

国際演劇年鑑 2018

Theatre
Yearbook
2018

Theatre
in Japan

日本の舞台芸術を知る

NOH and KYŌGEN – KABUKI and BUNRAKU – MUSICALS – CONTEMPORARY THEATRE –
CHILDREN'S and YOUTH THEATRE and PUPPET THEATRE – JAPANESE CLASSICAL
DANCE – BALLET – CONTEMPORARY DANCE and BUTOH – TELEVISION DRAMAS

公益社団法人 国際演劇協会日本センター
ITI / UNESCO

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2018 - The Year of ITI



Anniversary
International Theatre Institute

Theatre Yearbook 2018 Theatre in Japan

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c/o Kokuritsu Nohgakudo (The National Noh Theatre)
4-18-1 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-0051, JAPAN
Tel: +81-(0)3-3478-2189 / Fax: +81-(0)3-3478-7218
mail@iti-j.org / <http://iti-japan.or.jp>

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Editor-in-chief	Tanokura Minoru
Director in charge	Yoshiiwa Masaharu, Sota Shuji
Editor	Nakajima Kana
Editorial Staff	Iki Terumi, Goto Ayako, Sakurai Yumiko, Hayashi Hideki, Hishinuma Yoshiaki, Monden Miwa
Translation	William Andrews, Sumida Michiyo, Mark Oshima, James Ferner, Sato Michiyo
Proofreading	Mark Oshima, Tove Bjoerk, Rosalind Fielding
DTP Staff	Nakamura Tomoko
Art Direction and Design	Kubo Saori
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Foreword

The Japanese Centre of International Theatre Institute has become a public interest incorporated foundation and is a member of an international network comprised of National Centres and professional organizations in approximately ninety countries and regions constituting the International Theatre Institute (ITI), which is a non-governmental organization under the umbrella of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (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 mutual understanding and facilitating the creations and exchanges of theatre and dance based upon the purpose of the UNESCO Constitution”.

Theatre and dance are excellent media that enable us to take interest in one another and think about man and society by sharing time and space together. Even in today’s society, where the means of communication have developed and the volume and speed of distributing information have increased dramatically, the role of theatre and dance that help us gain multifaceted and deep insights will not diminish.

The Japanese Centre has continued to publish the Theatre Yearbook since 1972. Starting from 1997, it has been published in two parts, namely ‘Theatre in Japan’ (English version) for readers outside Japan and ‘Theatre Abroad’ (Japanese version) for domestic readers. From 2011, the Centre has been commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs to carry out the publication project under the ‘Program for Nurturing Upcoming Artists Leading the Next Generation’.

Furthermore, reading performances have been presented every year since 2009 to introduce remarkable plays from around the world as part of the research and study activity to promote international theatrical exchange. In 2017, the ‘Theatre Born in Conflict Zones’ series was carried out for the ninth consecutive year and two new plays from Syria and Jordan/Palestine were translated and introduced to Japan for the first time.

Thus the publication of the ‘Theatre Yearbook’ has laid a firm foundation for actual activities to gain knowledge on the relationship between Japan and the world, to deepen mutual understanding by positioning Japan within the global network, and to realize cultural development and peace.

We look forward to your continued support and cooperation to the activities of the Japanese Centre of ITI in the years to come.

March 27, 2018

In commemoration of the World Theatre Day

Nagai Taeko
President
Japanese Centre of International Theatre Institute

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Names are presented in the style of the person's country of origin.
For Japanese names, the order is family name followed by given name.

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**Shots from the Performing Arts in Japan
in 2017**

Noh and Kyōgen



Atelier Kashu celebration program for
Master Performer Nomura Shirō certified as Living National Treasures
Sansuijin Muchū Suigin (The Revelries of Three Drunken Poets)
© Suzuki Kaoru



Umewaka Manzaburō
Tomonaga (The Tragedy of Minamoto no Tomonaga)
Umewaka Ken Noh Kai Kikkō Kai
© Maejima Yoshihiro



Kanze Noh Theatre grand opening felicitous program **Okina** Kanze kiyokazu (centre) Kanze Noh Theatre
Photo provided by Kanze Sōke © Maejima Yoshihiro



Association for Japanese Noh Plays **Tsuchigumo (The Monstrous Ground Spider)**
Kongō Hisanori (left), Kanze Kiyokazu (right) © Maejima Yoshihiro

Noh and Kyōgen



Awaya Yoshio *Obasute* (*The Old Woman Abandoned in the Mountains*) Awaya Noh no Kai © Maejima Yoshihiro



Observing the 500th year since the passing away of Kanze Kojirō Nobumitsu *Hoshi* (*The Stars*)
Ōtsuki Bunzō (left) Ōtsuki Noh Theatre © Moriguchi Mitsuru



Myōga Zarae (Horikawa River Cleaning) the Nagoya Castle 'Yume Tsukuri' Kyogen Kai © Imai Keisuke



Ayu (The Sweetfish) Nomura Mansai (centre) © National Noh Theatre

Kabuki



Yoshitsune Senbonzakura – Tokaiya and Daimotsu no Ura (Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees – Tokaiya and Daimotsu no Ura) Kataoka Nizaemon © Shochiku



Name-succession program *Kotobuki Soga no Taimen (The Felicitous Soga Encounter)*
Bandō Hikosaburō 9th (fourth from the left) © Shochiku



Igagoe Dōchū Sugoroku – Numazu (Vendetta at Iga Pass – Numazu) Nakamura Kichiemon (centre), Nakamura Jakuemon (front), Nakamura Karoku (back) © Shochiku



Yuki no Yūbe Iriya no Azemichi – Naozumurai (Narrow Paths on a Snowy Night in Iriya – Naojiro the Samurai) Onoe Kikugorō (left), Nakamura Tokizō (right) © Shochiku

Kabuki



Noda Ban Sakura no Mori no Mankai no Shita
(Noda Edition : Under the Blossoming Cherry Trees)
Nakamura Kankurō (front), Nakamura Shichinosuke (back)
© Shochiku



Kiwame-tsuki Indo-den Mahābārata Senki
(The Ultimate Indian Epic: The Wars of Mahabharata)
Onoe Kikunosuke © Shochiku



Suda no Haru Geisha Katagi – Yanagisima Hashimoto Zashiki (*Ume Yoshibe and the Stolen Poem Card* – A parlor in the Hashimoto restaurant in Yanagishima) Nakamura Kichiemon (centre) © National Theatre



Chō Kabuki *Kuruwa Kotoba Awasekagami* (*Words and Mirrors Come Together in the Pleasure Quarters*) Nakamura Shidō
Photo provided by Niconico Chokaigi 2017

Bunraku



Honchō Nijū Shikō – Jushukō no dan (*Twenty-Four Filial Pieties – The Ten Types of Incense section*)

© National Bunraku Theatre cooperated with Ningyō jōruri Bunraku-za



Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami – Terakoya no dan (*Sugawara's Secrets of Calligraphy - The Temple School section*)

© National Bunraku Theatre cooperated with Ningyō jōruri Bunraku-za



Sonezaki Shinjū – Temmaya no dan (*The Love Suicides at Sonezaki – The Temma House section*)

© National Theatre cooperated with Ningyō jōruri Bunraku-za



Shō-Utsushi Asagao Banashi – Ōi Gawa no dan (*Story of the Morning Glory – The Crossing at the Ōi River section*)

© National Theatre cooperated with Ningyō jōruri Bunraku-za

Bunraku



Tamamo no Mae Asahi no Tamoto – Kewai Sesshōseki no dan (Tamamo the Nine-Tailed Fox – The Spirit of the Fox Becomes the Killing Stone section) © National Theatre cooperated with Ningyō jōruri Bunraku-za



Hiragana Seisuiki – Matsuemon Uchi no dan (The Battles of Genji and Heike – The Matsuemon's House section)
© National Theatre cooperated with Ningyō jōruri Bunraku-za

Musicals



Billy Elliot Tokyo Broadcasting System Television, Inc./HoriPro Inc./Umeda Arts Theater/WOWOW Inc./Mainichi Broadcasting System, Inc. (Osaka) photo provided by HoriPro Inc. © Abe Takayuki



Parade HoriPro Inc. © Miyagawa Maiko

Musicals



My Name is Shingo (Watashi wa SHINGO)
HoriPro Inc. © Watanabe Takahiro



Ikebukuro West Gate Park Song & Dance
Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre / HoriPro Inc.
© Watanabe Takahiro



The Land of the Gods – The Twilight of the Romanovs (Kamigami no tochi – Romanofutachi no Tasogare)
Takarazuka Revue Company (Cosmos Troupe) © Takarazuka Revue



All for One – D'Artagnan and the Sun King (All for One – Darutanian to Taiyōou)
Takarazuka Revue Company (Moon Troupe) © Takarazuka Revue

Contemporary Theatre



The Air (Za kūki) Nitosha Theatre Company © Honma Nobuhiko



Life is Precious (Nuchi du takara) Bunka-za © Sakamoto Masafumi



Cloud9 Mochiron © Hikichi Nobuhiko



The Diary of a Good Girl (Anne no hi) Fukinkobo © Yokota Atsushi

Contemporary Theatre



The Mass of Pale Pink (Usui momoiro no katamari) Saitama Gold Theater © Miyagawa Maiko



Risk-Takers (Okashita mono) Bungakuza © Miyagawa Maiko



Setagaya Public Theatre 20th Anniversary Production *Requiem on the Great Meridian (Shigosen no matsuri)*
Setagaya Public Theatre © Hosono Shinji



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Footprint Princess (Ashiatohime – Toki ayamatte fuyu no yūrei) NODA MAP © Shinoyama Kishin

Contemporary Theatre



Neighbors (Fushin – Kanojo ga uso wo tsuku riyū) Parco Co., Ltd. © Abe Akihito



Enemy of Heaven (Ten no teki) Ikiume © Tanaka Aki

Children's and Youth Theatre and Puppet Theatre



Arabian Nights – The Magic Lamp and the Light of Tomorrow
(*Arabian Naito — Mahō no Rampu to Asu no Hikari*)
Puppet Theater Musubi-Za © Shimizu Jirō



With Two Wings (Futatsu no Tsubasa)
company ma © Ota Hiroki

Children's and Youth Theatre and Puppet Theatre



Shinyuri Theater Musical *Cat Runs (Neko Hashiru)* Kawasaki Art Center © Sekiguchi Junkichi



Higashiyama Asakura Narratives – The Section of Jinbei's Ferry (Higashiyama Asakura Sōshi – Jjinbei Watashiba no Dan)
Kawano Kuruma Ningyō Preservation Society © Iida Puppet Theatre Festa Executive Committee



The Boy Who Was Always Late (Itsumo Chikoku no Otokonoko) Puppet Theatre Puk © Puppet Theatre Puk



Chua Chui Dong Lai – As the Sparrows Wended in a Windless Winter (Chua Chui Dong Lai – Suzume Sarite Fuyu Kitaru)
Public-interest incorporated foundation Edo Marionette Theatre YOUKIZA © Miyazaki Mitsuaki

Japanese Classical Dance



Yoshimura Chihiro Recital 'Mai no Kai' **Nonomiya** Yoshimura Chihiro © Video Photo Saito



Kanawa Inoue Koman © National Theatre



Nihon Buyō Mirai-za **Nyonin Sumida : Tayutō (Women and the Sumida River : Gently Flowing)** Onoe Yukari, Hanayagi Kiyohito, Fujikage Shizue, Fujima Etsuko, Mizuki Yuka The Japanese Classical Dance Association Inc. © Video Photo Saito



Goyōkai performance in New Delhi, India **Ramayana** The Japan Foundation / Nihon Buyō Foundation © One Frame Story

Ballet



©New National Theatre, Tokyo

The Nutcracker and the Mouse King The National Ballet of Japan © Shikama Takashi



Cleopatra Tetsuya Kumakawa K-Ballet Company © Gombi Ayumu



The White-Haired Girl (Hakumōjo) Matsuyama Ballet Company © Hirai Shinnosuke (A·I Co.,Ltd.)



