama Round Theatre). Also featuring Butoh dancer Kitamari and hip-hop dancer Kawamura Mikiko, it was an extraordinary spectacle.

With *Hajimari no maachi o matte ita* (We Were Waiting For the Beginning of March; March, Morishita Studio), *Tokyo rururu* (June, Kichijoji Theatre) and *Tsumaru tokoro yoin* (After all, lingering; October, KAAT), ELECTROCK STAIRS, led by street dancer KENTARO!!, continued to present new work and create experimental dance.

Company Co. Yamada Un, led by Yamada Un, created an original stage adaptation of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (February, Chigasaki Citizens Cultural Hall; December, Aichi Arts Center, national tour). Filled with sudden movement delicately and dynamically fostered, this acclaimed and richly witty dance work brimmed with vitality. Yamada also revived her solo dance piece *Dictée* (March, Setagaya Public Theatre), based on the experimental novel by Korean-American artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, as well as performing the dance duet *amness* (October, KAAT), with Ikeda Fumiyo (Rosas).

Iwabuchi Teita and Seki Kaori revived *Hetero* (June, Aoyama Round Theatre), and also premiered *Conception* (July, Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse 1) and *Amigurekuta* (October, Sai-no-Kuni Saitama Arts Theater). On a bare, almost silent stage their still, sensitive dance

saw them interact as they searched physically for signs and contact between their skin.

Onodera Shuji, who is head of Company Derashinera and originally trained in mime, had a busy year, premiering *Carmen* (January, Kobe Art Village Center), reviving *Ihoin* (The Stranger; February, Setagaya Public Theatre), and performing *Game in Paris* (March, Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris) as well as *Kanshoshu* (Appreciator; August-September, Owlspot Theater). There was also *Silenzio* (July, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre) with actress Harada Tomoyo and ballet dancer Shuto Yasuyuki, *Nora* (December, Owlspot), based on *A Doll's House*, at the Contemporary Ibsen Festival, and the outdoor *The Mermaid* (April-October, around Seto Inland Sea), starring Minami Kaho at the Setouchi Triennale 2013, and *Psycho* (October, Cerulean Tower Noh Theater) with Noh actor Tsumura Reijiro, based on Alfred Hitchcock's film. *Kanshoshu*, created out of Onodera's meeting with two deaf people in workshops he did over three years at a school for the deaf in Otsuka in Toshima City, was particularly vivid in what it presented about the role of public theatre alongside the potential for non-verbal dance and mime.

New York-resident Hashimoto Mana performed *Presley* (September, Atsukobarouh) as a work-in-progress. Hashimoto learnt classical ballet from a young age and then moved to America in 1993, studying at Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance, but an unexplained visual disability worsened and she lost her sight. However, hoping that it would offer opportunities to re-examine society and the disabled, she has continued to dance. In *Presley* Hashimoto lovingly dances with a fancy shirt that belonged to her late father, a fan of Elvis Presley. It was a sublime dance piece, seeming to wrestle with her own circumstances while tracing happy memories.

Noism1, the dance troupe attached to the Niigata municipal theatre Ryutopia, put on *ZAZA inori to yokubo no aida ni* (ZAZA: Between Prayer and Desire; June, KAA^T). In the years since it was first formed the dancers have changed, but artistic director Kanamori Jo's continued creative drive and vitality are still evident.

Former NDT dancer Nakamura Megumi was one of the choreographers, along with Kanamori, for the *DANCE to the Future 2013* series (March, New National Theatre, Tokyo) with the New National Theatre's ballet company. Also at the New National Theatre (NNT^T), Nakamura worked with Shuto Yasuyuki on two productions in October: *Une Petite Maison* was premiered, themed around a house built by architect Le Corbusier, while she also revived *Shakespeare: The Sonnets*, which featured characters from Shakespeare's oeuvre. At the National Children's Castle, she choreographed dancers Suzuki Yukio and Hirahara Shintaro in *Asleep to the World* (March, Aoyama Round Theatre). She also worked on dance duets with Oka Toshiko, creating Tanztheater-esque scenes in the première of *Memai* (Vertigo; October, BankART Studio NYK) and the revival of *Shiroyoru* (White Night; December, Theater X).

Oka leads Ensemble Sonne, which staged *Passive Silence* (February, ArtTheatre dB Kobe, Aichi Arts Center; March, Theater X). The performance took the abstract, difficult theme of the body exposed to various external pressures and encompassed it in a static yet sensitive dance.

In *Trip Triptych* (June, NNT^T), Hirayama Motoko adapted French Impressionist paintings into dance. She then worked with traditional music to create part of *Oto no ibuki* (The Breath of Sound; October, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan), which also included a contribution from Moriyama Kaiji.

The receptacle for alternative and extraterritorial art, originally taken up in the field of contemporary art, is far from absent in dance. The Aichi Triennale 2013 (August-October, Aichi Arts Center and other venues) saw a range of Japanese and international artists participate, including Fujimoto Takayuki, Shirai Tsuyoshi, Ho Ho-Do, Jiří Kylián, Mathilde Monnier, Arthur Nauzyciel, Jecko Siompo, and Umeda Hiroaki. The Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial and the Setouchi Triennale have also programmed performing arts, and art festivals are likely set to grow as platforms for dance work.

On the other hand, Butoh remains doggedly blind to the trends of the era. The Butoh that Hijikata Tatsumi originally founded was an attempt to create the antithesis of ballet's physically beautiful movement, to challenge stereotypes and taboos. That stance remains the same today.

Sankai Juku premiered *Umusuna: Memories before History* in Lyons in 2012 and then took it on a Japanese tour (January, Kitakyushu Performing Arts Center; May, Setagaya Public Theatre). The stage was divided in the middle by a straight chasm; at the back, sand poured down, dancing as if to keep balance. From start to finish, the sand piled up, representing the unchanging elements of earth, water, air and fire, with the ensemble less dancing as treading on the earth, nestling, with Amagatsu Ushio's unique dance seeming to take a grand overview that transcended the reason of nature. Mother Earth has been changing since prior to recorded history, nurturing time as conflict follows conflict. The stage design evoked plate tectonics while no doubt there were also some in the audience for whom it recalled the 2011 Tohoku disaster.

With the Butoh JE Executive Committee's *The Dream of Descending to the Ocean* (October, Za-Koenji), third-generation Butoh

dancers Kudo Taketeru and Wakabayashi Jun led a call for the Butoh of the next generation and male dancers, to exhibit their energies to the full in both Japan and overseas. The performance was a defiant dance attempting to go back to a primary physicality in the face of today's information society.

The Suzuki Yukio-led Kingyo premiered a new work, *Waltz* (August, Theatre Tram). The dance overflowed in savage energy amidst a minimal yet refined style, setting a new destination for this company.

Tanaka Min conceived and directed *Nidomemo shojiki sekimen boko* (The Second Time Too I Will Honestly Blush and Walk; August, Kirari Fujimi in Fujimi City, Saitama Prefecture) for Watashi no kodomo = Buyodan (My Child = Dance Troupe). This long-term project built on monthly workshops that anyone could apply to attend, facing up to memories and one's own body as if reverting to being an innocent child, encountering unknown movement and forgotten language.

Kasai Akira created a dance duet, *Spiel* (May, Asahi Art Square), with Emmanuelle Huynh, the French choreographer, dancer and artistic director of Centre national de danse contemporaine - Anger (CNDC). The pair imitated each other's movements, engaging in a dialogue brimming with jest. For eurythmic dance company Generis he created *Chotachi no korona* (The Corona of the Butterflies; September, Kokubunji Izumi Hall). In a lecture he gave ahead of this performance on "the body expanding beyond the skin", Kasai pointed to how Steiner's threefold social order of liberty, equality and fraternity had still not yet been achieved in the world, and he commented on the examples of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America, and the Constitution of Japan. He made the case that revising (that is, corrupting) the Constitution of Japan, the document that inscribes

the polity of the nation, would defile the country. He then created a solo dance, *Nihonkoku kenpo o odoru* (I dance the Japanese Constitution; October, BankART Studio NYK).

