

## **Yokohama Dance Collection Competition I**

Every year, the directors of overseas dance festivals look enviously at the Yokohama Dance Collection, which introduces Japanese young talent to the world. Since 1996, when this festival was established, its framework has gradually changed year after year. But in both fame and substance it has, for 20 years, been Japan's largest platform open to dancers from around the world and has exerted a powerful centripetal force on the world of dance.

In 2015, we felt new currents stirring. In the works submitted to Competition I, the judges look for outstanding choreography and composition. But that is only one dimension. We also look for power that transcends context and revelations that show us new forms of time, space and movement inherent in the human body. We hope to see uniqueness and fresh perspectives.

The Jury Prize and the French Embassy Prize for Young Choreographer went to Mikiko KAWAMURA. Her "Inner Mommy" had been awarded the Toyota Choreography Award 2014 but she had meticulously recreated it, turning it into an almost totally new work in its composition, music, and costume. The impact, the sheer reality of her powerful gestures, is still burned into my brain. Kawamura, who was still at university when she won the Yokohama Dance Collection EX2011 Outstanding New Artist Prize of Competition II, has since produced a rich array of creations and collaborations. I hope that her time in France will help her make further great leaps forward.

Turning, then, to other prizewinners, Ikumi KOROSU / Naoto KATORI showed us many beautiful moments. Ai TOHTOUMI displayed the wildness of her character with overwhelming force. In both cases, however, the tension to connect the whole was lacking. Razel Ann Aguda MITCHAO showed us the absurdity of the society in which she was born and raised. I also saw great potential in Ikumi KUROSU / Naoto KATORI, who won the Sibiu International Theater Festival Prize and Touchpoint Art Foundation prize, and in Haruka KAJIMOTO, who won the MASDANZA prize. I hope they found fresh seeds for their creativity through encounters with an audience whose members included people from different cultural backgrounds.

It is absolutely certain that artists who bring a fresh, contemporary gaze to the body and its expressive potential can, together with Yokohama, which provides a platform for exploring new possibilities in dance, continue to play an enormous role in the search for new values that will shape the future. (Shinji ONO)

Ten dance compositions in two days, in the midst of talks, showcases, and other performances: Competition I was shorter than in previous years. That was, perhaps, a good set of circumstances in which to differentiate the smell and the power of these performances. The energy displayed by Mikiko KAWAMURA, who won the Jury Prize and the French Embassy Prize for Young Choreographer, was outstanding. The sheer power of the performance enveloped everyone. It was dance as dance should be. Kaho KOGURE's "Far Eliche" poetic title and persistent movements had an uncanny appeal. The confident gestures of Haruka KAJIMOTO and Ai TOHTOUMI and the subtle and mysterious world evoked by Ikumi KUROSU / Naoto KATORI are still alive in my heart. I was also deeply impressed by the jaunty gestures of the last dancer who appeared before us, Razel Ann Aguda MITCHAO.

(Hiroko SHINDO)

Mikiko KAWAMURA was absolutely superb. The title of her work, "Inner Mommy," was the same as the work for which she received the Toyota Choreography Award 2014. I was stunned to see that work totally transformed, as if she had completely rejected the previous version. What we saw before was talent revealed in a combination of slow and rapid movements. This time she was all energy. Now, when all that we see is artists hesitating to push beyond the limits of contemporary dance, this mad rush was refreshing. The four works presented by Ikumi KUROSU / Naoto KATORI, Ai TOHTOUMI, Haruka KAJIMOTO, and Kaho KOGURE all had their exciting moments, but none surpassed her overall strength. In all four, however, I felt great promise. I look forward to enjoying their future works. For details, please see the May issue of *Dance Magazine*, which goes on sale on March 27. (Fumio HAMANO)

Yokohama Dance Collection, which was started in 1996 with the aim of discovering, promoting, and fostering young choreographers and contributing to the spread of contemporary dance, was held for the 20th time this year. As a way of discovering new talent in contemporary dance and providing continuing support for those talents, it has succeeded magnificently. This year, however, Competition I, frankly said, did not, result in the discovery of startling new talent except Mikiko Kawamura. Many of the participants provided glimpses of intention and effort in their use of body, mind, and all sorts of things (lighting, video, objects, and accessories) to create their "dance productions." It may be an obvious thing to say, but if dance is a "work" meant to be shown to others with a variety of different views, tastes and values, it must display an inner necessity different from yoga, Pilates, physical training or other activities pursued for self-cultivation, for one's own health or beauty, which are not intended to be shown to others. Dance is everywhere these days. For that very reason, I hoped to see something new that I had not seen before. That is what I was eager for. (Keizo MAEDA)

After the Yokohama Dance Collection EX 2015 Competition I judging, I traveled to Paris. There, in a studio at the Centre national de la Danse (CND), I have just started to work and make choreography with fourteen international young dancers for new creation "Nijinski a minuit" which is scheduled to have its premiere at La Villette in Paris this coming December. Silviane PAGES has just published "Le buto en France - malentendus et fascination" from CND's *recherches*. It is a good work that should as quickly as possible be translated into Japanese. Then, in Paris I really feel that "Paris is in danger, Japan is even more in danger". In the year of Yokohama Dance Collection's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is even more necessary that "the body of the dance" must be opened up to the other. This is the moment when we must learn from the hybridity of dance, from the transformation of the dancing Body. And also we have to learn <fragility> from each other. Our own body is the first "Other" and the first "alien thing" we confront. Being far from the myth of identity, and "being outside" from the myth of identity, this is dancing. (Ko MUROBUSHI)