Triple Bill: *Pas de Quatre* Shakuji Ballet Academy © Seto Hidemi

Ballet



Die Toteninsel Sadamatsu-Hamada Ballet © Kanehara Yumi



La Traviata Sasaki Michiko Ballet Company © Furuichi Eiji

Contemporary Dance and Butoh



Festival / Tokyo 2017 **Toky Toki Saru** Conceived and directed by Pichet Klunchun © Siriwan Pakmei



KAAT Kids Program 2017 **Alice's Adventure in Wonderland** Kanagawa Arts Theatre © Miyagawa Maiko

Contemporary Dance and Butoh



17's Map CONDORS Photo provided by Sainokuni Saitama Arts Theater © HARU



Howling at the moon (Tsuki ni hoeru) Saburo Teshigawara / KARAS © Maezawa Hideto



Woman is a Journey (Onna wa, tabi de aru) Mademoiselle Cinema © Yamanoue Masanobu



SAYUSA (Left-Right-Left) Co-produced by Yokohama Noh Theater and Japan Society © Tsukada Yoichi

Contemporary Dance and Butoh



Dairakudakan Temptenshiki Anniversary 45th *Super-human (Chōjin)*, *Pseudo-human (Gijin)* Dairakudakan
© Kawashima Hiroyuki



missing link lwabuchi Teita © GO (go-photograph.com)

舞臺芸術の
日本を知る
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**The Japanese Performing Arts
in 2017**

Noh and Kyōgen

An Abundance of Spirited Nohgaku Programs

Nishi Tetsuo

Award Winners

Certification as a 'Preserver of Important Intangible Cultural Property'

Ōkura Genjirō was certified as a 'Preserver of Important Intangible Cultural Property' - Individual Certification (National Living Treasure). He is a performer on the *kotsuzumi* (hand-held shoulder drum) and also the Grand Master of the Ōkura Kotsuzumi School. Born in 1957, he is the second son of (the late) Ōkura Chōjūrō 15th. This recognition makes him the eleventh living individual in the field of Noh who has been given this honor.

In addition, 45 individuals received certification as 'Preservers of Important Intangible Cultural Properties' (Collective Certification). With this new group, the total comes to 527 persons living who have received the recognition.

Japan Art Academy Prize

The Japan Art Academy Prize was awarded to Ōtsuki Bunzō. A *shite* (main role) performer of the Kanze School, he is the eldest son of Ōtsuki Hideo and he studied with his grandfather, Ōtsuki Jūzō, and his father, as well as Kanze Hisao and Kanze Tetsunojō 8th.

Grand Prize at the Arts Festival of the Agency for Cultural Affairs

The Grand Prize at the Arts Festival of the Agency for Cultural

Affairs in the Theatre division was awarded to Umewaka Manzaburō for his performance of *Tomonaga (the Tragedy of Minamoto no Tomonaga)* at the Kikkō Kai. A *shite* performer of the Kanze School, he is the eldest son of Umewaka Manzaburō 2nd. Born in 1941, he was instructed by his father.

Award for the Encouragement of the Arts

The Award for the Encouragement of the Arts of the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology was presented to Kongō Hisanori. A *shite* performer of the Kongō School, he is presently the school's 26th Sōke (Grand Master). The eldest son of Kongō Iwao, he received instruction from his father. He has also been the recipient of the Kyoto Prefecture Award for Cultural Achievement as well as the Award for Distinguished Service and others.

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The Kanze Hisao Memorial Hosei University Noh Theatre Award

Okamoto Akira received the Kanze Hisao Memorial Hosei University Noh Theatre Award for directing the production, *Ren'niku Kōbō*. He was born in 1949, and is currently associate professor at Meiji University Graduate School.

Matsuda Hiroyuki also received the award. A *nobkan* (flute) performer of the Morita School, studied with the late Tanaka Ichiji and Morita Mitsuharu. He is a graduate of the Kunitachi College of Music and is a Lecturer at the National Noh Theatre Training Course.

Successions of the Heads of Schools and other

Successions of the Heads of Schools

In the *shite* Komparu School, Komparu Yasuaki took the name Komparu Norikazu, becoming the 81st Grand Master of the School.

He was born in 1982, the eldest son of Komparu Yasuaki.

The *waki* (supporting role) performer of the Hōshō School, Hōshō Kinya has become the 13th Head of the School. He was born in 1967.

Name Successions

In the Kyōgen Izumi School, Nomura Toranosuke, the eldest son of Nomura Ryōsuke (Manzō), who, himself, is the second son of Nomura Man, took the name Mannojō 6th.

In the Kyogen Okura School, Shigeyama Yoshinobu took the name Shigeyama Chūzaburō 5th. Born in 1982, he is the eldest son of Shigeyama Chūzaburō 4th.

Relocation of the Kanze Noh Theatre

The new Kanze Noh Theatre - Memorial to Kanze Sakon the 25th Grand Master of the School - opened with a number of special commemorative programs. The new theatre is in the 3rd basement floor of GINZA SIX, located in Metropolitan Tokyo, Chuo ward, district 6.

The programs that accompanied this grand opening included 'Shukuga Noh' (Felicitous Program of Noh) that offered a performance of *Okina* by Kanze Kiyokazu (Grand Master of the Kanze School) and others (April 20, 21, 22 and 23rd), as well as, 'Hikazu Noh' (Program Celebrating Longevity, April 25, 27, 28, 29 and 30th and May 1st), and a 'Special Program for Young Performers' (April 24th).

Program of the Tokyo branch of the Association for Japanese Noh Plays

On September 19th, the Association for Japanese Noh Plays, whose members are among the professional performers who have

been recognized by the nation as being those with the highest skills, held its Tokyo Program at the new Kanze Noh Theatre. The Noh Play *Tsuchigumo* (*The Monstrous Ground Spider*) was performed with the *shite* of part one played by Kongō Hisanori and the *shite* of part two played by Komparu Yasuaki. The role of the warrior Raikō was performed by Kanze Kiyokazu and Kochō by Hōshō Kazufusa with members of the Kanze and Kita Schools assisting.

Performances of ‘Old Woman Plays’

Next, I will give a listing of performances of ‘Old Woman Plays’ which have a special place among the greatest works of Nohgaku:

Umewaka Genshō	<i>Sotoba Komachi</i> (<i>The Legend of Ono no Komachi at the Stupa</i>)	January 17th ‘Shikō no Hana’ Special Program.
Awaya Yoshio	<i>Obasute</i> (<i>The Old Woman Abandoned in the Mountains</i>)	March 5th at the Awaya Noh no Kai.
Ōtsubo Kimio	<i>Ōmu Komachi</i> (<i>The Legend of Ono no Komachi’s ‘Parrot’ reply</i>)	May 3rd at the Ōtsubo Kimio no Kai.
Hirota Yukitoshi	<i>Sotoba Komachi</i>	May 14th at the Hirota Yukitoshi Noh-Appreciation Program.
Kakutō Yukuo	<i>Higaki</i> (<i>The Cypress Fence</i>)	October 14th at the Ran no Kai.
Tōyama Takamichi	<i>Ōmu Komachi</i>	October 22nd at the Hōshō Special Autumn Program.
Takeda Yukifusa	<i>Sekidera Komachi</i> (<i>Ono no Komachi at Sekidera Temple</i>)	November 4th at the Kaei Kai.
Honda Mitsuhiro	<i>Higaki</i>	December 10th at the Komparu ‘En-Ma-I Kai’.
Uzawa Hisa	<i>Higaki</i>	December 24th at the Uzawa Hisa no Kai.

Reconstructed Plays and Newly Created Works for Noh

Reconstructed plays

Asami Masakuni	<i>Aya no Tsuzumi</i> (The Damask Drum)	January 29th at the National Noh Theatre Special Program. * This work is performed as a regular part of the reparatory of the Kita, Kongō and Hōshō Schools only.
Umewaka Genshō	<i>Ikenie</i> (The Pool Sacrifice)	February 4th at Noh Goban
Ōtsuki Bunzō	<i>Hoshi</i> (The Stars)	February 4th at the Program observing the 500th year since the passing away of Kanze Kojirō Nobumitsu.
Shiotsu Akio and Ōtsuki Bunzō	<i>Shikimi Tengu</i> (Goblins among the Flowers)	February 11th at the Shiotsu Noh Program.
Yamashina Yaemon	<i>Takayasu</i> (Takayasu – Narihira's Lover)	February 25th at the Takayasu Noh.
Hayashi Sōichirō	<i>Kibitsu no Miya</i> (Kibitsu Shrine)	May 13th, at the 'Program Commemorating the Reconstruction of the Play <i>Kibitsu no Miya</i> '.
Umewaka Genshō	<i>Natori no Rōjo</i> (The Aged Woman of Natori)	July 28th, at the National Noh Theatre Planned Program.
Ōtsuki Bunzō	<i>Unoha</i> (Cormorant Feathers)	July 30th at the National Noh Theatre's Special Programme of Noh Performance.

Newly Created Works for Noh

<i>Rikyu–Enoura</i> (The Tragic Death of Rikyu)	(February 12th at MOA Museum of Art Noh Theatre): Asami Masakuni and Kanze Tetsunojō with Sugimoto Hiroshi in charge of planning and production. The play, written by Baba Akiko was composed and directed by Asami Masakuni.
<i>Sanada Yukimura</i>	(March 16th, Yamamoto Noh Theatre): Yamamoto Akihiro (Kamigata Dentogeiinō DE Rekiyuku).
<i>Shiki</i> (The Poet Masaoka Shiki)	(May 10th, Matsuyama Castle Ninomaru Garden): Udaka Michishige, Ninomaru Takigi Noh.
<i>Newly Created Dance Sansuijin Muchū Suigin</i> (The Revelries of Three Drunken Poets)	(September 1st, National Noh Theatre): Nomura Shirō (Li Po), Sakurama Kinki (Tu Fu), Yamamoto Tōjirō (Bai Ju Yi), Matsuda Hiroyuki (Noh Flute), Kasai Kenichi director and scriptwriter.
<i>Contemporary Noh, Marie Antoinette</i>	(December 12th, National Noh Theatre): Umewaka Genshō. Written and directed by Ueda Shinji.

New Works for Kyogen

Wadachi, (The Wheel Furrows) with Sato Tomohiko, Yume Tsukuri with Inoue Matsujirō and Myōga Zarae with Kashima Toshihiro (All written by Yamakawa Satomi). (February 2nd, Nagoya Noh Theatre) in the Nagoya Castle 'Yume Tsukuri' Kyogen Kai.

Ayu (The Sweetfish) (December 22nd, National Noh Theatre) Nomura Mansai. Written by Ikezawa Natsuki and Directed by Nomura Mansai.

Noh performers and Individuals Related to Nohgaku who passed away last year

Tokue Gensei (2016 November 30th) Professor Emeritus at Kokugakuin University and a Medieval Performing Arts Scholar. He was 85.

Takahashi Hiroshi (2017 February 2nd) *shite* performer of the Kanze School. He was 70.

Sekine Shōsetsu (Shōroku) (February 22nd) a *shite* performer of the Kanze School. A member of the Japan Arts Academy and recipient of The Japan Art Academy Prize and the Award for Excellence at the Arts Festival among others. He was 86.

Kaburagi Mineo (June 27th) a *waki* performer of the Shimogakari Hōshō School. He was 86.

Yasufuku Tatsuo (July 17th) an *ōtsuzumi* (hand-held hip drum) performer of the Takayasu School also acting Grand Master of the school. A recipient of the designation 'Preserver of Important Intangible Cultural Properties' - Individual Certification (National Living Treasure). He was 78.

Hayashi Kiemon (August 15th) a *shite* performer of the Kanze School. He was 76.

Yoshii Junichi (September 1st) a *shite* performer of the Kanze

School. He was 85.

Umeda Kunihisa (October 5th) a *shite* performer of the Kanze

School. He was 86.

Nishi, Tetsuo

Nohgaku Scholar, born in 1937. Graduated from Saitama University. He has worked for Tokyo-dō Shuppan Publishing House, as well as part-time instructor at Musashino University and Bunka Gakuin University. He has been chief juror for the Agency for Cultural Affairs' Arts Festival – both Nohgaku and Theatre departments, on the Selection Committee for Arts Encouragement – classical arts and theatre departments, and on the committee of experts for the Japan Performing Arts Foundation (National Noh Theatre). He is a co-author of the *Nohgaku Daijiten* (*Encyclopedia of Nohgaku*, Chikuma Shobō).

(Translation: James Ferner)

Kabuki – noteworthy in its promotion of young stars; Bunraku – increasing its audience base year by year

Mizuochi Kiyoshi

Kabuki

The ‘Daikanbu’ or the ‘top executive class’, as the actors in their 70s and up who represent the Kabuki scene are generally referred to, are all in good health and have been respectively putting their matured and polished artistry on display, not only in performing the works that they are famous for but also in taking on new first time challenges. In recent years however, due to limitations of age, the middle-aged class of actors in their 40s and 50s have been leading the charge in an increasing number of programs and in 2017, the younger actors in their 20s and 30s were also being appointed to take on some of the bigger roles in an increasing number of programs. In addition, those ‘top executives’ have been sharing the stage more and more with the younger stars thereby creating more opportunities for the direct transmission of the art. In Kabuki, there are ceremonies called ‘Shūmei’ (name-succession) in which an actor receives the name of his father or teacher; in January, there was one for Ichikawa Udanji 3rd, and in May, Bando Hikosaburō 9th held a name-succession program that involved his entire house.