Kasai's solo, along with the aforementioned Nakamura and Oka pairing, was performed as part of the Ohno Kazuo Festival 2013 (September-November, BankART Studio NYK), which also included the participation of Newcomer H (Sokerissa), Kakuya Ohashi and Philippe Chehere, Yuval Pick, Ikemiya Nakao's Dance Company Nomad's, and Ohno Yoshito. The program formed an interesting retrospective on both Butoh and modern dance.

Meanwhile, Kawaguchi Takao's *Kazuo Ohno* (August, d-Soko) stirred up controversy in how it set out to make a perfect copy of one of Ohno's major works through viewing video records, transcribing the features of the movement into sketches and text, and then analyzing this.

In *Odorubaka* (Dance Stupid), Project Ohyama head Furuie Yuri, while being a member of the post-CONDORS generation, went back and watched documentary footage and imitated the movements of Japan's modern dance pioneer Ishii Baku, producing a parody with a contemporary interpretation.

This year also saw former Dairakudakan dancer Mukai Kumotaro perform the solo *Butoh?* (December, space EDGE), in which he used a YouTube video to attempt a perfect imitation of a Hijikata Tatsumi dance.

Creating something based on video footage in this way, without contact with the antemortem performance, results in a meta-perspective, and the audience too will enjoy the work aware in advance of aspects of the original. It provides a chance to re-interpret conventional dance and no doubt such experiments will continue to be updated and

increase in the future.

In fact, a younger generation is now taking the lead, having been influenced by their predecessors. Particularly striking are those emerging from the universities with newly established courses majoring in stage arts. At the head of the pack here is J. F. Oberlin University, which has produced the energetic activities of Shiraga Momoko and her Momonga Complex, as well as Kitao Wataru's Baobab, 21st Century GEBA GEBA dance company (producing co-creations between eight dancers, including Irite Anna, Tsujita Aki and Inoue Daisuke), and Kaeru-P, the dance unit by Ozono Koji and Hashimoto Noriyasu. In the Kansai region, there are also dance units emerging from Kyoto University of Art and Design, such as dots, which is led by Kori Gen and combines dance with media art, as well as KIKIKIKIKIKI, centering on the work of Kitamari, and the unique performances of dancer Kyogoku Tomohiko.

All this means that it is clear now the growth that contemporary dance has enjoyed in Japan has also fostered the next generation of artists.

Tsutsumi, Hiroshi

Editor, copy writer, theater and dance critic. A editor of art-, entertainment-, theater- and drama magazine, became a editor and copy-writer of IT. Planning/editing "Soratobu Kumonoue Dangoro Ichiza: Acharaka Saitannjo" (The Flying Dangoro Party In The Sky, "Rebirth of Acharaka"), Performing arts magazine, "Bacchus", "Gendai Doitsu no Pafu-mingu A-tu" (Performing Arts in Germany Today).

(Translation: William Andrews)

In the same way as in the December 2012 Diet election for the House of Representatives, in the July 2013 election for the House of Councilors, the Liberal-Democratic Party had an overwhelming victory and the coalition government between the LDP and the Komeito maintained a majority in both houses. Prime Minister Abe Shinzo has indicated that he wants to

revise the constitution, relying on this majority and at the end of the year, without much debate, the Special Secrets Law was passed.

There are many problems such as the expansion of

the definition of official secrets, how much objectivity the institutions charged with keeping a check on this will have and how the law will be applied to investigative activities. This law limits the freedom to collect information and report and the right of the people to know has been infringed on and it is a question how citizens and the media should respond to this. This is an age in which there are questions of how far the tense relationship with power must continue.

The fact that the 2020 Olympics will be held in Tokyo is bright news, but one must also note that this will give an opportunity for the cozy partnership between politicians, bureaucrats and business to be revived and take advantage of the opportunities for increased public works projects. So even as recovery from the East Japan Earthquake and the clean-up of the Fukushima nuclear power plant are delayed and postponed, public work projects will be concentrated in Tokyo and there will be increased pressure to restart nuclear power plants. It is impossible to overstate how much this Tokyo-central, economic

Television and Radio in 2013

The 60th Anniversary of the Beginning of Television Broadcasting in Japan and a Reevaluation of the Power of Television Drama

Kotaki Tetsuya

growth above all policy has brought the problems of Japan today. Television journalism must keep a strict watch on this power structure and how it impacts on these regions and the lives of ordinary people.

When considering the way that information about the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor was concealed in combination with the current Special Secrets Law, there are few better examples of good investigative reporting than the NHK Special Meltdown series. 'File 1: Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant - What Happened at the Time of the Crisis' appeared in 2011 and 'File 2: The Truth About the Chain of Events' broadcasted in 2012. This year followed with 'File 3: The Blind Spots of Cooling the Nuclear Reactor.' Based on interviews with 400 people and a vast amount of data, it showed that with the miscalculations and misunderstandings about the emergency cooling system for the Number 1 Reactor, clearly there was inadequate understanding of the cooling system and even insufficient technical knowledge of the actual operation of the reactor. This report won the Main Prize of the 39th Broadcast Culture Foundation. Despite Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's efforts to control NHK through appointments to the managing committee, I would like NHK to continue with projects like this series embodying the true spirit of investigative reporting.

There are starting to be dramas treating the social problems produced in the 1960's during Japan's period of high-speed economic development. *Orinpikku no Minoshirokin* (The Ransom Money of the Olympics, Terebi Asahi) treated the theme of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the tragedies of the workers brought in to build the facilities, in this case the victims of the construction of the National Athletic Stadium. The SBS Special *Shi no Toge - Jinpai to Tatakaisuzukeru Ishi* (The Thorns of Death - A Doctor's Unending Fight Against Pneumonoconiosis, Shizuoka Hoso) was a documentary that took

the story of a doctor who has been treating the elderly suffering from lung disease caused by inhaling fine particles like mine dust and asbestos while working and through this story, showed how many victims there were in the shadows of the prosperity of that time. The workers of that time in the mines and building skyscrapers are the sufferers of asbestos poisoning of today and the tragedies caused by this fine dust continues today. This documentary won the Age of Regionalism Video Festival Prize for Excellence.

The NHK Special series *Ninchisho 800 Mannin Jidai* (The Age of 8 Million People with Dementia) had two programs that dealt very directly with caretaking of people with dementia, a topic that is very close to everybody: 1) *Haha to Musuko 3000 Nichi no Kaigo Kiroku* (Mother and Son: Record of 3000 Days of Caretaking) and 2) *Koritsu suru Nichisho* Koreisha (Isolated Elderly People with Dementia). The first program was a record made by former NHK documentary filmmaker Aida Yutaka of his own life of caretaking. Through the cheerful view of his days of taking care of his mother, it taught what is most important. But at the same time, it showed how great a gap there is between the reality of people caretaking and the system that is supposed to support it. The second program very graphically showed elderly people with dementia that are isolated from society and refuse caretaking. This showed the problems involved with caretaking very graphically. The format of the program that considered both families and society made the arguments very convincing. This series won the 51st Galaxy Award for Monthly Programs.

The NHK Special, *Sekai Hatsu Satsuei! Shinkai no Chokiyodai Ika* (First Filming in the World! Deep-Sea Giant Squid) and *Nettchu Koma Taisen - Zenkoku Machikoba Funtoki* (The Passion of the Spintop Competiton - A Record of the Fight of the Small Factories

All Over Japan; Tokai Terebi) were both, in a different way, very thrilling documentaries. The ‘Deep-Sea Giant Squid’ overwhelmed with the mysterious sight of the giant squid shining with a golden light. The passionate efforts of researchers and advances in filming technology made possible the discovery and filming of the squid, and this backstory provided its own fresh excitement, and also won the 39th Gold Prize for Programs of the Broadcast Foundation). ‘The Passion of the Spintop Competition’ showed the workers at small factories participate in a competition to make the best spin tops. It was entertaining to watch the workers at these factories enjoying themselves as they became absorbed in the competition. Even with something that seems like a trivial child’s game, the craftsmen making these tops pay attention to every single detail and the program made clear that this is the very root of the Japanese approach to making things. This program won the 51st Galaxy Prize for the First Period.

