

Yokohama Dance Collection 2016 Competition II

The overall level was high; any of the finalists might have won a prize. To put it another way, none of the works would stir up an argument. The entrants all created within a subtle range of difference, as though competing with each other. Their work, to put it positively, is delicate; to put it negatively, their horizons are narrow. I do not watch dance regularly, and I hoped to have my meager fixed concept of dance shaken.

What do I express on the stage? Why stage it? How does work impact on other?

Don't imitate someone else's dance; create your own. I also make my own performances. Let's meet at some locus of creative activity someday.

Yukio SHIBA, Playwright, Director, Founder of the theatre company Mamagoto

Again this year, the quality of the works in Competition II was at a high level, equal to those in Competition I. The difference is thought to be only one of the entrants' age. I found it extremely moving how boldly these choreographers at around the age of 20 expressed their consciousness of self and sought to engage with the world amidst conditions with limitations on stage equipment and other factors.

Koichiro TAMURA, who won the Outstanding New Artist Prize, continues, as last year, to depict stirring matches between different species in the world of nature and contrasts between life and death. He condenses an absurd, bleak world that suggests reading a Kafka short story into the minimum elements, demonstrating the height of his creative abilities.

Mako EGAMI, who won the Encouragement Prize, makes skillful use of the ways to use the body cultivated in classic ballet and body language of contemporary dance, handing the negative feelings that erupt in the course of everyday events with objective gestures, unfolding them with a vigorous freedom before our eyes.

I would also like to comment on each of the other finalists.

SAKAI: The theme is unique, the expressions with the four limbs acute and rich. Using the space three-dimensionally without repeatedly changing the music would increase the work's centripetal force.

SHIBATA: I would like to see you tackle more representational motifs while making use of your lively expressive abilities, which, unusually in contemporary dance, are quite feminine.

KURIYA: Deftly deviating from the theme of femininity, the two performers' bodies generated a sense of scale 2.5 times as large, and the vast sense of energy was fascinating.

SAKATO: The work, based on a concept like a work of art, was fresh. I look forward to your developing your world with its distinctive ambiguity between truth and fiction further, based on physical training.

SHIMOJIMA: Your comical climax depicting the classic theme of the flesh as the slave of thought made me think of Asian rituals and folk dances and was most impressive.

OHKITA: I hope you will open up your own physical vocabulary, building on the strengths of your fresh movements and gestures, with no touch of the borrowed image fostered in the academic setting.

WAKUTA: Your experiment at expressing the sketches of thoughts and feelings we call '*tanka*' through poetry and dance is ambitious. I hope you will turn your stubbornness like a closed shellfish opening itself to your own advantage.

UCHIDA: I hope you will research and dig down historically into your unusual material, twins, and play with it coolly and more loudly, without getting too detailed.

KURIHARA: Yours is a fascinating conceptional piece from a somewhat unexpected perspective. I hope to see you developing a sense of how to draw the eye with subtle changes in movements.

YAMAGUCHI: The breathing of the two, who have physically expressive abilities of such power, is life, and the originality of your work, which recalls battle paintings, was remarkable. The judging was very close; please try again.

Chie SUMIYOSHI, Art Producer, Writer

This competition was filled with powerful work and all sorts of possibilities.

Koichiro TAMURA, whose "zoo keeper" won the Outstanding New Artist Prize, did a brilliant job of presenting the violence within abstractly, not in its raw form. I want to see a longer version next.

Mako EGAMI, who won the Encouragement Prize, has made amazing advances since last year. Her "Everyone all over the world lives sensitively to his unpleasantness" has an irregular, far from straightforward texture in both the movements and composition, generating considerable appeal.

Naoyuki SAKAI's "Counter-Earth" sticks with an approach on the offensive, while Reisa SHIMOJIMA's "Wazze" brought many smiles.

"Conjoined -ONE-" by Shotaro YAMAGUCHI presents a rich duet between men with a lasting impact.

Fumio HAMANO, Senior Editor, Shinshokan DANCE MAGAZINE

Five points:

1) Necessity of the movements 2) Originality 3) Opening up 4) Treachery 5) Critical concerns

Those are the five points experience has led me to, but they are just my five points and hardly binding. Please trust in your own motivation for dancing and do what you want to, to the hilt. The forcefulness with which you do what you want to, the drive, more than how polished your work is, matters, even if it's unrefined. And don't stop with surface matters; venture into places where you have no control. Be forced out from your work, wreck it. Encounter that other self looking from above just before the work collapsed. What do you want to show people through your dancing on stage?
Continue your explorations.

Maki MORISHITA, Choreographer, Dancer

This year I was judging the works while being especially conscious of the *raison d'être* of Competition II and its objectives. Competition II, compared with Competition I, should be a place for possibilities outside conventional dance and for dance as a living thing rather than a matter of technique and experience. What matters is having your own yardstick for gauging your work, your own relationship with the body and the world, rather than worrying about rankings and prizes. That is connected to results. I want expression that goes beyond dance.

As I stated in my comments when the jury announced its results, dance is abuse of the flesh. That is paradoxical, but how can it be justified?

I spoke of a spirit that haunts a particular *topos*, a specific place or building. A spirit is a metaphor, but it is not an expression that is reproducible, in any place and at any time, in the uniform space we associate with Modernism. How can we envision a distinctive place and time? "A particular *topos*" does not mean only a specific place or building; it applies to our own bodies, our flesh. If one is a dancer with a distinctive, unique body, the question is what the phenomenon of 'I' indicates. Start from there and draw out the spirit lodging in a unique body.

The *raison d'être* of Competition II lies in the body; it is a place to engage more richly, more wildly, and more transcendently with something that cannot be controlled, that lodges in the body or perhaps possesses it.

Artist, Vivienne SATO