The Kabuki-za Theatre, the home base of Kabuki, held monthly

programs throughout the year. There were quite a few specially-titled programs: in January, the opening New Year's program, in February Edo-Kabuki (its 390th year), in May the Dangiku-sa (a joint program by the Danjūrō and Kikugorō acting houses), in September, Shūzan-sai (program commemorating Nakamura Kichiemon I - stage name: Shūzan), in October, the Geijutsu-sai (Arts Festival), in November, the 'Kaomise' (All-Star Program). Most of these programs were in two parts (those in August and December were in three) with lineups of multiple works that did justice to the program titles. Among the especially fine programs that were presented throughout the year were: Nakamura Kichiemon, Nakamura Karoku and Nakamura Jakuemon performing the Numazu sections of *Igagoe Dōchū Sugoroku (the Vendetta at Iga)* in January; Kataoka Nizaemon performing *Yoshitsune Senbonzakura (Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees)* - the Tokaiya and Daimotsu no Ura sections in March; Kichiemon and Onoe Kikunosuke performing *Keisei Hanganoko (the Stuttering Painter)* in April; Onoe Kikugorō and Nakamura Tokizō performing, *Sakana-ya Sōgorō (Sōgorō, the Fish Monger)* in May; Kichiemon, Karoku and others performing the Sakaro section of *Hirakana Seisuiiki (Record of the Battles of the Genji and Heike)* in September; and in November, Kikugorō and Tokizō performing the Naozamurai (Naojiro the Samurai) section of *Yuki no Yūbe Iriya no Azemichi (Narrow Paths on a Snowy Night in Iriya)* as well as Nizaemon performing the fifth and sixth sections of *Kanadehon Chūshingura (Treasury of Loyal Retainers)* and Matsumoto Koshiro, Ichikawa Somegorō and Nakamura Kotarō performing in *Ōishi Saigo no Ichinichi (Ōishi's Last Day)*.

Among the 'Shinsaku' (newly created works) there was an adaptation of a play, by Noda Hideki for Kabuki entitled, *Noda Ban Sakura*

no Mori no Mankai no Shita (Noda Edition: *Under the Blossoming Cherry Trees*) in August, which featured, Nakamura Kankurō, Nakamura Shichinosuke and Somegorō. Also, in October, there was a work based on the Classical Indian Epic Poem entitled: *Mahābārata Senki* (*The Wars of Mahabharata*) (written by Aoki Gō and directed by Miyagi Satoshi) and performed by Kikunosuke. In addition, there were a number of programs in which children of 4 and 5 years old from the major houses of Kabuki made their debuts, and these received big coverage in the media as well as large audience turnout.

The National Theatre held a program commemorating its 50th anniversary which lasted until March. In January, an ensemble with Kikugorō at its head performed for the first time in forty years, the play, *Shiranui Monogatari* (*The Tale of Shiranui*), a work by Kawatake Mokuami with Kikugorō directing and providing a new script. His son, Onoe Kikunosuke played the leading role of Princess Wakaba and skillfully maneuvered between multiple male and female roles (four in all), executing quick costume changes and even flying-through-the air effects. In March, the work *Igagoe Dōchū Sugoroku* (*The Vendetta at Iga*), which had a triumphant tour in 2014 when it was awarded the Yomiuri Theatre Grand Prize, was performed with Kichiemon topping the bill in the role of Masaemon and delivering a spectacular performance. In June and July, there was a special program aimed at novice spectators entitled, ‘Discover Kabuki’. In October, the work *Reigen Kameyama Hoko* (*Blood Revenge at Kameyama*) by Tsuruya Nanboku was performed by Nizaemon, who took on two separate evil roles: one performed in historical *jidai mono* style, one in domestic *sewa mono* style, along with Jakuemon, Nakamura Matasaburō, Nakamura Kinnosuke and Kataoka Takatarō and others. In November there was a performance of a Kabuki play

written in the 20th century by Yamamoto Yūzō entitled, *Sakazaki Dewa no Kami* (*Sakazaki, Lord of Dewa Castle*), performed by Onoe Shōroku, as well as a performance of *Kutsukake Tokijirō* (*The Lonely Yakuza*) written by Hasegawa Shin and featuring Nakamura Baigyoku, Nakamura Kaishun and others. In December Kichiemon gave his first performance of a work made famous by his adopted father Kichiemon 1st, *Suda no Haru Geisha Katagi* (*Ume Yoshibei and the Stolen Poem Card*), written by Namiki Gohei.

At the Shinbashi Enbujō in January, a name-succession ceremony for Ichikawa Udanji 3rd was held with performances by Ichikawa Ebizō and others. In October and November, there was a repeat performance of the adaptation of the popular Manga, *One Piece* for ‘Super Kabuki’. In January at the Asakusa Kabuki, Onoe Matsuya took the stage leading a troupe of young actors in their 20s. In May, at the Meija-za, there was also a performance given by a troupe of younger actors in their 20s led by Kataoka Ainosuke. In June, the Theatre Cocoon held a program featuring Ebizō. In April, at the Akasaka ACT Theatre, Kankurō, Shichinosuke, and others gave a performance of a new work for Kabuki written and directed by Hōrai Ryūta entitled, *Yume Maboroshi ka Koi Zōshi* (*Reincarnation of the Red Eye*). Also in April at Makuhari Messe, Nakamura Shidō, continuing the tradition from last year, shared the stage with the popular Vocaloid, Hatsune Miku in a ‘Chō Kabuki (Ultra Kabuki)’ performance of *Kuruwa Kotoba Awasekagami* (*Words and Mirrors Come Together in the Pleasure Quarters*). In July at the Yoyogi National Gymnasium, Somegorō together with Arakawa Shizuka from the world of figure skating, joined efforts in a collaboration program called, ‘HYŌEN 2017 Basara’. This series of new projects may be seen as experiments for the upcoming Olympics/Paralympics in 2020,

where the essence of Kabuki will be shown to foreigners.

In Osaka, at the Shōchiku-za, there was a name-succession ceremony for Nakamura Shikan 8th. In February and in May, there was a program of 'Hanagata' Kabuki (featuring the younger actors), in July, Nizaemon, and Somegorō also performed. In Nagoya, in July, Kankurō and Shichinosuke performed in the Heisei Nakamura-za Program, in November, a 'Kaomise' (all-star) program was held at the Civic Centre (Shimin Kaikan). As Kyoto's Minami-za is being renovated, the December program was held at the Rome Theatre and it was also a 'Kaomise' (all-star) program. From the summer to the autumn, there were also the customary three troupes touring all of the public halls giving performances, and they also performed quite a few shows in the smaller performance rooms that still remain in every region of the country.

In this manner, Kabuki has seen a yearly increase in the number of programs given as well as an increase in younger audience members. At the same time, there have been more programs featuring the younger actors, who are themselves, from the same generation as the young audience goes, and are now being appointed to take on the larger roles. On the whole, the past year was one in which each generation of actors, from the 'top executives' to the young stars were all actively engaged in performing.

Especially active were the middle-aged generation with Somegorō, Ainosuke, and Ennosuke, the generation in their 30s and below that, the younger generation with Onoe Matsuya, Nakamura Baishi, Nakamura Kazutarō, Nakamura Kotarō and Onoe Ukon.

In March, as part the 45th anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic ties between Japan and China, , there was a program of Kabuki held in Beijing with Nakamura Ganjirō, Shikan, Kazutarō and others

in performances of *Torii Mae* (*In Front of the Fushimi Inari Shrine*), *Fūin Kiri* (*Breaking the Seals*) and *Fuji Musume* (*The Wisteria Maiden*).

Bunraku

In Bunraku there was a program entitled ‘Program Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Opening of the National Theatre’ which went on until March. At the National Bunraku Theatre in Osaka, there were five programs held in the course of the year. Part one of the January program, consisted of the famous works: *Kotobuki Shiki Sanbasō* (*The Dance of Sanbasō*), *Ōshū Adachigahara* (*Adachi Plain in Ōshū*) and *Honchō Nijū Shikō* (*Twenty-Four Filial Pieties*). In April there was a name-succession ceremony in which Toyotake Hanabusadayū took the name Toyotake Rodayū 6th. The first part of the program consisted of *Kotobuki Shiki Sanbasō*, and the third and fourth sections of *Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami* (*Sugawara’s Secrets of Calligraphy*) in which, Rodayū chanted the fourth section – *Terakoya* (*The Temple School*). The second part consisted of *Kusunoki Mukashi-banashi* (*The Old Tale of Kusunoki*) and *Sonezaki Shinjū* (*The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*). In the ‘Discover Bunraku’ Workshop in June, there was a performance of *Ninin Kamuro* (*Two Apprentice Geisha*) followed by a lecture entitled ‘Bunraku for Beginners with younger performers explaining and demonstrating the three elements of Bunraku and their techniques: the Tayū (narrative chanting), Shamisen (a three-stringed musical instrument played with a plectrum) and the Ningyōtsukai (Puppeteering) and then going on to perform the third and fourth sections of *Kanadehon Chūshingura* (*Treasury of Loyal Retainers*). In July, there was the three-part, ‘Bunraku Special Performance’: the first part being called, ‘Family Summer Holiday Show’, with performances of works that even

children could enjoy, such as *Kintarō no Ōgumo Taiji* (*Subjugation of the Ground Spider*), which is based on the famous Japanese Fairy Tale and *Akai Jinbaori* (*The Scarlet Cloak*) based on a Folk Tale and written by Kinoshita Junji. The second part called, ‘Masterpiece Theatre’ was a performance of *Genpei Nunobiki no Taki*, (*Minamoto and Taira Clans at Nunobiki Falls*), and the third part, called ‘Summer Late Show’ was a performance of *Natsumatsuri Naniwa Kagami* (*Summer Festival: a Mirror of Osaka*). In the November program, part one was *Hachijū Shugo no Honjō* (*Masakiyo’s Loyalty*) and *Yarino Gonza Kasane Katabira* (*Gonza the Lancer*), while part two had *Shinjū Yoigōshin* (*The Love Suicides of Hanbei and Ochiyo*) and *Momijigari* (*Maple Viewing Party*). In addition there were two performances of ‘su-jōruri’, in which, chanting without puppets was presented as well as a program called ‘Demae Koen’ (Bunraku on Demand) which could be held at schools or outside events. Audience numbers have been on the increase year after year, and in the past year, not only the special name-succession events, but every program outdid those of the previous year in attracting spectators. The ‘Discover Bunraku’ program drew a particularly large crowd at 94.7% of the theatre’s capacity.

In Tokyo, there were four programs given at the National Small Theatre. The special program in February was in three parts and entitled, ‘Chikamatsu’s Masterpiece Collection’ with performances of three works of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, who flourished at the beginning of the 18th century. The first part featured the period piece (historical play), *Heike Nyogo ga Shima* (*Shunkan on Devil Island*); part two featured a ‘sewamono’ (contemporary-setting play about common people) *Sonezaki Shinjū* (*The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*) and part three also featured the ‘sewamono’, *Meido no Hikyaku* (*Courier*

for Hell). In May, the program featured the name-succession ceremony of Rodayū, which was the same one that had been held at the Osaka Bunraku Theatre. Part one had the same lineup of works; part two was a performance of *Kagamiyama Kokyō no Nishikie* (Pictures of our Home at Kagamiyama) in its entirety. In September, the first part was a complete performance of, *Shō Utsushi Asagaobanashi* (Tale of the Morning Glory); the second part was *Tamamo no Mae Asahi no Tamoto* (Tamamo the Nine-Tailed Fox), also a complete performance. In December, there was a matinee for high school students entitled, 'Bunraku Performance for Beginners' with *Hidakagawa* (Cherry Trees along the Hidaka River) followed by a lecture and then, *Ninokuchimura* (Ninokuchi Village). In the same program in the evening there were two workshops called, 'Bunraku for Working People', also in August, there was a workshop for foreigners called, 'The Charm of Bunraku' with a lecture in English and a performance of *Ninokuchi Village*. Each of these programs had significant audience turnout. Programs for foreigners were also held in Kabuki and Noh last year and from now, there will be more of this type of activity in anticipation of the 2020 Olympics/Paralympics, to prepare for the opportunity in a timely fashion.

Tokyo, including its surrounding areas, with its large population generally enjoys packed houses for every program. This year was no exception with every program playing to full capacity. In particular, there was an increase in the number of elderly males attending the performances. In October, the customary tour of the provinces was carried out as always with performances of *Katsuragawa Renri no Shigarami* (The Love Suicides of Ohan and Chōemon) and *Sonezaki Shinjū* (The Love Suicides at Sonezaki).