Variety programs continue to be in the doldrums and this year, their negative features were particular striking. For example, both *Hoko X Tate* (Spear and Shield = Contradiction, Fuji Terebi) and *Matsuko no Nihon Bokashi Banashi* (Matsuko Deluxe’s Japanese Stories that Can Only Be Told By Concealing the Faces of Celebrities, TBS) had to be stopped for inappropriate production approaches.

It’s been a long time since people started saying that audiences have stopped watching television dramas, but in 2013, there were two dramas that were so popular that they produced catch phrases that were awarded the top prize for popular words of the year. The 15 minute long morning drama series *Amachan*, (NHK) produced the phrase “je, je, je (a phrase indicating surprise),” and the drama series *Hanzawa Naoki* (TSB) produced the phrase, “bai gaeshi da! (Take it back double fold!).” Both dramas became a social phenomenon because of

the closed off nature of Japanese society today, but they also were both dramas that were well-crafted entertainment.

Amachan was a dramatic series that could be enjoyed in all kinds of ways. A girl in high school named Amano Aki (Nonen Rena) who was shy and withdrawn in Tokyo suddenly has to go to her mother's (Koizumi Kyoko) native town on the Kita Sanriku coast in the Tohoku region and eventually becomes a widely loved idol. The scenario by Kudo Kankuro showed how Aki's desire to become an idol leads to a three generation conflict in her family with her mother and grandmother, and also her relationships with the people of the area and how they become increasingly important, but the program also took a good look at the East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. It is rare to have a drama with this many interesting features, beginning with making the local dialect phrase "je, je, je" into a popular sensation, the memorable supporting cast, beginning with Miyamoto Nobuko as Aki's grandmother, the way that the question of Aki becoming an idol involves all three generations of women in her family and the broad range of memories and emotions that this can incorporate, the depiction of the human relationships, which was very close without becoming cloying, the many references to hit dramas of the past and the many little jokes, and, looking at the earthquake and tsunami from the point of view of the people that actually live there. The special quality of *Amachan* can be seen by the fact that at the Tokyo Awards 2013, *Amachan* took seven awards: the Dramatic Series Grand Prize, prize for leading actress (Nonen Rena), supporting actress (Koizumi Kyoko), scenario writer (Kudo Kankuro), producer (Kurube Kei), director (Inoue Tsuyoshi) and a special prize (Otomo Yoshihide for music).

Hanzawa Naoki is set in a mega-bank and showed the moral and vengeance drama of investment section chief Hanzawa Naoki (Sakai

Masato) with a touch of the chivalrous drama of the old yakuza movies in a way that must have been deeply satisfying to people working in large institutions. This drama featured the catch phrase, “Yararetara, yarekaesu. Bai gaeshi da! (If they get you, get back at them. Get back at them double!)” in the many stirring speeches the protagonist addresses to his boss, the powerful eyes and spirit that threatens to drag everyone around it into the situation of Sakai Masato, the actor in the role, the menacing presence of the supporting actors playing the villains like his boss and bureaucrats and sharp and vigorous directing (Fukuzawa Katsuo). This drama was successful and evoked such a big response because it brought the original novels by Ikeido Jun to life so vividly. It drew in middle-aged men who are not usually considered part of the potential audience for television dramas and also was watched by middle-aged women. That this was possible is an important hint for how in the future to think about dramas as television entertainment.

‘Woman’ (Nihon Terebi) was not entertaining and easy to understand like *Amachan* and *Hanzawa Naoki*. This was a series that required you to look closely and listen carefully to catch every little pleat of the love and hate relationship between mother and daughter. Koharu’s (Mitsushima Hikari) husband dies and while raising two children, she struggles with poverty and illness and finally goes to stay with her mother (Tanaka Yuko) with whom she parted with both of them hating one another. The script (Sakamoto Yuji) and direction (Mizuta Nobuo) concentrates the drama of their love and hate relationship by showing it in their conversations between the living room and the kitchen. The mother stands in the kitchen and the daughter looks down at the dining room table, they turn their backs to each other and exchange words. This tense and stubborn time until they

can finally talk face to face made a strong impact on showing how impossible it is for a person alone to do anything. This drama was praised abroad and won the MIPCOM Buyer's Award for Japanese Drama at the International Sample Market · MIPCOM 2013 held in Cannes, France.

In dramatic series, *Saiko no Rikon* (The Best Divorce, Fuji Terebi) and *Naku na, Hara-chan* (Don't Cry Hara, Nihon Terebi) were entertaining in their deft and profound presentation of human psychology. *Saiko no Rikon* showed two couples as they get divorced, and it was painful to watch the isolated images of the man and woman as they hearts are frozen by the wretchedness of hating each other. All the subtleties of the relationship between husband and wife etched out by Sakamoto Yuji's script were acted out sensuously and with pathos by Eita and Ono Machiko and Ayano Go and Maki Yoko. This made the human relationships depicted in this drama leave behind a heartrending feeling and the series won the Heisei 25 Japan Commercial Broadcaster's Association Top Prize for Excellence. In *Naku na, Hara-chan*, the device used to draw viewers into sympathizing with the drama was clever and enjoyable. The shy heroine (Aso Kumiko) releases her daily stress by drawing manga. She has the hero of her manga (Nagase Tomoya) constantly say bad things about her workplace, then suddenly, he appears before her and says "You got to change things yourself." This premise allows all kinds of comic give and take between Nagase and Aso and without seeming to, shows the struggle that people have to go through before they ready to work to move forward in their lives and won the Tokyo Drama Award 2013 Prize for Excellence in Dramatic Series.

It has been two years since the earthquake and tsunami in eastern Japan and as a single episode drama, 'Radio' (NHK) communicated

the very raw feelings of the people in the affected areas, which we must not forget. The location is Onagawacho in Miyagi Prefecture. After the earthquake, a girl who is a high school student (Kariya Yuiko) is living in temporary housing and is depressed and reclusive. She becomes a member of the staff at an emergency disaster FM radio station and this leads her to taking the first steps towards recovery. She is encouraged when her feelings and the emotions of her coworkers communicate to the radio listeners and the people following them on the Internet, and she loses heart when people don't seem to understand how they feel. She says, "I thought people were calling all the things I valued the most a pile of rubble," and when she says that her blog takes off like wildfire. In the days that pass like this for her, in the mutterings of the people around her, in the landscape of the now empty lots with patches of remaining snow, the feelings of the people in the affected areas come across so vividly that it is almost painful. And from far away, the calls of recovery that are only voices cast a shadow on their lives. The script was written by Isshiki Nobuyuki and as a notable drama of 2013, it won many awards, including the 68th Prize of the Arts Festival of the Japanese Cultural Agency, the Tokyo Drama Award 2013 for Excellence in Single Episode Dramas and the 50th Galaxy Prize for Excellence.

Isshiki Nobuyuki also wrote the script for the documentary-drama *Aku Yu o Korosu - Kayokyoku no Osama Densetsu* (Killing Aku Yu - The Legend of the King of Popular Songs, NHK · BS Premium) showed the anguish of a lyricist that had hit the top. This story was transformed into a drama with an interpretation unique to this scenario writer. One night when Aku Yu (Fukikoshi Mitsuru) is taking a break from writing, he happens to enter a small bar in a back alley, and the proprietress and the customer sing his hit songs, one

after another and shout their praise and criticisms. While all of this is going on, he only looks down and listens. Most documentary-dramas only try to reenact the facts of what happened. But in this drama, in his wordless time in that bar, Aku Yu's pain and resignation as he faced having to lose the glory of the past came out clearly. This was truly a portrait of Aku Yu that only Isshiki could create.

It is the 60th year since the beginning of television broadcasting. In 2013, the main television broadcasting tower has changed from Tokyo Tower in the center of Tokyo to Tokyo Sky Tree in *shitamachi downtown*, but it has also been a year for re-evaluating television drama.

