

Yokohama Dance Collection 2016 Competition I

Competition I attracted 133 entrants from 15 countries. After the preliminary judging via videos of their works, nine choreographer units were selected as finalists, and their live performances judged. Based on the totals of the scores each of the members of the jury assigned, the jury discussed the results for an hour to decide to whom to award the Jury Prize. The Encouragement Prize was given to a choreographer who, while not quite ready for the Jury Prize, shows great promise. For the French Embassy Prize for Young Choreographer, the jury considered the results of their scoring in combination with interviews with the choreographers to confirm whether they had the communication skills needed to study in France. The three French members of the jury made the final decision. For the Touchpoint Art Foundation Prize and MASDANZA Prize, the directors of those festivals made the decision and delivered the prizes in person.

In contemporary dance, with its vital expression of creativity, the originality of the choreography is one focus in evaluating work. The jury members also focused on distinctive approaches to the body's potential, beyond the composition of the work and its performance. Aokid × Takumi HASHIMOTO's individuality shone in a performance that combined art, sound, and acoustics. Through his delicately layered composition, Junpei HAMADA expressed powerful emotions instantaneously. Kaori ITO dedicated her body, in a closed in space, to others far away. We hope that they and all the other finalists will continue to making major advances in their work. This year's Yokohama Dance Collection, the twenty-first since its founding, welcomed more dance specialists from abroad than ever before. Yokohama is indeed, in communicating the possibilities of dance to the world, undertaking a major role in its creative future.

Shinji ONO , Chief Producers, Yokohama Arts Foundation

This year Yokohama Dance Collection has proved, once again, that this event is one of the most important in the contemporary dance scene in Japan!

All the competitors were very talented and everyone showed a strong artistic universe. Junpei Hamada has been chosen by the French embassy's juries for his great dance technics as well as his sensibility as a choreographer and his presence on stage. He will spend several months in an artist residency in France which will give him the opportunity to work with French choreographers and dancers and confront and dialogue with them.

The competitors who have been awarded by other juries have also impressed by their capacity to excel in their arts and gave the best of themselves. We wish them all success in the implementation of their carrier.

The Grand Price has been assigned to a very unique and creative show performed by Aokid × Takumi HASHIMOTO. We also want to congratulate them as well as Kaori Ito for her "Melancholy of square" who receive the encouragement prize.

Diane JOSSE, Cultural Attaché Ambassade de France au Japon

Works that shake up the framework of dance and works that try to reach, in their depth, unknown terrain battled it out over two days. Gentleness and density, well-thought-out compositions and the freshness of ideas: the competition format may no longer fit in a setting where values on different dimensions intersect.

It stands to reason that Aokid × Takumi HASHIMOTO's "free free" and Kaori ITO's "Melancholy of square," two works that are the reverse of each other, won the Jury Prize and Encouragement Prize. Haruka WATANABE, who won both overseas prizes, stood out for the simplicity of her work, her potential and appeal as a dancer.

The real pleasure of taking part in the Yokohama Dance Collection is being exposed to the eyes of people with a variety of backgrounds and evaluative frameworks. And English ability is a necessity to open the doors to work abroad.

Hiroko SHINDO, Dance Critics

Brief comment: Aiko OBANA would be better to have a strong desire to show, not to be seen. I would like Junpei HAMADA and Haruka WATANABE, who are both in their early twenties, to thoroughly pursue a mode of expression that goes hand and hand with bodily necessity. I'll lay a task on Aokid x Takumi HASHIMOTO: I would like to see dance as it advances with them. Cheol In JEONG has overwhelming physical presence but might venture into a more "dirty" world. Moto TAKAHASHI's work was good, but I would like to see something more overwhelming, more overflowing. Kaori ITO presented the greatest approach to perfection; Encouragement. Koji OZONO and Noriyasu HASHIMOTO both should trust their creative expression more, especially in the second half. Sayuri IIMORI / Yuki NISHIYAMA are definitely good dancers; they could question their technique more.

Conclusion: I would like to see urgency, compulsion in the act of deliberately dancing before others. If you just want to dance, dance by yourself! If you want to show your work, look! Viva Dance"

Junnosuke TADA

Director of TOKYO DEATHLOCK / Artistic Director of Cultural Centre of Fujimi City

I am delighted at the emergence of choreographers who want to dislocate and deviate from the fixed forms of contemporary dance. Aokid × Takumi HASHIMOTO's "free free," which won the Jury Prize, seems at first glance just to be fooling around, but shifts the conventional view of dance as though enfolding it. Their skills seem familiar, yet new. Koji OZONO and Noriyasu HASHIMOTO's gentle dislocations are appealing, but, unfortunately, the second half of their performance was weak. Kaori ITO's "Melancholy of square," which won the Encouragement Prize, is filled with a strange fascination. Junpei HAMADA, who won the French Embassy Prize for Young Choreographer, has great, if not yet fully realized, potential. Haruka WATANABE, Moto TAKAHASHI and Sayuri IIMORI and Yuki NISHIYAMA all are strikingly compelling dancers.

Fumio HAMANO, Senior Editor, Shinshokan DANCE MAGAZINE

In 2016 Yokohama Dance Collection was held for the 21st time. Writing "21," and thinking rather foolishly that "Someone born 21 years ago would be 21 now," I realize that achieving 21 years of a complex event like this is not easy. In addition to Competition I and Competition II, filled each year with expectations for the emergence of new talent, this year has even more rich and exciting content, including the Asia Selection and Special Program. Coupled together with TPAM (Performing Arts Meeting in Yokohama), held over the same time period, it attracted enormous attention, including attendance by many professionals from Japan and overseas.

In Competition I, in which I served as a member of the jury, the entry from Malaysia, which had been one of the finalists, could, unfortunately not be performed. The final judging was confined to nine works, by Cheol In JEONG of Korea and eight Japanese choreographers. Since the results of the judging have been reported on the website and elsewhere, I would like to present my personal comments on the works as a whole, including the many entries that sadly did not reach the finals.

Here the recent tendency has been towards "improving dance technique" and "indistinctness of the roots of dance." In the works submitted to Competition I, in particular, many of the performances were about right as dance. But that is, of course, not good enough for works conceived of as being performed before others. To make works stand on their own, they naturally need the motivation for dancing, the roots of dancing, and the work must have the power to "act on" the viewers in some way. Contemporary dance is a quite free art form, an art form in which you can do anything you like. Therefore, when composing a dance work with an audience in mind, the choreographer and dancers should not concentrate on dancing but should ask themselves how they want this dance to appear and what sort of effect they hope to have on those who see it.

Keizo MAEDA, Producer, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre / Director of Realtokyo