The 'Tayū' (performer of the narrative chant), Toyotake Sakitayū,

in conjunction with Shamisen performer, Tsuruzawa Enza demonstrated some superb chanting in his performances of the Temma House section of *Sonezaki Shinjū* as well as in the Shimada Yadowarai section of *Shō-Utsushi Asagao Banashi (Story of the Morning Glory)*. Among the following generation, Takemoto Chitosedayū showed off his skills in the Fūin Kiri (Breaking the Seal) section of *Meido no Hikyaku (Courier for Hell)*, as well as the Michiharu Yakata section of *Tamamo no Mae Asahi no Tamoto (Tamamo the Nine-Tailed Fox)*. On the other hand, the middle-aged class, which includes Rodayū and Takemoto Mojihisadayū seemed to be in somewhat of a slump. The generation below that one, including Toyotake Rosetayū and Toyotake Sakihodayū has been taking on more important chanting opportunities drawing on their strong resonant voices. Among the younger chanters, Toyotake Yoshihodayū and Toyotake Yasutayū are both gaining strength. Toyotake Matsukadayū retired in March.

The elder statesman of the Shamisen camp, Tsuruzawa Kanji, in excellent health, played with a tone that was voluptuous in hue.

The ‘top star’ in essence, Tsuruzawa Seiji, had more opportunities to team up with chanter Rosetayū; and with Rosetayū’s chanting taking the lead, some wonderful performances were created. Tsuruzawa Seisuke, Toyozawa Tomisuke and Nozawa Kinshi all have acquired the skills to deal with whatever part they are playing, and have displayed a diversity of technique. Among the younger performers, Takezawa Sōsuke, Tsuruzawa Tōzō and others have become much more solid performers, and appear to have made their way up to a new level

Among the puppeteers, the senior performer, 83 year old Yoshida Minosuke is in good health but he has limited his stage appearances to onnagata (female) roles where he displays an original beauty all

his own. In the following generation, Yoshida Kazuo was chosen the next National Living Treasure after Minosuke. The main roles of each program were being assigned to Yoshida Tamao and Kiritake Kanjūrō, with Tamao showing his skills in such roles as, Tokubei from *Sonezaki Shinjū*, Chūbei from *Meido no Hikiyaku* and Matsuomaru from *Terakoya* - a tachiyaku (male role) and Kanjūro showing his worth in such roles as, Chiyo from *Terakoya*, onnagata (female) roles such as Ohatsu in *Sonezaki Shinjū* and even comic roles such as Yūsen, the doctor, in *Shō-Utsushi Asagao (Story of the Morning Glory)*. In addition, he demonstrated a broad diversity of puppeteering style in executing the quick changes required in his renditions of the seven characters that the Yōko (fox spirit) transforms into in *Tamamo, the Nine-Tailed Fox*, differentiating clearly between them. Among the following, generation: Yoshida Tamaya gave a demonstration of his skills as Gonshirō from Hiragana Seisui (the Battles of Genji and Heike), Usugumo no Ōji from *Tamamo, the Nine-Tailed Fox*, and others making the leap to the taking on of larger supporting roles. Toyomatsu Seijūrō gave us some neat playing in his performances of the onnagata roles of Asagao from *Story of the Morning Glory* and Umegawa from *The Courier for Hell*. Among the younger performers, Yoshida Kōsuke, Yoshida Minojirō, Yoshida Ichisuke and Yoshida Tamaka are all gaining strength and we can look forward to their further development in the future.

Mizuochi, Kiyoshi

Born in 1936 in Osaka. Graduated from Waseda University Faculty of Literature, specializing in Theatre. From 1970 he was in charge of the Theatre section for the Arts and Cultural News department of the Mainichi Shimbun and served as vice-chairman for that newspaper as well as having been a member of the Editorial board and also a special committee member before his retirement. Currently he is Affiliate Member of the Editorial Board. From the year 2000, he was a professor at J. F. Oberlin University, retiring in 2007 as Professor Emeritus. His writings include: *Kamigata Kabuki* (Kyoto-Osaka Style Kabuki), *Bunraku*, *Heisei Kabuki Haiyu-ron* (*Essays on Kabuki Actors Today*) and others.

(Translation: James Ferner)

Musicals

Outstanding Japanese Version of Billy Elliot Original Musicals Made With Hard Work

Hagio Hitomi

In 2017 many musicals were presented, and the Japanese musical scene was full of variety. Nevertheless, aside from a few productions such as *Billy Elliot*, not many of them were very striking. Musicals translated into Japanese were largely quite successful both in terms of artistic value and commercial results, but some of the adapted musicals were disappointing. There were also a number of co-productions with foreign creative staff, which may have contributed to the recent development of original Japanese musicals.

Two Challenging Musical Productions

The most noteworthy musical in 2017 was no doubt *Billy Elliot*, which received rave reviews when it premiered in London in 2005. It opened on Broadway in the following year, and has been long-awaited here in Japan as well. However, because of licensing problems and above all the difficulty of the casting, at one point, it seemed as though it would never be presented in Japan. For one thing, there was the hurdle of finding boys for the title role with unbroken voices, who could not only sing and act, but could also dance at a high-level. Nevertheless, the project was finally realised at long last.

It took careful preparation and time to present the Japanese

version of *Billy Elliot*. Schedule-wise, auditions for child actors started in November 2015, then the children took lessons, before it finally opened in July 2017. It would never have been possible without the resilience of the production-side, as well as their love and commitment for the piece. As it is probably unlikely to recoup the costs, it must indeed have been a big challenge.

The story is about a boy named Billy Elliot, who lives in an English coal-mining town and aspires to become a ballet dancer, and it is set during the Thatcher era. It is based on Stephen Daldry's film of the same title (the Japanese title is *Little Dancer*). For the musical adaptation, the script and lyrics were written by Lee Hall, the music was composed by Elton John, and Daldry himself directed it. The Japanese version followed the original direction and choreography (by Peter Darling).

The Japanese company followed the original staging very well and gave a human touch to the characters. Above all, the five boys who played the part of Billy (Kato Kōsei, Kimura Sakuya, Maeda Haruto, Mirai Kazuki and Yamashiro Riki) were wonderful. Also, the boys who played Billy's friend Michael and the girls who played the ballet girls sang, danced and acted with ease. I felt sure that the foundation of the Japanese musical world had expanded.

While the original film focused on Billy growing up, more depth was added to the drama in the musical version. Through the clear-cut portrayal of the adults around Billy and the difficulty of the times, a stark contrast was drawn between Billy's steps towards the future, driven by his will and the love of his family, and those who were left behind by the economic changes.

Staging methods that are only possible in musicals were extremely appealing. For instance, there was a scene in which the

increasing tension in the coal-mining town that was heading toward a long strike was depicted alongside children taking a ballet lesson. They were taking place at the same time in the same town. Moreover, there was a beautiful dreamlike scene, in which Billy, who is aspiring to become a ballet dancer, danced a fantastical duet with Billy from the future. The most spectacular scene was the 'Angry Dance', in which Billy's anger at not being able to attend a Royal Ballet audition was overlapped with a clash between demonstrators and the police. It was a powerful scene with a cross-over between Billy's tap dance and the collision between the police and demonstrators.

Another musical that seemed to be taking on a difficult challenge was *Parade*. Premiered on Broadway in 1998, the story is about a real case of false accusation which occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century in the American south (book by Alfred Uhry, music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown). It seems to have taken a long time to be presented in Japan due to essential elements of the drama which are hard for the Japanese to understand, such as the complicated racial segregation and the cultural and economic confrontation between the north and the south.

The falsely-accused Frank Leo, the central character (played by Ishimaru Kanji), is a Jewish man born in the north, who has been sent to the south, where the agricultural economy is declining. He is a so-to-speak 'puppet' for the industrial economy of the north. He was the perfect human sacrifice. The prosecutor (played by Ishikawa Zen), who used people's frustration over racial discrimination and economic disparity to lay a false charge against Frank, was a symbol of populism. There were other characters such as the governor (played by Okamoto Kenichi), who wanted to hold on to his political career, a reporter (played by Takeda Shinji), who embodied

sensationalism, and a social activist (played by Niiro Shinya), who took advantage of people's anxieties. It was a gritty drama that also reflected the dangerous world that we live in today.

It opened with a vivid scene with colourful confetti falling almost excessively. The drama evolved smoothly through well-paced staging (by Mori Shintaro) using a revolving stage, but it seemed to be lacking something. Nevertheless, on the whole, the musical was not bad and the fact that this controversial musical was presented in Japan was gratifying.

The Contrasting Results of Translation and Adaptation

Other translated Broadway musicals that premiered in 2017 included *Big Fish*, *Legally Blonde*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Beautiful: The Carol King Musical*, *Young Frankenstein* and *The Pajama Game*.

Big Fish (book by John August, music and lyrics by Andrew Lippa) is a musical adaptation of the Tim Burton film based on the novel of the same title. It is an out-of-the-world fantasy celebrating life, evolving around the bond between a big-mouthed father (played by Kabira Jay) and his son (Urai Kenji). The cast were well suited for the parts and the direction (by Shirai Akira) was steady, so it became a warm musical.

Legally Blonde is also a musical adaptation based on a successful movie. The cute charm of Kanda Sayaka in the lead role was appealing. *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* is based on a novel that was also turned into a film which won a Tony Award. It was fun to watch the comical performance of Ichimura Masachika, who played eight different characters including men and woman of all ages.

Beautiful is Carol King's critical biography pieced together with

her songs. It is one of the so-called catalogue musicals that have recently become popular, but it did not have any significant hook and the script was quite flat. However, Mizuki Nana and Hirahara Ayaka (double cast) playing the leading character sang well and made the numbers appealing, and also added different colours to the character with their individual qualities, creating an entertaining musical.

The Pajama Game premiered on Broadway in 1954 (revived in 2006) and is known as the first musical Bob Fosse choreographed. This was its Japanese premiere. The classic love comedy set against the backdrop of a wage increase dispute at a pajama factory was directed by Tom Sutherland, who revealed new dimensions when he directed *Grand Hotel* and *Titanic*. Unfortunately, he did not take a vivid approach in this musical.

Young Frankenstein is based on Mel Brooks' film with the same title (1974) which Brooks himself adapted into a musical (2007). The Japanese version was directed and written by Fukuda Yūichi, a popular director known for successfully writing the script for and directing the Japanese version of *Monty Python's Spamalot*. It was a pity that they were apparently trying to get laughs from the audience, especially because Oguri Shun, playing the leading character, put on a sharp performance.

There were also some successful foreign musicals that were altered and adapted. Amongst them was an adaptation of hit Korean musical *Frankenstein* (written and directed by Wang Yong Beom, music by Lee Sung Joon) that was premiered in Japan (embellished and directed by Itagaki Kyōichi). Stories conveyed through powerful song numbers is the trend and appeal of Korean musicals. On the other hand, logical consistency tends to be neglected, which is why Japanese audiences may not be completely satisfied. If that is the case,

I think this musical should have filled these gaps more daringly. Though I am aware that the original creator's intentions cannot be easily changed, the inconsistent parts could have been fixed and depictions that were too extravagant for the Japanese audience (as some scenes felt like that to me) could have been cut. With just a few changes, it could have turned into a much more appealing musical. The cast had many good singers such as Nakagawa Akira and Hamada Megumi.

A very disappointing adaptation of a musical was *Comedy Tonight! A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (Edo Version)* (directed and script adaptation by Amon Miyamoto). It was based on the wonderful premise of transferring the setting of Stephen Sondheim's great musical full of famous numbers to the Edo period in Japan. But as it turned out, for some reason, it was without atmosphere. It was all the more a pity because as the lead Kataoka Ainosuke sang and danced well.

Original Musicals Made with Hard Work

It seems that original musicals are becoming richer every year. Among them, *My Name is Shingo (Watashi wa Shingo)* was a fresh musical. It was based on Umezu Kazuo's comic from the 1980s and was directed and choreographed by Philippe Decouflé. A boy and a girl in elementary school decide to get married and from that moment they have a reckless adventure, with an industrial robot they have been playing with developing a consciousness and thinking it is their child. The long and complicated original work starts from there, but the storyline of the musical was trimmed to a simple drama about love, and the script (Tani Kenichi) was well written. Dance, acrobatics, projection, scenic art and music were integrated, creating a

magical production. The cast consisting of Takahata Mitsuki, Kadowaki Mugi and Songha were also appealing.

After a series of workshops, Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre put on *Ikebukuro West Gate Park Song & Dance* (directed and designed by Sugihara Kunio), which was a stylish production leaving room for refinement. Shiba Yukio wrote the script based on the original novel by Ishida Ira, which has also been adapted into a hit TV drama series. It is a universal ensemble play about the young members of a street gang portrayed through the eyes of a man who used to be its leader, looking back on the gang wars twenty years later. The powerful dance numbers (choreographed by Kitao Wataru) worked well with the piece.

The Great Gatsby is a musical adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel which has been made into a movie several times. The hit musical was originally made for the Takarazuka Revue was reworked to star Inoue Yoshio, and was directed and written by Koike Shūichiro as with the Takarazuka version. The music was written by the up-and-coming composer Richard Oberacker, who made his Broadway debut in 2017. It was a pity that the melodies were beautiful but not very catchy.