In radio, the following two programs were particularly excellent. The special news report *Genpatsu Sagyoin ga Kataru Ni Nen* (Two Years as Told by a Worker in Nuclear Energy, Mainichi Hoso) is a very precious report of a worker involved in the clean-up after the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi Reactor. While always facing the controls on investigation placed by the power company, this reporting went on steadily over a long period and showed the true conditions of the workplace very clearly where the workers must constantly be exposed to radiation as they deal with severe conditions and a numbing of the senses. I want to express my admiration for the faith and determination of the reporters and producers of this program, and it also won the Heisei 25 Japan Commercial Broadcaster's Association Prize for Excellence in News Programming, 50th Galaxy Prize for Excellence. *In My Life - Kaigo no Shigoto to Bi-toruzu to* (Caregiving Work and the Beatles, Kita Nihon Hoso) shows a welfare caregiver named Kawade Teruko who sings famous songs of the Beatles and through this, you see her life and the deep enveloping love that animates her. This excellent program was very moving in bringing out the harmony between Kawade's singing voice and her life. It won the

Heisei 25 Japan Commercial Broadcaster's Association Top Prize for Excellence in Entertainment Programs. I want to emphasize that both of these programs made full use of the special qualities of radio.

Kotaki, Tetsuya

Critic, Professor Emeritus at Nihon Daigaku university (specializing in the cultural history of television). Executive Director of the Hoso Hihyo Kondankai (Broadcast Critics Benevolent Association), special advisor to the organizing committee of the International Drama Festival in Tokyo, director of Nihon Kyakuhon A-kaibusu Suishin Konso-shium (Consortium to Create an Archive for Japanese Scripts) and member of the Hoso Bangumi Shushu Shimon linkai (Broadcast Programming Collection Advising Committee). Among other positions, he has been head of the selection committee for the Galaxy Prize, a judge in the arts festival sponsored by the Japanese National Cultural Agency and a member of the BPO Hoso Ronri linkai (Broadcast Standards Committee). Among other books, he has supervised "Terebishi Handobukku (Handbook of Television History)" (Jiyu Kokuminsha), and was a co-writer on "Terebi Sakka-tachi no 50 Nen (50 Years of Writers for Television)" (NHK Shuppan).

(Translation: Mark Oshima)

The communication was peculiar yet comic, unfurling through fragmentary language and movement, like a conversation between fairies that had arrived on Earth for the first time. This was *Niwa mitai na mono* (Something like a garden), a dance work by choreographer Yamashita Zan, known for using unique methodologies and structures, and which was performed

in 2011 in Itami, Yokohama and Yamaguchi as a co-production between theatres in the three cities (Ai-Hall, ST Spot, Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media. In Yokohama, the performances were held at the Kanagawa

Arts Theatre). The stage design was by Kamiike Takuya, who built a small hut to simulate the theatre space in his base in Takamatsu and actually lived inside it for several months while he created his design. From the epic stage design to the props, the performers recruited in Itami and Yokohama, the production staff, Yamashita himself, and all the people and the objects – everyone and everything involved in the performance worked through the creative concept of “speculating while migrating” to each of the places in the tour.

Two public theatres (Ai-Hall and YCAM) came together with the non-profit-run ST Spot Yokohama with the aim of making a new dance work by Yamashita Zan, though not with one of the theatres as the main venue but rather as a co-production harnessing each theatre’s specialties. Ai-Hall handled the rehearsals in Kansai and coordinating the performers and staff, and as it was the location for the première, also allocated its theatre for ten days of rehearsal and

[Developments in Japan]

New Developments in Co-Productions, Growing from Networks of Regional Theatres and Producers

Ogura Yukako



Yamashita Zan, *Niwa mitai na mono* (Something like a garden) © Abe Ayako (both)

technical adjustments, before the production then went on tour. ST Spot took care of the rehearsals in Yokohama and, as a venue well versed in working with limited resources, also handled the accounts for the production, while from YCAM, with its unique bevy of media technology specialists, Hama Satoshi (YCAM InterLab) assisted with the programming and system design.

The work everyone was involved with was that of searching for the “co-production” that was right for the participants. Regional theatres each have their own missions and kinds of audiences, and so the way they communicate and do their accounts will differ in the public and private sectors, and even between different public venues. This co-production developed while discussing these dissimilarities. There already exists a network for public theatres, formed by the Japan Foundation for Regional Art-Activities in order to create partnerships between public venues, as well as a cooperation program for supporting regional cultural and artistic activities. The Agency for Cultural Affairs is also working to promote partnerships and cooperation between theatres and music halls, and supports touring performances. Even with such frameworks in place, there are still many challenges,

and we felt the potential to discover different methodologies and diverse paths.

The supervisors from the three venues also knew each other prior to starting the project, and that the co-production could be realized was down to how they already understood their respective work orientations. This made the team newly aware of the importance of such networking and increased their desire for it to spread.

Almost at the same time that this project was taking place, there were new developments related to constructing networks of fellow theatre producers in Japan. More opportunities began to appear for producers to get together, such as through the Saison Foundation and Komaba Agora Theater's joint foundational courses for artistic directors and producers at self-producing theatres, the courses run by Next (Nevula Extra Support), and TPAM (Performing Arts Market in Yokohama). This led to many people beginning to sense the significance of networking. Since the earthquake and tsunami that occurred in northeast Japan in March 2011 and the problems that arose that could not be solved by the power of individuals alone, the necessity for sharing information and networks has become a burning issue. Preparatory meetings promptly began in order to create a network that would bring everything together while also still embracing individuals' ideas and each respective party's directions. Following an October 2012 kick-off meeting in Kyoto, ON-PAM (Open Network for Performing Arts Management) was born in February 2013 with the premise of initiating democratic, open discussions between peers.

ON-PAM is a network of Japanese and international members connecting audiences with artists and arts organizations. People working to promote production practices in the performing arts participate voluntarily, sharing and exchanging frequently updated information



ON-PAM's Regional Partners Committee meeting in Sendai

and ideas through their work, aiming to form a place that connects to developing activities. It is currently working via three committees: the Cultural Policy Committee, the International Exchange Committee, and the Regional Partners Committee, to which I belong. The Regional Partners

Committee learns from a range of approaches to performing arts in regional areas, and extracts and applies universal lessons from these – both successes and failures – aspiring to create new networks and values. In its first year in 2013 it held committee meetings in three locations: Kyoto, Sendai and Tottori. The process of trial and error continues to consider how to utilize this fledgling network and initiate new movements.

2013 also resulted in several interesting developments and new works that harnessed each network. Mamagoto, Shiba Yukio's theatre company, was commissioned by the Aichi Triennale 2013 and produced *Nihon no otona* (Japanese Grown-Ups), a play for both adults and children. After its première in Aichi it toured to Toyohashi, Niigata, Shodoshima and Itami. At Shodoshima there was also another yearlong project. Challenging the obvious modus operandi of holding performances in a theatre in Tokyo, there was a strong determination here to create original types of activity. Meanwhile, the Museum of Art in Kochi and 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa both transcended national boundaries and created a work in partnership with overseas organizations. The result was *One Day, Maybe*, a site-responsive performance directed by Tristan Sharps, the artistic director of UK theatre company dreamthinkspeak.

It was developed over three years in partnership between the Institute of Asian Cultural Development (Gwangju, Korea) and AsiaNow, and was staged in the three cities of Gwangju, Kochi and Kanazawa. Kinoshita International Art Center will also open in April 2014 as a site for artist-in-residency programs for the performing arts. There are surely many further developments to come.

As networks are born and fields and perspectives expand, the framework for performances and their means will continue to develop more and more. Without resorting to an “anti-Tokyo” stance or “This is Regional Japan”-style posturing, if similarly oriented people gather together, within these kinds of inevitable alignments all manner of things begin to happen as a result. Rather than unidirectional globalization, when networks expand in this way it leads to exclusive encounters and lessons, contributing to a re-appreciation and re-examination of the value of the locality. I believe that there we can find one of the keys to unlocking what the future vision for the performing arts should be.

Ogura, Yukako

Born in Hyogo prefecture in 1976 and graduated from the Faculty of Literature at Kobe College. In 2008, she became a director of Ai-Hall, a municipal theatre in Itami City, and she plans and produces the dance performances and workshops there. She is the Administration Manager for ON-PAM (Open Network for Performing Arts Management), and Chair of its Regional Partners Committee.