Speaking of original Japanese musicals, one has to mention Takarazuka. After all, the company produces new musicals almost every month. Young creators, who developed their skills at Takazuka, are emerging. Takarazuka Revue thrived commercially in 2017 and produced a number of good productions. Hana Gumi (Flower Troupe)'s *Golden Desert (Konjiki no Sabaku)* and Sora Gumi (Cosmos Troupe)'s *The Land of the Gods - The Twilight of the Romanovs (Kamigami no tochi - Romanofutachi no Tasogare)* (both written and directed by Ueda Kumiko) were spectacular dramas dealing with

novel subject matters. Tsuki Gumi (Moon Troupe)'s *All for One - d'Artagnan and the Sun King* (*All for One - Darutanian to Taiyōou*) (written and directed by Koike Shūichiro) was a typical Takarazuka love comedy. Hoshi Gumi (Star Troupe)'s *Berlin, My Love* (*Berlin, Waga Ai*) (written and directed by Harada Ryō) was a love story closely based on theory.

Shiki Theater Company, which plays a central role in the Japanese musical scene, did not premiere any new musicals in 2017. The number of Shiki's productions in Tokyo decreased because its permanent theatres, namely Haru (Spring) Theatre and Aki (Autumn) Theater, closed down for redevelopment. However, the company is still energetically putting on long-running shows elsewhere and touring all over Japan as ever. Lion King transferred from Haru Theater to Natsu (Summer) Theater and entered its twentieth year in Japan at the end of 2017.

As described above, the world of musicals in Japan thrived in 2017 both in terms of the number and variety of productions.

Hagio, Hitomi

Film and theatre critic. Hagio started her career as a newspaper journalist and writes reviews for Tokyo Shimbun as well as a column series and articles for musical magazines. She has written books such as *Musical ni Tsurete itte* (literal title: 'Take me to the musicals'), *Les Misérable no Hyakunin* (literal title: 'A Hundred People of Les Misérable') and others. She has also edited and written *Broadway Musical, Tony shō no Subete* (literal title: 'All about Broadway Musicals and the Tony Awards'), *Hajimete no Musical Eiga: Hagio Hitomi no Besto Selekushon 50* (literal title: 'Your First Musical Film: Top 50 Selected by Hagio Hitomi') and others.

(Translation: Sumida Michiyo)

Contemporary Theatre

Theatre that Scrutinizes Where We Are Today

Yamaguchi Hiroko

In 2017, the Abe Shinzō government forcibly passed the Conspiracy Law, in spite of strong opposition that protested its erosion of freedom of speech. The prime minister and his wife, Akie, also came under suspicion over whether or not they had used their influence to acquire favours for others through “conjecture” (*sontaku*), but straight answers were not forthcoming. On the other hand, the private actions of the former public servant, whose testimony added much to those suspicions, was splashed across the newspapers like a scandal. Against a backdrop of the prime minister pushing ahead with his pledge to change the Constitution, how did theatre respond to these times?

Strong Urge of Artists to Reflect Social Changes

Nervous about news shows, the Abe government revealed an extraordinary attitude when it requested that television broadcasters provide “fair coverage.” How should TV channels, which are dependent on the government for their broadcasting licenses, respond?

One play based on this was *The Air* (*Za kūki*), written and directed by Nagai Ai, and set at a TV channel. Sensing the mood of the government, the top ranks of the channel disapprove of a news special set to go out that night about the crisis of freedom of speech. Should they reject the interference, or should they compromise? As the time for broadcast draws near, the staff behind the programme are caught

in a state of uncertainty. And what exerts power here is not the instructions that accompany responsibilities or overt pressure, but the “air” (*kūki*, meaning the climate or unspoken mood) within the broadcaster and society at large. Nagai portrayed the people entangled by this “air” acerbically and humorously. That sharp look was directed at both the writer and the audience. And it asked a question: What kind of society lies ahead after “reading the air” and imposing self-censorship on itself? The play was performed between January and March. Just a few months later, the suspicions over the prime minister and his wife came to light. At the end of the year, *sontaku* was chosen as one of the buzzwords of the year.

A similar awareness of this issue also appeared in the work of younger theatre artists. Ishihara Nen wrote *Hiding the White Flower* (*Shiroi hana o kakusu*), directed by Ogasawara Kyō and dealing with the changes the public broadcaster NHK made to a TV show about the comfort women. Narahara Taku wrote and directed the comedy *It's a Conspiracy!* (*Kyōbō desu yo!*), in which a cooking club finds itself suddenly mistaken for a terrorist group. These plays shared a stance whereby they thought about the themes as personal problems from the starting point of individual lifestyle, rather than placing the artist on a pedestal and making grand statements to the audience.

Marking 75 years since it was first established, Bunka-za premiered *Life is Precious* (*Nuchi du takara*). Written by Sugiura Hisayuki and directed by Uyama Hitoshi, the play depicted the steadfast nonviolent resistance of people in postwar Okinawa, when their farmland was taken from them and their lives threatened while the United States military controlled the prefecture. As we stand 45 years after the restoration of Okinawan sovereignty to mainland Japan, which the characters in the play yearn so strongly for, US

military bases remain concentrated in Okinawa, leading to continual accidents and crimes. This pain is rooted in the relationship between the United States and Japan. The compelling play powerfully zoomed in on the pride and faith of the Okinawans, taking aim at mainland Japan in 2017.

In the wake of various high-profile accusations of sexual harassment in Hollywood, the prominent #MeToo movement encouraged women to break the silence over their treatment by men. “Feminism” was selected by an American dictionary as the word of the year for 2017. In the midst of this tide attempting to fight back against subjugation, the year witnessed a coincidentally yet perfectly timed revival of Caryl Churchill’s *Cloud 9*, directed by Kino Hana. First staged in the UK in 1978 and some 30 years since Kino first directed it, the feminist play still felt astonishingly fresh. Though a technically adroit play that mixes up chronology and the genders of the performers and characters, it also powerfully affected the viewer with its portrayal of the difficulties of obtaining a satisfactory way of living and position within society, or finding the love and sexuality that is true to oneself, as well as its depiction of the poignancy of the desire to overcome conventions.

Written and directed by Shimori Roba, *The Diary of a Good Girl* (*Anne no hi*) livelily portrayed the struggles of women striving to develop sanitary products that are good for both the body and nature. It was a touching play that discussed mind and body, society, corporations, and the dignity of the individual from a thoroughly female point of view, including those whose physical and mental genders differed.

Six Years on from the Great East Japan Earthquake

It is now six years since the Great East Japan Earthquake. It is

said that reconstruction has progressed in the areas hardest hit by the disaster, but many people are still unable to return to their previous lives. In particular, the nuclear power plant accident made the area uninhabitable for the local people. Though the evacuation order has been lifted for some places, people are torn over whether or not to return to their hometowns. We watched this current reality of Fukushima in two new plays written and directed by Iwamatsu Ryō. Staged with young actors, *The Young Girl Miu (Shōjo miu)* focused on the eponymous Miu, who is the daughter of an employee who causes a nuclear accident, intersecting a mysterious family tragedy with a TV show about her. The other play was *The Mass of Pale Pink (Usui momoiro no katamari)* for Saitama Gold Theater and Saitama Next Theatre. Complexly interweaving several stories, including those of people involved with reconstructing a railroad line in order to help evacuees return home, of lovers separated by the disaster, and of newly blossomed romance, it conjured up a mystical world through which powerfully flowed the life force of mankind and nature.

Written and directed by Okada Toshiki, *Time's Journey Through a Room (Heya ni nagareru jikan no tabi)* was staged in Tokyo after already premiering in Kyoto in 2016 and touring to 16 cities worldwide. It layered the temporalities of three people (a young wife who died soon after the disaster while hoping a new world would come, her husband who survived, and his new lover), quietly examining how far we have been separated since that fateful day in 2011.

The theatre department of Futaba Future School, which was opened in Fukushima Prefecture as a symbol of reconstruction, staged the play *Number Line (Sūchokusen)* in Tokyo, portraying and performed by students who had directly experienced the earthquake and nuclear disaster. The time spent by the students, who were still in

elementary school when the disaster took place, made us think of these six years with a greater gravity and acuteness than what adults had felt.

Kawamura Takeshi wrote and directed *Ephemeral Elements* (*Efemeraru erementsu*), in which a robot with advanced artificial intelligence works to decommission a nuclear reactor. Seemingly developed from his android-themed 1983 play *Japan Wars* (*Nippon uōzu*), what was originally science fiction now seems strangely real. The questions it asks about what makes someone human have taken on an even greater urgency.

Handing Over the Generational Baton and Renewing

The theatre company Bungakuza commemorated 80 years since it was established and the energetic activities of veterans stood out through such plays as the premiere *Hooray for Gluttons! Masaoka Shiki's Youthful Rhapsody* (*Kuishinbō banzai! Masaoka shiki seishun kyōshikyoku*), written by Setoguchi Kaoru and directed by Nishikawa Nobuhiro, and the first revival in 23 years of *Nose (Hana)*, written by Betsuyaku Minoru and directed by Uyama Hitoshi. On the other hand, the company's Atelier no Kai studio saw the debut of two young directors, Tokoro Kanade and Ikuta Miyuki. With his productions of *Nakahashi House* (*Nakahashi kōkan*) by Mafune Yutaka and *Risk-Takers* (*Okashita mono*) by Miyoshi Jūrō, the up-and-coming director Kamiura Satoshi carefully rediscovered plays that examined the Japanese immediately after the war and used them to raise issues about contemporary society. It was a commemorative year that showed the overall strength and vigour of the company.

Gekidan Mingei's production of "Work Club" *Actresses* ("*Shigoto kurabu*" *no joyūtachi*), directed by Tanno Ikumi, used a script by the

young playwright Osada Ikue (adapting the novel by Aoki Shoko) and starred everyone from the company's director Naraoka Tomoko to its younger performers. Here was another production that brought different generations together.

Marking 20 years since it opened, Setagaya Public Theatre's artistic director Nomura Mansai announced that he would direct and star in an "upgrade" of a masterpiece by Kinoshita Junji, *Requiem on the Great Meridian* (*Shigosen no matsuri*). Featuring a cast of actors from such differing backgrounds as Noh, Kabuki, and Shingeki, each bringing their own qualities, its harmonious, polyphonic structure inherited from the past while employing clever conceits that visually showed the Genpei War (1180–1185) and the impermanence of our world, resulting in a highly accomplished performance. Setagaya Public Theatre also staged other ambitious productions, such as *Tschick*, directed by Oyama Yūna and adapted from a German children's story, and a South Korean and Japanese co-production of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, directed by Yang Jung-ung.

The New National Theatre, Tokyo marked its 20th year with a series of plays by Mishima Yukio, Abe Kōbō, and Tanaka Chikao directed by young up-and-coming directors—Tani Kenichi, Kamimura Satoshi, and Ogawa Eriko—and a staging of a new translation by Mizutani Hachiya of a foreign masterpiece, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, directed by Chiba Tetsuya.

Having lost in Ninagawa Yukio such a central figure in its activities, the Saitama Arts Theater started the process of handing things over to the next generation, including the aforementioned Iwamatsu Ryō production with Saitama Gold Theater. Yoshida Kōtarō, in whom Ninagawa placed much trust, took over as artistic director of the theatre's project to stage all of Shakespeare's oeuvre, and directed

and starred in his contribution to the series, *Timon of Athens*.

At Kanagawa Arts Theatre, artistic director Shirai Akira's work began in earnest. With the productions that he directed himself of Frank Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* and *Orlando*, based on the Virginia Woolf novel, as well as Nagatsuka Keishi's staging of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Luigi Pirandello, the programming aspired toward new possibilities for a theatre and really started to build momentum.

The artistic director of Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, Noda Hideki, wrote and directed *Princess Footprint: Time Mistaken Winter Ghost* (*Ashiatohime – Toki ayamatte fuyu no yūrei*), which was a tribute to the late Nakamura Kanzaburō XVIII and also examined the origins of Kabuki. It paid homage to an actor whose ideas connected the past and the future, his spirit and craft housed in a body that is fated one day to disappear. *Step Outside!* (*Omote ni deroi!*), which Noda originally performed with Nakamura Kanzaburō, now transformed into the English-language *One Green Bottle*, written and directed by Noda from an English adaptation by Will Sharpe. It eerily showed how intolerance within a family spreads.

Neighbors (*Fushin – Kanojo ga uso o tsuku riyu*), written and directed by Mitani Kōki, seemed to inherit something from the work of Betsuyaku Minoru. The two married couples in the play are not given names, adding to the inscrutable human enigmas that unfold in this story composed in the mystery tale style that is Mitani's forte. It both showed the influence on the next generation of the Theatre of the Absurd that Betsuyaku established in Japan as well as formed a kind of successor to it. While there was a cynical or even cold feel to this play, Mitani also wrote and directed *Children's Affairs* (*Kodomo no jijō*), which was set in an elementary school fourth-grade classroom

and in which the joys and sorrows of the world of children were performed by adult actors, resulting in moments of touching comedy and poignancy.

Keralino Sandorovich similarly paid homage to Betsuyaku with *Please Wait A Moment* (*Chotto, matte kudasai*), which he wrote and directed. It was a comedy depicting the strange intermingling of two families, but the clearly Betsuyaku-esque quality of the play meant that the humour and social criticism felt stronger than in Keralino Sandorovich's other work.

The company Komatsu-za, which stages the plays of Inoue Hisashi, particularly shined with Kuriyama Tamiya's productions of *Who Am I?* (*Watashi wa dare deshō*) and *Glittering Constellation* (*Kirameku seiza*).

Portraying the Diversity of the World

Shizuoka Performing Arts Center general artistic director Miyagi Satoshi's staging of the Greek tragedy *Antigone* was invited to open the Festival d'Avignon in France. In these times today, when partitioning the world simplistically into either friend or foe is dominating the discourse, Miyagi's approach of mourning the dead as Buddha showed us a way to heal our divisions.

The much-discussed director Mori Shintarō achieved successes with *Ghost Story: The Peony Lantern* (*Kaidan: Botan dōrō*), from a script by Fujino Satsuko, and *Enigma Variations* by Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt, while Ogawa Eriko demonstrated her abilities with her production of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* by Martin McDonagh.

The revivals of *Enemy of Heaven* (*Ten no teki*) and *Before We Vanish* (*Sanpo suru shinryakusha*), in which Maekawa Tomohiro returned to earlier plays he had written and directed, were highly

acclaimed. Akihori Masaaki revealed a cross section of contemporary Japan in *World (Sekai)*, which he wrote and directed, reflecting the depressing everyday lives of sullen men.

The popular company Gekidan Shinkansen enjoyed a long run of over a year, changing casts every few months, with one of its major plays, *Seven Souls in the Skull Castle (Dokurojō no shichinin)*, written by Nakashima Kazuki and directed by Inoue Hidenori, and staged at IHI Stage Around Tokyo, a new theatre in Toyosu featuring approximately 1,300 seats on a circular platform that can rotate 360 degrees. Enhanced by its ample use of video, the fast-paced action and large-scale entertainment spectacle unfolded on a stage that completely surrounded the audience seating in a doughnut shape.

Yamaguchi, Hiroko

Reporter for the *Asahi Shimbun*. Born in 1960, she 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. She has served on the paper's editorial board and as an editorialist. She co-wrote *Ninagawa Yukio's Work* (Shinchōsha).

(Translation: William Andrews)

Working Together to Prepare for the Tokyo Olympics

Yokomizo Yukiko

Bullying and violence at schools and child suicide are occurring on a daily basis. Lack of ease in society at large is depriving children of dreams and time to play. It is therefore necessary to have another look at why theatre education should be prioritized over moral education. Theatre education consists of two pillars, namely 'expression' and 'appreciation'. Theatre games, in particular, stimulates children's imaginations and helps to develop their expressiveness. To watch high-quality stage art gives children emotional richness as it provides opportunities to expand images with no end.

Moving Forward Through the Basic Act for Culture and the Arts

There are an increasing number of schools that are trying to enhance the scholastic standards of children for the sake of achievement tests, and therefore time allocated to appreciate theatre through classes and events tends to be reduced. Under such a situation, there was a ground-breaking incident which became a 'tail wind' for the world of theatre for children and the youth, which was the revision of the Basic Act for Culture and the Arts for the first time in sixteen years that took place in June. The word 'promotion' has been taken away from the name of the Basic Act for Culture and the Arts and in the second paragraph of Article 8 of its guiding principle, it is stipulated as follows: 'Measures must be taken to enable mutual

cooperation among schools, organizations engaged in cultural and artistic activities, families and regional communities to support the importance of cultural and artistic education for infants, pupils and students.' As a result, the Agency for Cultural Affairs is planning to increase the frequency of art appreciation, which used to be twice, to three times during the years of compulsory education. As infants have been added to the clause, if the coverage of financial aid is expanded to 'baby drama' (the name given to performing arts for infants, which is also called 'baby theatre'), it will help to invigorate theatre for children and young people.

At the ninetieth world conference of ASSITEJ (International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People), it was decided that the 20th world conference of ASSITEJ will be held in Japan in 2020. It was the most remarkable accomplishment in the history of theatre for children and young people in Japan. The Asia TYA Festival in Japan will be held in February 2018 at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Centre as its pre-event.

The 'Regional Tour of Theatre for Children and Youth (*Jidō Seishōnen Engeki Chihō Junkai Kōen*)' that is subsidized by the Japan Arts Council marked its fifty-eighth year. It is based on steady efforts and activities made by the Japan Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (*Nihon Jidō Seishōnen Engeki Kyōkai*) that provides opportunities to children living in underpopulated areas to watch live performances. During the first school term, eight troupes performed throughout Japan plays for children and puppet plays, which included Gekidan Geiyū-za's *Ikkyū-san* and Puppet Theatre Puk's *Tiny Pink Dragon* (*Pinku no Doragon*); during the second school term, twelve troupes performed nationwide, presenting plays such as Theatre Company Poplar's *Wizard of Oz* (*Ozu no Mahōtsukai*) and Operetta

Theatre Tomoshihi's *The Grateful Tiger* (*Tora no Ongaeshi*). As for the project called 'Touring to Regional Areas, Remote Islands and Secluded Areas' commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, thirteen troupes toured around Japan, such as Puppet Theatre Company Hitomi-za's *Beauty and the Beast* (*Bijo to Yajū*), and Gekidan Urinko Theatre Company's *The Dawning of Rakugo* (*Yoake no Rakugo*).

Under Shiki Theatre Company's project 'Theatre of the Heart (Kokoro no gekijō)' sponsored by private corporations, four family-musicals, namely *The Prince and the Pauper* (*Ōji to Kojiki*), *Elcos's Prayer* (*Elcos no Inori*), *Gamba's Great Adventure* (*Gamba no Daibōken*), *Children of the Storm* (*Arashi no Naka no Kodomotachi*) toured around Japan from the northernmost Hokkaido to the southernmost Okinawa, visiting 171 cities around Japan, performing 438 times and 560,000 children seeing the shows. The company also held lessons called 'How to Speak Beautiful Japanese (*Utsukushī Nihongo no Hanashikata Kyōshitsu*)' at 715 schools.

Increasing Number of Festivals During the Summer Holidays

During the summer holidays, festivals are held in various parts of Japan. Ricca Ricca *Festa International Theatre Festival OKINAWA for Young Audiences is a large-scale event and in 2017 it was held from July 24-30 (at Gino-za in Naha) with the participation of twenty-five troupes from nine countries.

Baby theatre, which is plays for infants, drew particular attention. Dansema Dance Theatre from Lithuania presented *Colourful Puzzle*, and actors inside tube and square-shaped objects created various shapes, such as carrots, tomatoes and mushrooms, which stirred and expanded children's imaginations. Finland's *Baby Sauna* (Loiske

Ensemble) used sounds of steam, crackling fire and other sounds as an attempt to attract children to the world of rhythm and colours. After watching *AGAIN* by the Danish company called Aaben Dans, a lecture on 'Baby Theatres of the World' was held. Baby theatre is drawing more attention in Japan as well.

'Forum for Children to Encounter Stage Arts (*Kodomo to Butai Geijutsu Deai no Fōramu*)' (July 28 - August 2 at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Centre) marked its seventeenth year. Thirty-eight productions were presented, which included Tokyo Engeki Ensemble's *A Pirate that Disappeared* (*Kieta Kaizoku*), Hipopotaamu's *The Hedgehog and Snow Flower* (*Harinezumi to yuki no hana*), drawing a total audience of six thousand. Besides workshops on *kyōgen*, playing with shadows and hip hop, there was a lecture on baby theatre under the title 'Until Now, Now and From Now On (*Koremade, Ima, Korekara*)'.

Twenty groups took part in the forty-fifth 'The Summer Vacation Children and Youth Theatre Festival' (July 22-30 at Space Zero, Puk Puppet Theatre). Both puppet theatre companies and modern drama troupes are making efforts to deliver good productions such as Gekidan Nakama that presented *The Day All the Little Letter 'Tsu's Disappeared* (*Chīsai 'Tsu' ga Kieta Hi*) and Puppet Theatre Poporo that presented *Rudolf and Ippai Attena* (*Rudorufu to Ippaiattena*).

At the eighteenth '21st Century Theatre from Kitakata' (held August 4 - 7 at Kitakata Plaza and other venues), seventy-six troupes took part and presented eighty-seven productions.

'Nissay Theatre Family Festival' was held during the weekends of July and August, aimed to show first-rate art although the admission fees were expensive. The classic concert *Alice's Music Journey with Beethoven* (*Beethoven to Iku Arisu no ongaku Ryokō*) was a bold

attempt to tell music history through a play with music with a full orchestra playing Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. Puppet theatre Hitomi-za's *Summer Festival at Moomin Valley* (*Mūmin-dani no Natsumatsuri*), *Comic Chat for Parents and Children at Nissay* (*Nissay Oyako Yose*) by Yanagiya Karoku and others and Tokyo City Ballet's *Coppélia* were presented as well.

Three productions were presented at 'TACT/FESTIVAL (International Theatre Festival for Young People)' (May 4-7 at Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre). *Moon and Sun - Eclipse* was a shadow play and masked dance from Bali. Japanese actors joined Canadian theatre troupe Corpus's *A Bigger Flock of Sheep* (*Les Moutons*), which has already been invited many times, and this year the number of sheep increased. Cicero Aero, a Finnish circus company that visited Japan for the first time, presented *The Pianist* and got lots of laughs. A pianist dressed in a tuxedo performed acrobatic stunts such as rolling on the floor in front of a piano and jumping on to a chandelier. There were other summer festivals held by public theatres such as Setagaya Public Theatre and Za-Kōenji Public Theatre based on unique ideas.

I will name 2017's top three productions for children and the youth.

Company ma presented *With Two Wings* (*Futatsu no Tsubasa*) (written by Anne Negri, directed, translated and designed by Ōtani Kenjirō). It was about how physically-challenged parents faced their healthy children. The theme has not been dealt with in the world of juvenile theatre and it was depicted as a story about a family of birds. It was written by an emerging playwright, who teaches theatre at a public elementary school in the U.S.

Kawasaki Art Centre planned and produced *Cat Runs* (*Neko Hashiru*) (written by Kudō Naoko, script written and directed by

Fujita Asaya, music by Nishimura Katsuyuki, choreographed by Sakai Mayako). It was made into an excellent musical production with a cast comprised of actors and opera singers who graduated from Showa University of Music.

Puppet Theatre Musubi-za presented *Arabian Nights - The Magic Lamp and the Light of Tomorrow* (*Arabian Naito - Mahō no Rampo to Asu no Hikari*) (script by Yoshida Atsushi, directed by Ōno Masao). Three people manipulated the puppets by incorporating traditional bunraku-style puppetry to express the delicate movements of the puppets and the actors used colourful cloths and large flags in their performance. The meaning of true happiness was asked through the play.

Creative Ideas of Puppet Theatre Companies

Puppet theatre companies from all around Japan gathered at 'Iida Puppet Theatre Festa (*Iida Ningyōgeki Festa*)' (August 1 - 6). The lineup ranged from a traditional puppet company called Edo Marionette Yūkiza to contemporary puppet theatre troupes, with 268 companies presenting 489 performances. Kawano Kuruma Ningyō Preservation Society (*Kawano Kuruma Ningyō Hozonkai*), succeeding 'Kuruma Ningyō' style of puppetry passed down in Tokyo's Okutama region, presented *Higashiyama Asakura Narratives - The Section of Jinbei's Ferry* (*Higashiyama Asakura Sōshi - Jjinbei Watashiba no Dan*) with unique puppetry using a three-wheeled box car called 'Rokuro Guruma'. This year, Shōnanza from Hiratsuka City in Kanagawa Prefecture took part for the first time. The company, which succeeds the 'Otome Bunraku' puppeteering technique of one puppeteer manipulating the puppets that has been handed down from the Taishō Era, presented *Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees - Scene of the Journey of Shizuka Gozen* (*Yoshitsune Senbon Zakura*

- *Michiyuki Hatsune no Tabi*). It was also unusual that thirteen companies representing the three major puppet festivals held in Kanagawa Prefecture (Kanagawa Puppet Theatre Festival, Märchen Puppet Festival and Kawasaki Puppet Theatre Festival) performed one after another.