(Translation: William Andrews)

The workshop in the traditional Japanese performing arts in noh was held during the 9 days from August 22 to August 30, 2013 at the Tessenkai Noh Theater and Research Center in the Aoyama neighborhood of Tokyo. ITI began this workshop in 1987 with all non-Japanese participants with the aim of widening and deepening knowledge of

Japanese culture abroad.

[Developments in Japan] Report on the Traditional Japanese Performing Arts Workshop on Noh

Odagiri Yoko

From 1998, the participants were no longer only non-Japanese and the program was widened to teach the fundamentals of a genre of traditional Japanese

performing arts to people directly involved in stage arts in some way without distinctions of citizenship. Since that time, Japanese and non-Japanese study side by side and it has become an annual activity of ITI each summer and is highly regarded both inside and outside Japan.

The 2013 workshop was the 24th since this program began and was devoted to classical noh drama. Since becoming a project directly sponsored by the Japanese National Cultural Agency, this is the second workshop following the Nihon Buyo (Japanese

Classical Dance) workshop in 2011. The workshop was taught by 11 teachers from the Tessenkai group who are *shite* main actors and there were 26 participants who in the midst of the severe heat of summer had intensive lessons daily from 10 AM to 5:30 PM using the noh play “*Hagoromo* (The Feathered Robe)” as base. The schedule was very intense and the only breaks were the lunch break and the time between the two afternoon classes, the two breaks

Kanze Tetsunojō



amounting to a total of only an hour and a half. The Tessenkai building is in the midst of the high fashion boutiques of the Aoyama district, but once the participants entered the Tessenkai building, they were immersed in the ancient world of noh and for 9 days, all four floors of the building were totally devoted to the ITI workshop.

As with the previous workshop under the auspices of the Japanese National Cultural Agency, the theme of the workshop was “training the new artists who will create the culture of tomorrow.” The main teacher was noh actor Kanze Tetsunojô and the central concept of his teaching was, “first, the fundamentals and second, also the fundamentals.” The fundamentals of noh movement, standing, *hakobu* (“carrying” which is the word used in noh for walking, a way of walking which is sometimes described as “*suri ashi*” or “the sliding step.”), and *mai* (“dance”) are the most crucial things to learn and are useful to all performing arts east and west. With this in mind, the play *Hagoromo* was chosen because it contains strong elements of both story and dance.

On the first day, the opening ceremony was held on the main stage of the Tessenkai. After that, the participants got a rare opportunity to see at close range how the *shozoku* or “noh costume” was put on. They watched as one of the instructors had the costume and mask put on him with the help of three other teachers. As he gradually was transformed into the role of the angel in *Hagoromo*, it looked like the participants were overwhelmed by the swift and efficient movements. They were even more overwhelmed by the acting and beautiful dance of an actual performance of *Hagoromo* that followed by that *shite* main actor together with four of the teachers singing as the *jiutai* chorus. This was a very significant moment because it meant that before beginning the daily lessons, the students could see the real thing.

DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN

The lesson spaces were the main noh stage and two practice spaces. One class period was 2 hours for a total of 3 periods each day, one in the morning and two in the afternoon. The participants were divided into three groups that revolved through these three spaces every day. In other words, this meant that every day, a participant's group would have an opportunity to work on the actual noh stage. This was a rare and very significant experience and was one of the important strengths of the workshop. When the groups were on the actual noh stage they had one on one instruction from the master

teacher Tetsunojô.

In the last half of the workshop, during one of the afternoon periods, two of the participants were chosen as models and had the actual costume and mask put on for the two pieces that the students were working on, one the angel of *Hagoromo*, exemplifying the gracious, elegant *yugen* style and the other a very masculine vigorous piece. Then all of the participants had the opportunity to wear the noh mask and to experience the limitation of vision. This was also an opportunity to see the masks in the storehouse of the Tessenkai, many of which are very great art treasures. On another day,



Watching close up as the Noh *shōzoku* is put on to transform the actor into an angel.



Tetsunojô giving individual instruction.

the two afternoon sessions were devoted to trying to apply what was learned in the lessons and seeing some of the experiments in noh in lecture-workshops conducted by Kasai Kenichi, noh producer. The participants worked in pairs moving on the noh stage and spoke a passage from the ancient chronicle “Kojiki” about the first encounter of the gods Izanagi and Izanami and also experimented with speaking passages from “Macbeth” as a way of comparing different ways of doing theater. The noh way of standing and walking on stage doesn’t mean just to stand and walk. When standing, the body is held in such a way that it is as though the body is pulled in all directions by invisible cords and is kept still in the equilibrium of all these forces. This fundamental and basic standing position is called the “*kamae*” and it means that even just standing, the noh actor is projecting an infinite amount of energy in all directions.

By making the steps fast or slow, strong or weak, accelerating or decelerating, the friction with the stage made by *suri ashi* sliding step (which noh actors call “*hakobi*”) creates the spacing of an infinite number of narratives. By doing so, the body moves in all directions without wavering and creates beautiful lines on stage, which are combined and this is the root of stage expression. In turn, this is combined with the regulation of the breath, in other words this expression is intimately related to the strength of the breath and its careful control. These hidden features of noh were explained in great detail and this was vital not only to understanding noh, but all arts. Art is discovering that essential form with absolutely no waste that can communicate to an audience and move them.

Hagoromo is also a play that teaches the importance of peace. The angel asks for her feathered robe back, but the man who has found it is greedy for this treasure and refuses to return it. But finally, when

he understands her need for the robe, he agrees to return it, but there is a condition. She must dance for him. This is the kind of “contract” that is depicted in this noh play created hundreds of years ago. Now the problem becomes whether she will get the robe first or whether she will dance first. He says that if he returns the robe, she will fly away without dancing, but she says that doubt/deceit is only a part of the human world, it does not exist in heaven. He is chastened and without fighting, through discussion, trust is created. She wears the robe that she has had returned and as she dances, she returns to the heavens. The words of the song during this final dance describe that as she dances, prosperity comes to the realm, there is an unending shower of treasures and peace comes to the world. *Hagoromo* is a play celebrating peace.

When the workshop got settled, I talked to the participants. In China, it seems that there is a classical dance called “Tennin Sange (The Angel Scatters Blossoms).” An angel wearing a beautiful robe appears on the shores of a pond and the place is filled with flowers and beautiful music. She does an elegant dance and eventually returns to heaven. There is no interaction with human beings and no particularly philosophy, but apparently the famous beauty Yang Kuei-fei loved to do this dance. In Europe as well, there are stories of creatures from another world appearing in human form, but usually, they are not embodiments of goodness like the angel in Japan’s *Hagoromo*. European examples are usually like the legend of the Lorelei. One focus of this workshop was to draw attention to the excellence of *Hagoromo* as a prayer for peace. It was a very intense and worthwhile nine days. And there cannot have been any better setting for the workshop. It became a very high level masterclass.

In this workshop, there were 8 participants from outside Japan

(1 from Singapore, 1 from China, 3 from South Korea, 1 from Germany and 2 from Poland) and 18 participants from Japan for a total of 26, plus 5 observers. We would like to express our gratitude to the Tessenkai for

providing the space for this workshop for 9 days and to the instructors from the Tessenkai, first, the head teacher of the workshop, master *shite* main actor Kanze Tetsunojô and the other *shite* main actors who served as instructors (Shimizu Kanji, Nishimura Takao, Shibata Minoru, Umano Masaki, Asami Jiichi, Kitanami Takahiro, Nagayama Keizo, Tanimoto Kengo, Uzawa Hikaru and Ando Takayasu) as well as noh producer Kasai Kenichi. We would also like to express our appreciation for the interpreters for the workshop, Mark Oshima and James Ferner.



While watching the instruction being given on stage, the participants practice at the same time.

Odagiri, Yoko

Painter and stage designer. Studied at the Tokyo University of the Arts, post-graduate school of fine arts majoring in *Nihonga* Japanese-style painting. Studied in France with a scholarship from the Boursier du Gouvernement Français at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs and the Institut d'Etudes Théâtrales de Université de Paris 3, with instruction from the late Bernard Dort and the late Denis Bablet. After working as part of the scenographic staff for Le Théâtre du Soleil and the Compagnie Roger Blin, she returned to Japan in 1982. She has created many scenographic works. At the same time there have been solo exhibitions of her paintings. From 1995 – 2009, she was Secretary-General of the Japanese Centre of ITI and at present is a Executive Council of ITI worldwide.

Photographs: Fujii Aki

(Translation: Mark Oshima)

Seven colleges involved in theatre education gathered in Beijing and took part in the 3rd Global Alliance of Theatre Schools International Theatre Festival (abbreviated as GATS Festival) held from September 18 to 28, 2013, at the Central Academy of Drama, Beijing. This festival is carried out every other year under the auspices of the Global

[Developments Overseas]

GATS Festival and ATEC Festival

China's Central Academy of Drama Leading the World's Theatre Education

Hishinuma Yoshiaki

Alliance of Theatre Schools (GATS) and the Central Academy of Drama has been playing the leading role in terms of financing and operation. GATS is an international organization comprised of drama-related colleges and it was established in 2008 by the edu-

cation center of the International Theatre Institute (ITI), which is under the umbrella of UNESCO. Based on the spirit of UNESCO, which is to promote world peace and mutual understanding, GATS has set a goal to promote exchanges of information related to theatre education on an international level and thereby to contribute to the development of theatre education projects around the world.

The festival was divided into the performance section and workshop section. In the performance section, the participating schools had to present a production of a chosen Shakespeare play for the Universal program as well as a production based on their country's ethnic and artistic traditions for the National program, and the running time was set respectively to 40 minutes. The characteristics of the schools and the individualities of the academic supervisors could be seen in



Theater College students took part from all over the world.



Toho Gakuen College of Drama and Music participated in GATS Festival.

the workshops. The students were able to attend any workshop and there was an air of youthful zest at each session.

The Central Academy of Drama has established two drama awards, namely the Award for Best Performance and the Award for Outstanding Performance. The student who received the Award for Best Performance (excluding Chinese students) was given qualifications to study at the Central Academy of Drama for six months (during the first semester from September to January of the following year or the second semester between March and July) in order to refine their artistry.

The inaugural GATS Festival took place in 2009, the second festival in 2011 and in 2013 it was the third time around. The seven colleges that took part were the Central Academy of Drama, Toho Gakuen College of Drama and Music (Japan), National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts (Bulgaria), Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts (Germany), Chung-Ang University (Korea), University of Veracruz (Mexico) and Kyiv National I.K. Karpenko-Kary Theatre, Cinema and Television University (Ukraine). It was the second time for Japan's Toho Gakuen College of Drama and Music to participate following 2011.



Workshop led by Sato Akiko (G.com)

The opening ceremony was held at the Experimental Theatre on Dongcheng Campus in Beijing, where the old school building of the Central Academy of Drama is located. Many people took part in the ceremony, including officials of the Chinese central government such as the head of the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges of the Ministry of Education and the head

of the Department of Education and Science of the Ministry of Culture alongside theatre scholars of the Chinese Dramatic Art Research Society and other specialists, demonstrating the high level of interest among the Chinese theatrical circle.

This time the assigned play was Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Each school competed with their ethnic styles expressed through sophisticated staging and performances, highlighting their unique interpretations, and impressed the audience with the results of their constant training. The workshops have given experienced academic supervisors chances to show their achievements, and the contents seem to be improving every time the festival is held.

Koshimitsu Terufumi, the President of Toho Gakuen College of Drama and Music, who also directed the *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the assigned program and *Musical Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, adapted by Fukuda Yoshiyuki for the free program, left the following comment:

“*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was directed based on the concept expressed in its secondary title ‘The Forest Full of Love’ and it was re-structured by putting several couples from other plays of Shakespeare into the story and introducing Japanese forms of art. As for *Musical Little Women*, it was turned into a musical set in Hiroshima after the Pacific War, which was different from the original novel, and through the eyes of the brave sisters, the follies of war were questioned. Among other works presented under the Universal program, the production by the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts from Germany was memorable, portraying the conflicted feelings of love amongst the two couples that live in the modern society. With respect to the National program, the National Academy for Theatre and Films Arts from Bulgaria portrayed the abysmal anxieties and terror of the people who lived under the former communist regime by transposing such feelings to a bus that went out of control and it left a strong impression on the audience.”



Toho Gakuen College, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* directed by Koshimitsu Terufumi, Miura Go

The closing ceremony was held in the afternoon of September 26 at the outdoor theatre on the Changping Campus, which is under construction on a vast site, and the Award for Best Performance and the Award for Outstanding Performance were presented to the students including two participants from Toho Gakuen College. Xu Xiang, who is the President of the Executive Committee of GATS Festival and also the President of the Central Academy of Drama, and Corneliu Dumitriu from Romania, who is the Secretary General of GATS, presented the awards to the winners, and the members of participating schools from various countries and the guests congratulated them with fervent praise.

GATS is not the only international organization for drama-related schools in which the Central Academy of Drama is involved and plays the central role. There is also the Asia Theatre Education Centre (ATEC), which was established in October 2005 led by three schools, namely the Central Academy of Drama, the Theatre Department of Nihon University College of Art (Japan) and Chung-Ang University, and 15 member schools as of now and 20 other applicant schools that have been registered are taking part in its activities.

The main activities of ATEC during 2014 are to host the 3rd Asian Theatre Schools Festival and the 1st World Theatre Education Convention, which will be held concurrently between May 18 and 23 on the campus of the Central Academy of Drama. The theme of Asian Theatre Schools Festival is “Modernization of Traditional Theatre”. With regard to the World Theatre Education Convention, 30 prominent educators and specialists from around the world will be invited as special guests and preparations are under way, setting a goal to invite

a total of 250 participants from 45 countries. ‘Asia Today—Theatre Education of the 21st century’ has been set as the unifying theme of the two conventions.

Through the events organized by GATS and ATEC, people who are working for theatre-related schools and specialists worldwide are given opportunities to have gatherings and I cannot take my eyes off the future activities of the Central Academy of Drama, which is increasingly taking on the pivotal role in theatre education of the world.

Hishinuma, Yoshiaki

Hishinuma is a translator and is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Japanese Centre of International Theatre Institute. He has translated modern Chinese plays such as *Farewell Seto-naikai* (*Bie le, Laihu nei hai*) by Deng Youmei as well as *Bull* (*Niu*) and *Road Work* (*Zhu lu*) by Mo Yan. Among the works he has translated that have also been performed in Japan, there are *Empress Dowager* (*Xitaihou*) by Sun Demin, which was presented by Shochiku Co., Ltd., *Go Player* (*Qiren*) and *Frog* (*Qingwa*) by Guo Shixing produced by the New National Theatre, Tokyo, *Aboard the Ferryboat Together* (*Tong chuan guodu*) and *Temporary Ward* (*Linshi Bing Fang*) by Shen Hongguang produced by The Theatrical Company of Toen and *The Peony Garden* (*Mudan ting*) presented by Jiangsu Province Kunqu Theatre and hosted by Nippon Cultural Centre.

(Translation: Sumida Michiyo)

‘Theatre Born in Conflict Zones’ is a project planned and produced by the Japanese Centre of International Theatre Institute and this year it was held for the fifth time around. At the end of December 2013, ‘Part 1’ of ‘Theatre Born in Conflict Zones 5’ was held for five days at Atelier West of the Tokyo Metropolitan Theater. Through the reading

performances, talk sessions, round-table discussions and crosstalk sessions, plays from Palestine, Afghanistan and Algeria, which were translated into Japanese and presented in Japan for the first time, were introduced.

Additionally, on January 26th, 2014, ‘Part 2’ was held under the title ‘Japan-Palestine Theatre Exchange Seminar’. Ihab Zahdeh, who is the author and cast member of the Palestinian play *3 in 1* that was introduced during ‘Part 1’, was invited to the seminar.