Eight foreign companies took part in the festival. Sawa Noriyuki, who is a puppet artist based in the Czech Republic, completed his giant puppet show *Salamander (Sanshō-uo)* with the citizens of Iida-Shimoina area (presented at the Auditorium of Iida Cultural Centre), which took him two years. The aim of the project was to create an international show originating from Iida City. Seven companies took part in *My First Puppet Show (Hajimete Deau Ningyōgeki)* for zero-year to two-year old infants. Each company came up with creative ideas.

Puppet Theatre Puk, which marked its 88th anniversary, presented thirteen plays at its home theatre Puk Puppet Theatre and toured seven shows. *Tales of Peony Lantern (Kaidan Botan Dōrō)* for adults was revived at Kinokuniya Hall in Tokyo. Moreover, it premiered *Where's the Fish? (Kingyo ga Nigeta)* (originally written by Gomi Taro, dramatized by Shibasaki Yoshihiko and directed by Hayakawa Yuriko) catered to zero-year to two-year old infants. It was visually easy to understand, with goldfish moving around the stage and playing hide-and-seek, and it was expressed through onomatopoeia and pantomime. *The Boy Who Was Always Late (Itsumo Chikoku no Otokonoko)* (originally written by John Burningham, adapted by Ikuta Mariko and directed by Nishimoto Katsuyoshi) stirred the imagination by making a manhole cover turn into an alligator and grass look like lions, and it also had a unique rhythm. One may also say that it was a piece that indicated the future direction for puppet theatre

Puppet Theatre Puk invited Stuffed Puppet Theatre from Holland

to present *Mathilde*, which made a deep impression. It is a tragicomedy about the 102-year old Mathilde who lives in a nursing home. The technique of Neville Tranter manipulating life-sized puppets was fascinating and we could relate to the poignant satire. The three best productions that Puppet Theatre Puk worked on were *Mathilde*, *Tales of Peony Lantern* and *The Boy Who Was Always Late*.

Puppet Theatre Hitomi-za took on the challenge of mounting Inoue Hisashi's play, namely *Dog's Revenge (Inu no Adauchi)* (March 23 - 26 at Haiyūza Theatre). It was the first time in many years for Hitomi-za to put on one of Inoue's plays. In the past, the company has presented two of his plays, which were *The Floating Gourd Island (Hyokkori Hyōtanjima)* (premiered in 1967) and *The Life of Don Matsugorō (Don Matsugorō)* (premiered in 1977). When the forty-seven rōnin (Akō Rōshi) attacks, Kira Kōzukenosuke escapes from his bed and hides himself in a coal hut with a white dog that he has been given in trust from the Shogun general. It is an epic puppet drama depicting *Treasury of Loyal Retainers (Chūshingura)* from Kōzukenosuke's point of view.

Edo Marionette Theatre Yūkiza revived *Dollstown* written and directed by Chon Uishin for the first time in ten years (January 15 - 55 at The Suzunari). Marionettes played people living in a town during the wartime, and the people remembering the days of the war in the postwar period were performed by actors, creating a double structure. *Chua Chui Dong Lai – As the Sparrows Wended in a Windless Winter (Chua Chui Dong Lai– Suzume Sarite Fuyu Kitaru)* (script by Zhao Binghao, composition and direction by Wang Chong, puppets designed by Kushida Kazuyoshi) is set in a nursing home in a certain town in Asia and the sadness of the elderly people, who were lonely and scared of death, were portrayed through close-up images of marionettes

(November 30 - December 3 at Za-Kōenji Public Theatre 2).

Taira Jō, who is a puppet show actor with a unique performance style combining monodrama and puppeteering, presented a trilogy about ‘women’ (*The Story of Medea* (*Ōjo Media no Monogatari*), *The Ballad of Orin* (*Hanare Goze Orin*) and *La Marie-Vision* (*Kegawa no Marie*)), alternating the programme every day (September 30 - October 2 at The Pit, New National Theatre Tokyo).

The World of Kawamoto Kihachiro—Puppet Theatre, Noh, Puppet Animation (December 16, Yokohama Nōgakudo) was held as part of The Year of Czech Culture in Japan. Czech’s Alfa Theatre troupe manipulated puppets made by Jiří Trnka, under whom Kawamoto studied, and presented the world premiere of *Trnka’s Circus* (*Torunka no Sakasu*). *House of Flame* (*Kataku*), which is Kawamoto’s puppet animation based on the Noh play *Seeker’s Mound* (*Motomezuka*), was screened as well.

The O Fujin Prize for Children and Youth Theatre was established for women who have contributed to the world of theatre for children and the youth. The 27th prize was given to Yoshida Akiko, the longtime producer of Puppet Theatre Musubi-za, for producing *Pinocchio* and *Arabian Night*, which were both highly acclaimed.

Yokomizo, Yukiko

Yokomizo Yukiko is a theatre critic, executive director of the Japan Theatre Association, a councilor for Tomin Gekijō and a member of Kabuki Circle’s planning committee. After working as an editorial staff of the cultural section of Jiji Press Ltd., she held posts in the screening committee of the Arts Festival sponsored by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Japan Arts Council’s Theatre Committee and has given lectures at Nihon University College of Art. She is also a member of Dance Critics Association, Saitama Prefecture’s Writers’ Association and the International Theatre Institute. She has translated *Practical Stage Makeup* (joint translation) and written *Actors Talk About Their Dreams* (*Yume Kataru Yakusha-tachi*), etc.

(Translation : Sumida Michiyo)

Japanese Classical Dance

It Is Time When We Must Find the Exact Border Between “*Hare* (Non-Daily)” and “*Ke* (Daily)” in *Nihon Buyō* (Japanese Classical Dance)

Hirano Hidetoshi

What is the Position of “*Kabuki Odori*” Within *Nihon Buyō* ?

In designating Intangible Cultural Treasures (popularly known as “Living National Treasures”) for the genre of *nihon buyō*, the Japanese Cultural Agency officially uses the term “*kabuki buyō*,” emphasizing the important place in the repertory of *nihon buyō* of dances originally performed as part of productions of kabuki theater and the importance of preserving this tradition from the Edo period (1603 – 1868). These dances were performed by kabuki actors (all men, even for female roles) in the *hare* (which means “formal” or at least, “removed from ordinary daily life”) context of a kabuki performance with the kabuki actors in make-up and stage costumes. In fact, it is said that the first time Japanese classical dancers (“*odori shishō*,” meaning “dance teachers”) were able to wear the same stage costumes as kabuki actors was with the performances of the Hanayagi Buyō Kenkyūkai founded in 1924 by Hanayagi Jusuke II (1893 – 1970), the second head of the Hanayagi school of dance and one of the pivotal artists who brought the dance traditions of the Edo period into the modern world in the form of “*nihon buyō*.”

In 1924, it was epoch-making when Japanese classical dancers

wore the same costumes as kabuki actors; today, it is considered to be quite normal. This is just one aspect of the question of what *nihon buyō* is: what kind of spaces is it performed in and what kind of performers, from what kind of background, in what kind of situation are performing it. This is what Hanayagi Juraku II (1918 – 2007) one of the most prominent dancers and choreographers in the Hanayagi school and the nephew of Hanayagi Jusuke II had to say about performances on stage of *nihon buyō*:

I am often asked exactly what “*nihon buyō*” is and that is a very good question, because, in fact, the definition is not clear at all. By the broadest definition, all kinds of things can fall into the category of “*nihon buyō*.” Folk dances can be included, *Awa odori* can be included and – this is an extreme case – I understand that there are even “*nihon buyō* Shows” as part of strip-tease performances, so I guess that might be included as well. (Laughs.)

But if I were to speak as one of the directors of the Japanese Classical Dance Association (*Nihon Buyō Kyōkai*), first, I would like to point out that unlike other forms of traditional performing arts, like kabuki, Bunraku, noh and most recently, the *kumi odori* of Okinawa, *nihon buyō* is a genre without a nationally supported theater building specifically dedicated to this art form.

When I go to the government offices to see if it is possible to get a theater for *nihon buyō*, they ask me, “What is *nihon buyō* ?” And this is where the problem comes. I have been designated a “Living National Treasure,” but it is in the field of “*kabuki buyō*.” Now I work to teach and choreograph kabuki dances and so I am very much working in the field of “*kabuki buyō*” and have received some degree of recognition for that, but ultimately, the performers of “*kabuki buyō*” are kabuki actors.

As Japanese Classical dancers, of course, we perform the same dances, often in costume and make-up. But it is very hard for a Japanese Classical dancer to give a performance of a dance from the kabuki repertory that might be considered superior to what a kabuki actor might do. We might be able to compete with short dances like *Tomo Yakkō* (*The Samurai Footman*) or *Echigo Jishi* (*The Echigo Lion Dancer*) in a program of, say, two contrasting dances, which don’t have much

of a story and we can excel with formal perfection. But when it comes to large-scale dance plays like *Seki no To (The Snowbound Barrier)* or *Masakado*, with extended sections of dance, but also with complex stories and sections of dialogue, there is no chance that we Japanese Classical dancers can compete with kabuki actors. There is something that a kabuki actor can express on stage because day in and day out, throughout the year, they are performing kabuki and this is something that we cannot possibly hope to imitate. That is what real “*kabuki buyō*” is and you have to understand that fact to understand *nihon buyō*.

(“*Nihon Buyō Nyūmon*” 2001, published by the Engeki Shuppansha)

In 2017, the National Theatre sponsored two performances of *nihon buyō*, the “Meisaku Kabuki Buyō (Masterpieces of Kabuki Dance, May 27, Large Hall) and “Hanagata Meisaku Buyō Kanshōkai (Masterpieces of Japanese Classical Dance by Young Dancers, August 26, Small Hall). All of the pieces presented were dances originally from kabuki with Japanese Classical dancers performing the dances in make-up and costumes. The piece that received the most attention was the performance of the Tokiwazu piece *Tsumoru Koi Yuki no Seki no To (The Snowbound Barrier)* with Hanayagi Motoi as the barrier guard Sekibeï, actually court noble Ōtomo no Kuronushi, Fujima Etsuko as Princess Komachi, Mizuki Yūka as the courtesan Sumizome, actually the spirit of the Komachi cherry tree and Hanayagi Juraku III as Shōshō Munesada. This was probably the best possible cast with Japanese Classical dancers, but what they produced was very distant from a performance of this dance by kabuki actors. This is not the level of performance that lives up to the designation of an art form as an “Intangible Cultural Treasure.” Seeing this performance I very sharply felt the difference between what Japanese Classical dancers and kabuki actors can do. In a performance like this, Japanese Classical dancers wear the same costumes and make-up

as kabuki actors, but in their daily life, they are dance teachers and the essence of their existence comes through in their performance. A kabuki actor spends his daily life in costume and make-up and expressing themselves through these techniques of staging and movement. Even with the same dance play, the difference type of performance is very evident.

The Current State of the Schools of “*Mai*” and “*Odori*” in *Nihon Buyō*

The word “*buyō*” was created in the Meiji period by combining the Chinese characters for the two major varieties of dance, “*mai*” and “*odori*” to describe all kinds of dance that were then known by a variety of names. “*Odori*” is represented by dances from kabuki mostly originating in Edo (the old name for Tokyo). “*Mai*” is represented by several schools of dance in Kamigata (the old name for the area around Kyoto and Osaka) and includes *kyōmai* and *jiuta mai*. While also being related to kabuki, these schools of *mai* are also strongly influenced by *gidayū*, the narrative music of the Bunraku puppet theater and the classical *noh* and *kyōgen* theaters. These schools of *mai* are also closely with the geisha districts of Kyoto and Osaka and these dances are usually performed in banquet chambers by *maiko* and *geiko* dressed in formal kimono with hair dressed in traditional hairstyles and often with white face make-up.

“*Mai*” has also been designated an Intangible Cultural Treasure” and *kyōmai* ^(*) and *jiuta mai* are represented by such schools as Inoue, Yamamura, Yoshimura and Umemoto. The National Theatre of Japan in Tokyo first produced a recital of *mai* called “*Mai no Kai*” in 1967 (supervised by Numa Sōu) with a rich variety of artists. The performers from the Inoue school were the Gion geisha Komame and

Yasue. The Yoshimura school was represented by the head of the school, Yoshimura Yūki (*2), the Yamamura school was represented by dance teacher, Yamamura Taka, the Kanzaki school was represented by the head of the school, Kanzaki Hide and the Umemoto school was represented by the head of the school, Umemoto Rikuhei. The performance also featured Takehara Han, a prominent *jiuta mai* dancer who was not associated with a particular school of dance. From 1971, the name of the recital was changed to “Mai no Kai: Keihan no Zashiki Mai (*Mai* of the Dances for Banquet Chambers of the Geisha Districts of Kyoto and Osaka),” adding the words “*zashiki mai*” and under this name it has continued until today.