[Special Feature] Report on Theatre Born in Conflict Zones 5

Goto Ayako



Flyer of “Theatre Born in Conflict Zones 5”

I would like to review the project as the translator of the Afghan play *Infinite Incompleteness* and also as a production assistant who spent time together with the two guests from abroad.

3 in 1

Written by Ihab Zahdeh, Mohammad Titi and Raed Shuyoukhi (Yes Theatre)

Translated by Yanagiya Ayumi

Directed by Sugiyama Tsuyoshi (Theater Company A La Place)

Performed by Kinomoto Akira (Black Tent Theatre), Shigemori Jiro (Black Tent Theatre) and Hirohata Tatsuya

Date & time: December 19 (Thu) 19:00 / December 21 (Sat) 19:00

From Palestine, the play *3 in 1* by Yes Theatre, which is the one and only theatre troupe based in Hebron, the largest city on the West Bank of the River Jordan, was presented to the Japanese audience.

The play was written by the actors of Yes Theatre centered round Ihab Zahdeh in order to express their true feelings and each episode was based on the real experiences of the actors. The main audiences of the play have been children.

Human beings are creatures that are constantly acting some kind



3 in 1 © Ishizawa Chieko(both)

of part (or role). Above all, Palestine, which is under occupation, is a land where everyone has to act a part in his or her real life on a daily basis and to this effect actors are people who make their living by acting. Furthermore, in the city of Hebron, where there are many conservative and devout Muslims, theatre activity, from some people's point of view, is regarded as an evil practice that is meaningless. However, Yes Theatre believes in the power of theatre. It wants to pass on the power of theatre to young people who are the bearers of Hebron's future. It is trying to provide children chances to experience how to express their feelings through theatre. In other words, it wants children to be able to exert their potential to the utmost. For that reason, Yes Theatre is calling on the adults to understand what theatre is about. Through its workshops carried out for schoolteachers and instructors at culture centres and other activities, the Hebronian society is slowly but definitely beginning to embrace Yes Theatre. In Hebron, women are not allowed to perform on stage due to the conservative character of the locality (although there are actresses in other Palestinian cities). Last year, Yes Theatre achieved 'a feat' of having three women appear on stage. In 'Part 2', we heard stories of how the members of Yes Theatre worked hard to persuade the families of those women.

Despite the fact that they can barely manage to perform normal daily activities as a Palestinian and as a Muslim living in Hebron, which is a conservative Muslim city that has an Israeli enclave at its centre, the actors, who also have to go through their life by bearing a profession that is difficult to earn one's living by, delved into the theme of "how to live" in the drama *3 in 1* and the play attained first place at the international theatre competition Premio Internazionale 'Il Teatro Nudo di Teresa Pomodoro' held in Milano, Italy, in November 2013.

Their approach as performers persistently searching for a way to live by exposing (or informing) their way of life came in line with the concept of the competition, which is ‘Teatro Nudo’ (naked theatre).

After the reading performance, a talk event was held with the speakers Hosoda Kazue (Researcher of Israeli literature and culture at Chuo University), Muneshige Hiroyuki (Black Tent Theatre) and its director Sugiyama Tsuyoshi, which helped us to understand more about the play. Zahdeh and Sato Shigenori, a schoolteacher who has been creating theatre with high-school students in Fukushima after the 11. 3 earthquake and tsunami disaster, were invited to ‘Part 2’ held on January 26, 2014, and a four-hour long seminar was carried out. At the seminar, Zahdeh gave an introduction to Yes Theatre and *3 in 1*, and then Zahdeh and Sato Shigenori had thought-provoking discussions in the talk session, which was followed by reading performances in Japanese by the participants and also in Arabic by the students of the Arabic Islamic Institute in Tokyo as well as a reading by Zahdeh himself in Arabic, which turned into a good quality time. On our way to the venue, Zahdeh said, “It is by no means easy for me to travel to Japan. This may be the last time. That’s why while I am in Japan, I want to pass on every bit of information that I have and everything that I have on my mind now. Although what I have on my mind may not necessarily be correct.”

Carrying out the reading performances and having invited Ihab Zahdeh was made possible through



Seminar with Ihab Zahdeh and Sato Shigenori.

the cooperative system set up by Imamura Sae and members of Peace-builders (abbreviated as PB, a specified non-profit corporation working on peace building, which is headquartered in Hiroshima and has a branch office in Palestine). Moreover, some of the text in 3 in 1 was introduced in the 'Plays to Read' column of the December 21 issue of Nikkan Gendai newspaper.



Reading performance by Ihab Zahdeh himself in Arabic.

Infinite Incompleteness

Written by Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO)

Translated by Goto Ayako

Directed by Kouke Yoshinori (Tokyo Engeki Ensemble)

Performed by Koyama Moeko (Empathy), Hanagasaki Koichi (Alpha-selection),

Otani Kenjiro (AT Production), Okubo Taka and Masaki Hikari (Tokyo Engeki Ensemble)

String instrument (rabab) performed by Satow Keiichi (Afghan music unit 'Chalpasah')

Projected images created by Takahashi Keisuke (Nibroll)

Date & Time: December 20 (Fri) 19:00 / December 22 (Sun) 14:00

From Afghanistan, we introduced *Infinite Incompleteness* produced by AHRDO (Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization). Additionally, Hjalmar Jorge Joffre-Eichhorn, who is the co-founder of AHRDO and also the director of the

original production of *Infinite Incompleteness*, was invited to the talk session. Joffre-Eichhorn is half Bolivian and half German, and not an Afghanistani. He has deeply committed himself to the Afghan society as a foreigner—in other words, he is in the same position as us—and taught us many things about the possibilities and difficulties of bringing about peace.

This play was written by collecting voices of people who had experienced losses due to conflicts. Men of three opposing ethnic groups and one woman talk about the irrational grieves of reality in place of the disembodied spirits and their kins. Borrowing the words of Joffre-Eichhorn, actors are ‘weapons of peace’. There are the grief of being deprived of one’s loved ones by an irresistible enemy, the grief of giving birth to new life by placing slight hope for the far future though knowing that there will be no peace during the life of one’s child and the grief of not being able to make concessions due to ethnic distinction despite the fact that they share the same feeling of grief. The play is woven with such grieves based on the voices directly collected from the people of Afghanistan through the Playback Theatre method (improvised theater in which the audience and participants talk about their past experience and act it out). To look back at and talk about the unwanted past must be hard but Joffre-Eichhorn says that theatre has the power to “change tears into energy”.

Putting their lives at risk, the members of AHRDO carry out activities aspiring for democratization and peace in Afghanistan by providing opportunities to conflicting ethnic groups to understand each other.



Satow Keiichi (rabab)

*Infinite Incompleteness* © Ishizawa Chieko(both)

Joffre-Eichhorn took part in the post-performance talk alongside the director Kouke. We were able to hear from Hjalmar about the members of AHRDO, about doing plays with the oppressed, about what it is like be involved in theatre activities that are deeply rooted in the Afghan community as a foreigner and other matters. As for the round-table talks, Ohashi Hiroshi (the representative of Asia meets Asia and the leader of the theatre group DA-M, who has invited a theatre group from Afghanistan in the past) and Murayama Kazuyuki (teaches South Asian and West Asian culture at Wako University and supervised the translation of *Infinite Incompleteness*) were invited as guest speakers, and it developed into a unique discussion. They were also able to draw out interesting topics from Joffre-Eichhorn.

Hjalmar Joffre-Eichhorn arrived in Japan ahead of time and showed up at the studio during rehearsals. There was also an interview by Radio Japan after the performance. The interviews of

Joffre-Eichhorn, Kouke, Koyama, Hayashi Hideki, who is the producer of this project, and Satow's Rabab performance were broadcast in Afghanistan (Kabul and Herat) and on the Internet radio on January 5th. The play also appeared in the 56th issue of the magazine Theatre Arts (published on September 20, 2013). Furthermore, the English translation of the play was published in an American performing arts magazine PAJ (Performing Arts Journal, in the 106th issue published on January 1, 2014).

I was truly happy to be part of introducing this play in Japan as the translator and with these members. To live, to die, to love, to kill and peace—we had intensive discussions over these words day and night. Through working on this play, I was able to encounter life and words anew.



Post-performance talk with
Joffre-Eichhorn.
© Niwayama Yuka



Joffre-Eichhorn came to
rehearsal of
Infinite Incompleteness

Le Cadavre Encerclé

Written by Kateb Yacine

Translated by Udo Satoshi

Directed by Hirota Junichi (Amayadori)

Performed by Nishikawa Kotaro (Gekibaka/ Oshare shinshi), Nishimura Sogo,

Asano Chizuru (Ajiwai dodo), Inagaki Kanjyo (Amayadori),

Itoyama Kazunori (Amayadori), Yamamori Shintaro (Higekikaku),

Kokado Maya (Amayadori), Miyazaki Yuma and Numata Seima

Date & time: December 21 (Sat) 14:00 / December 23 (Mon & national holiday) 14:00

From Algeria, we introduced *Le Cadavre Encerclé* by Kateb Yacine (1929-1989).

Although this play deals with the Sétif massacre that occurred

Le Cadavre Encerclé ©Yamaguchi Mayuko(both)



in 1945, it also has a very strong sense of modernity. Niino Morihiro (Professor of German Theatre at Rikkyo University) appeared in the round table talk after the performance and said, “The play reminded us of the Arab spring that took place from the end of 2010 to 2011”. As the play is written with a complicated structure and the words are full of symbolism, it is by no means easy to understand. However, on December 23, the director Hirota gave an explanation of the play

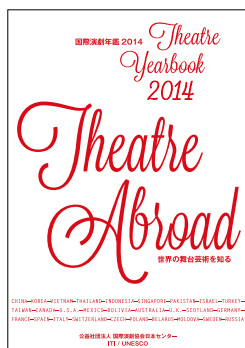
before the performance and also the actors' body had much to tell, which made it considerably easier for the audience to appreciate the play. After the performance, Udo (associate professor of Arabic and Berber literature and theatre at Kagoshima University) Shichiji Eisuke (theatre critic) and Niino took part in the round-table talk titled 'Contemporary Theatre of the Arab and Islamic Countries'. Ito Hiroshi (Professor of French literature) was among the audience, and having said that he was studying in France when *Le Cadavre* Enceclé was premiered in Belgium (at Theatre Moliere in Brussels in 1958), he talked about how much buzz the play had caused, making it a deeply moving session.

In addition, a crosstalk session was held inviting the directors of the three plays and Udo, after the performance on December 23, which was also the closing day of 'Theatre in Conflict Zones 5'. How should we approach the society that gave rise to the plays or the people who live in the realities depicted in the plays? How should we understand and face them, and what kind of stance should we take to express them? Not only did the crosstalk session help us to deepen our understanding of the plays through Udo's explanation, it also gave us a chance to get glimpses of the three directors who pondered, struggled and took on the challenge.

Goto, Ayako

Goto was born in 1982. She graduated from the Department of German, Faculty of Foreign Languages at Dokkyo University and then completed the postgraduate course of Language and Society at Hitotsubashi University. After living in Vienna, Goto has worked with the marionette theatre company Youkiza and also at Shizuoka Performing Arts Center (SPAC). She then received on-the-job training at the dramaturg division of Residenz Theatre (Munich). Goto now works as a freelancer.

(Translation: Sumida Michiyo)



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Here is the list of the articles which do not appear in this volume
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- China** Major Productions and Little Theatre in Beijing and Shanghai —Iizuka Yutori
- Korea** Theatrical Explorations of Individuals Living in History —Nam Song-Ho
- Vietnam** Luu Quang Vu Festival, Interchange Between the North and South
and the Japan-Vietnam Friendship Year —Yoshioka Norihiko
- Thailand** Looking back on Thai Theatre during 2013 with Nikorn SaeTang —Sentoku Miho
- Indonesia** From Beckett, Dorfman to Brecht —Seno Joko Suyono
- Singapore** Ushering in a New Era —Takiguchi Ken
- Pakistan** The Pleasures of Theatrical Satire on Independence Celebrations —Murayama Kazuyuki
- Israel** Who's afraid of Theatre? —Lilach Dekel-Avneri
- Turkey** Art, Politics, Oppression, Hope... —Dikmen Gürün
- Taiwan** Hope Found in Two Artists of the Younger Generations —Yao Lee-chun

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- Mexico** Amid the “Violencia” —Yoshikawa Emiko
- Bolivia** Two Different Theatre Movements —Kojima Mine
- Australia** Two Contrasting Large-Scale Works —Sawada Keiji

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Theatre and Translation — Encounters in Languages ————— Hayashi Tatsuki

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The Current Arab-Berber Theater — Report on the Theatre Festival in Béjaia, Algeria — Udo Satoshi

Overseas Tours Report

Convey the Japanese Language as a Sound – First Overseas Tour of Company *mum & gypsy* — Uematsu Yuko

An International Project Continues to Travel around the World – *THE BEE* ————— Naito Minako

Beyond the Different Cultures – European Tour of *Sugimoto Bunraku Sonezaki Shinjū* — Okamura Takio

ITI National Centres (as of 3rd March, 2014)

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Central African Republic
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Playhouses, performers and the audience. But what is indispensable?
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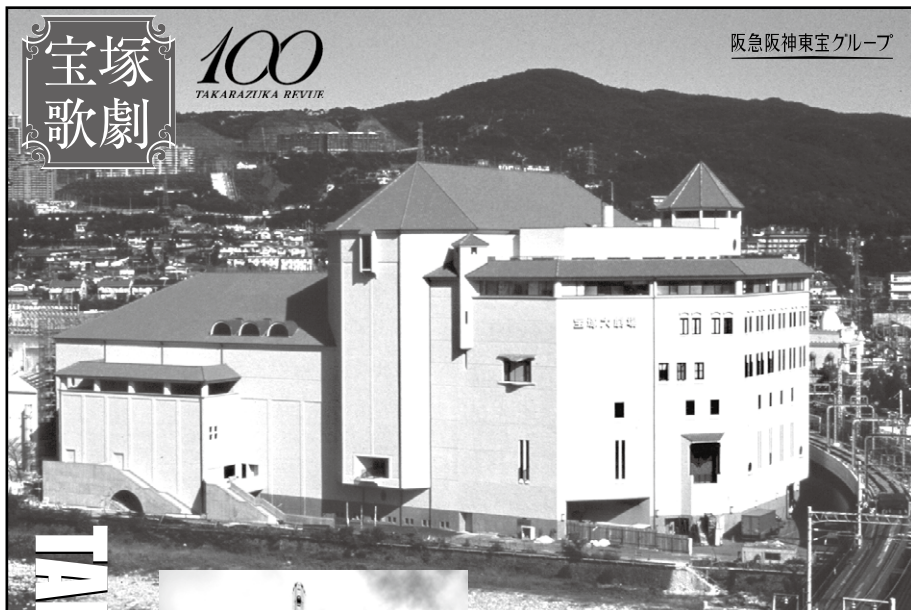
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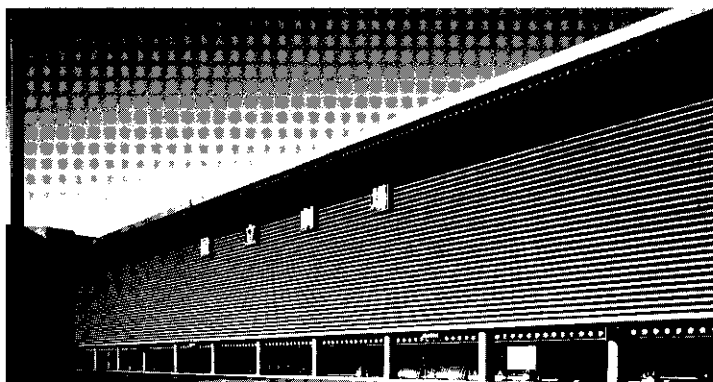
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We apologize to inform you by Xiao Ke & Zhou Zi Han (TPAM in Yokohama 2014)

Photo: Hideto Maezawa

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