In this year’s recital (November 23, 2017, small hall of the National Theatre, Tokyo), Living National Treasure for *kyōmai* and head of the Inoue school, Inoue Yachiyo, displayed the poise and power of the artistry of a dance teacher with the *jiuta* piece, *Yomogiu* and in the sensuous performance of the *jiuta* piece *Kanawa*, the Gion geisha Inoue Koman filled the stage which evoked the intimate atmosphere of a banquet chamber. In both of these performances, there was a strong feeling of the desire of personal expression, which had a very special feeling. However, as a whole it was worrisome that with the change in generations differences in artistic levels were very noticeable.

Gondō Yōichi explained the way of thinking in *kamigata mai* in the following way:

Among the performers in the “Mai no Kai” in 1969 commemorating the third anniversary of the opening of the National Theatre, the name of the dancer Nishikawa Koyuki appears. Nishikawa school dance is not ordinarily considered to be “*kamigata mai*.” But in the old days in Kamigata, there was not a very strong feeling of restricting dancers only to the schools of which they were members, so it was not particularly unusual to go learn from a teacher in a separate school or

genre of dance. Nishikawa Koyuki was a student of Nishikawa Koi and a member of the Nishikawa school but at the same time she learned Yamamura school *kamigata mai*. *Kamigata mai* dancers like Takehara Han, Kanzaki En and Kawaguchi Hideko (*3) all got their first training in dance in the Yoshimura school of *kamigata mai*, then learned from dance schools in Tokyo, synthesized these experiences inside themselves and then blended all their distinctive characteristics to create their own personal styles of "*kamigata mai*."

But in recent years, the trend has been reversed. There are many dancers in established schools of *odori* who take advantage of the wide range of distinctive techniques in *kamigata mai* that they do not have in their own schools to create their own new works. This is especially true for new pieces and revivals of *su-odori* (dancing in formal kimono without stage costume). This shows the extent to which *kamigata mai* has an attraction and characteristics not found in Edo styles of *buyō*.

(from the program for the "Mai no Kai: Keihan no Zashiki Mai" in 2006 commemorating the 40th anniversary of the opening of the National Theatre, published by the National Theatre)

As he says it is necessary to recognize the breadth of technique contained in *kamigata mai*. But also, in view of the fact that the National Theatre of Japan commemorated its 50th anniversary in 2017, it is vitally important to return to the roots of the "Mai no Kai" and re-evaluate questions like the meaning of the fact that the term "*zashiki mai*" is originally a term from the classical noh theater and the meaning of the difference between the *hare* or formal extra-daily performances of geisha in white make-up and the *ke* or daily performances of dance teachers without white make-up.

In the world of *buyō* in Tokyo there is a similar problematic to the *kamigata mai* situation in the relationship of geisha performing in a *hare* extra-daily situation with white face make-up and dance teachers without white make-up in the genre of *su-odori*. This is a genre that became established in the Taisho period (1912 - 1926) where a

dancer would perform in formal kimono without stage costume or stage make-up. Like *kamigata mai* this overlapped with the world of geisha doing dances in banquet rooms, but for teachers of *buyō* that were neither kabuki actors nor geisha, the genre of *su-odori* provided a special realm in which they could excel. *Su-odori* is not recognized as an independent genre by the Japanese Cultural Agency as a Living National Treasure and moreover, the 2016 “Su-Odori no Kai” at the National Theatre at the beginning of the year commemorating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the National Theatre was the last. Nevertheless, this is a genre in which teachers of *buyō* can assert their unique artistic excellence.

As Gondō explained, *kamigata mai* has a rich variety of resources for *su-odori* and the new piece *Nonomiya* in the recital of Yoshimura Chihiro at Kioi Hall on November 5 (lyrics, Tsuki Morimitsu, composition, Tsukahara Katsunori, koto and kokyū composition and performance, Takahashi Suishū) was a good example of this. The lyrics, composition and *mai* melded together perfectly and created a piece in the atmosphere of a banquet chamber with a powerful emotional impact. As an example of *su-odori* as a place to display the artistry of a *buyō* teacher in formal kimono without white make-up, there was the performance of the Tōmei piece *Kono Kimi* at the “Onoe no Kai (September 1, large hall of the National Theatre)” danced by Onoe Bokusetsu and Onoe Kikune that was a performance that used the performers’ technique polished by years of experience to create an appealing piece full of their individual emotions. This raises hopes for the future of the *buyō* of dance teachers whose artistry has been supported by fifty years of effort by the National Theatre.

Probing the Future of *Nihon Buyō*

In recent years, the term “Galapagos phenomenon” has been used a lot. The Galapagos islands are 900 kilometers off the coast of Ecuador in South America and with minimal interaction with the outside world, this group of islands has developed its own, unique ecology. This term is used to describe the fact that in a variety of fields from data communications, automobiles to the music industry, in Japan product development and industrial organization has undergone its own unique development so that even if there is great development, it is only in reference to conditions inside Japan without any relationship to the outside world. For example, Japan is one of the few countries where fold-out cell phones are still common and they are called “*gara-kei* (Galapagos style).” In other words, development and prosperity within Japan also means a decline in the ability to compete internationally.

In the history of Japanese culture, there have been several times where there have been policies restricting interaction with the outside world, for example ending the cultural missions to Tang China in 894 and the seclusion policies and banning of Christianity in the Edo period. But the result is that Japan has been able to pursue its own cultural development resulting in art and performing arts like *noh*, *Bunraku* puppet theater, *kabuki*, traditional music and dance for the *zashiki* banquet chambers and even folk music and dance. Many of these cultural forms have achieved glory by being designated World Cultural Heritages by UNESCO. But this culture rare in the world can also be described as a “Galapagos phenomenon.” In other words, the *kabuki buyō* and dances for the *zashiki* banquet chambers recognized as Intangible National Treasures are a kind of Galapagos phenomenon.

There have been efforts to create new forms of stage dance in Japan or “*shin buyō*” ever since the publication of “Shin Gakugeki Ron (New Stage Arts)” by Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859 - 1935). From 1984 to 2015, the Nihon Buyō Kyōkai sponsored the “Sōsaku Buyō Gekijō (Creative New *Buyō* Theater)” which made many new works. This is what Hanayagi Juraku II, who was instrumental in beginning and leading the project, had to say:

Until the beginning of the *Shin Buyō Undō* (New Buyō Movement), in *buyō*, the only time you would have many dancers moving at once would be in brief sections of *sō-odori* (everyone dance) with simple, unified choreography. There was no *gunbu* (massed dance) in which dancers were choreographed in massed groups. Many of my predecessors made attempts to create *gunbu*; some were successful and others ended with just a trial and error effort. This is a task that we have continued and I think that we have been successful in raising the level of technique in *gunbu* in *buyō*. But one thing that makes *gunbu* difficult in *nihon buyō* is that it seems that kimonos are not very suited to *gunbu*.

Naked bodies are what is most suited to *gunbu*, but they have to be good looking bodies. I saw Maurice Béjart's *Bolero* when it came to Japan, and in it, as the solo dancer Jorge Donn goes through a series of movements on a round platform, there is an ensemble performing a *gunbu* surrounding the platform below. I remember that when I saw it the first time, the *gunbu* was performed by Japanese and unfortunately I thought they were terrible and had no idea what they were doing there. But the next time I saw it, the *gunbu* was performed by an ensemble from abroad and for the first time, I was convinced. With enormous power, the *gunbu* concentrated attention on Jorge Donn in the center. This is a power that you cannot have with scrawny Japanese bodies.

First of all, these dancers from abroad have bodies that are a picture even if they are just lying down and not doing anything. Just the naked body is a picture, is a sculpture. So conversely, we have to create a kind of *gunbu* suited to the Japanese body, one that you can only do with Japanese bodies. It's OK to do it in kimono, but we have to make a *gunbu* suited to Japanese bodies wearing kimono.

("Nihon Buyō Kanshō Nyūmon [Introduction to the Appreciation of *Nihon Buyō*]" 2001, published by the Engeki Shuppansha)

In 2017, the Nihon Buyō Kyōkai got a new start with the first performance of the Nihon Buyō Mirai-za (Nihon Buyō Future Theater), "Sai (Throwing the Dice)" (June 16 - 18, small hall of the National Theatre). Three of the four pieces had the problems identified by Juraku. The fourth was the Risōgaku piece *Nyonin Sumida: Tayutō (Women and the Sumida River: Gently Flowing)* (staging: Orita Kōji, composition: Honjō Hidetarō, choreography: Tachibana Yoshie, dancers: Onoe Yukari, Hanayagi Kiyohito, Fujikage Shizue, Fujima Etsuko and Mizuki Yuka). The music was a lyrical picture of the Sumida river, "Tayutō," that was originally composed in 2010 by Honjō Hidetarō as a concert piece. The dance was staged by taking characters from shinpa and kabuki to display the beauty of people in kimono. The dance showed the very high technical level of the top female *buyō* dancers and recalled the achievements of the Shin Buyō Movement in the early part of the 20th century. But although the theme of the production was "the future of *nihon buyō*," it did not advance beyond the previous achievements of shin buyō.

The crisis regarding the future of *nihon buyō* is probably because for too many years a preoccupation with the extra-daily space of stage performances has meant that there has not been sufficient attention to other fundamental problems. This includes attention to the witty aesthetics of the music and lyrics of the pieces of *nihon buyō* and focusing attention on the development of individual physical technique and creative ability, something which has long been stifled.

Topics

In recent years, there have been many performances of *nihon buyō* on noh stages. It is not clear what a theater devoted to *nihon buyō* might look like, but I think that something resembling the stage and seating of a traditional *zashiki* might be desirable. Probably noh stages are attractive to *nihon buyō* dancers because there are similarities to *zashiki* and they have their own charm as a traditional Japanese stage space.

On April 20, 2017, the Kanze Sakon XXV Memorial Kanze Noh Theater opened in Tokyo's Ginza. With the aim of bringing the traditional performing arts closer to the Japanese people, there is a new production group named Ginza Hana Kagami centered on producing a variety of performances using the stage of the Kanze noh theater. On July 11, they sponsored a performance titled, "Nippon no Buyō." It will be interesting to see how this project develops. It is an age in which Western dancers can wear *tabi* and dance. It is necessary to think very carefully about the meaning of using a noh stage for traditional Japanese music and dance.

There were many collaborations with other genres. One unusual performance was a collaboration between *nihon buyō* and flamenco. Flamenco dancer Kagita Mayumi and Fujima Kiyotsugu presented *Futari Shizuka* (December 24, small hall of the National Theatre, Seikei Kai) was an impressive effort that showed how Western and Japanese styles can be combined.

There has also been an increase in international exchanges. In 2017, the *nihon buyō* group Gei Maru-za performed in New York (February 22) and following on the 2016 performance, the Goyōkai again performed in New Delhi (December 4 - 11).

These two groups are also very active within Japan as well. There

are many workshops for children sponsored by the Japanese Cultural Agency and local governments, but these workshops don't seem to connect at all with the creation of professional *nihon buyō* artists. In 2017, there were no recipients of the Cultural Agency's Special Prize and the only award was Nishikawa Mitsu's performance which participated in the Kansai division of the Arts Festival.

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- *1 Although there are several schools of *jiuta mai* in Kyoto, the only school of *kyōmai* is the Inoue school, which is closely related to the Gion geisha district.
 - *2 Yoshimura Yūki (1923 - 1998) was one of the few male dances in the world of *jiuta mai* and is also known as the father of actor and stage personality Ikehata Shinnosuke ("Peter").
 - *3 Takehara Han (1903 - 1998), Kanzaki En (1874 - 1950) and Kawaguchi Hideko (1927 - 2009) were all born in Kansai and were active in Tokyo. Takehara Han is noted for her relationships with a broad range of writers, artists and other creative people. Kanzaki En was the founder of the Kanzaki school of *jiuta* dance, while Kawaguchi Hideko is noted for her work with her husband Takechi Tetsuji (1912 - 1988) who was a theatrical and film director and critic who is famous for his efforts to bring traditional arts and the modern world together.

Hirano, Hidetoshi

Nihon buyō (Japanese classical dance) critic. Born in 1944 in Sendai and graduated from the theater division of the literature department of Waseda University majoring in kabuki. Worked for a publishing house as an editor for such periodicals as "Okinawa Performing Arts," the quarterly journal "Folk Performing Arts," the monthly magazine, "Japanese Music and Classical Dance." As a critic, his interest is in investigating the art of physical expression. He is a member of advisory committees for the Japanese Cultural Agency and the Society for the Advancement of the Arts in Japan. In 2016, his book "Critique: History of Japanese Physical Expression - Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Period" (Nihon Buyō-sha) was published.

(Translation: Mark Ōshima)

Ballet

Creative Energy in the Unfavorable Wind; More Disparity between Regions

Urawa Makoto

Political, Economical, Environmental Situations around Japanese Ballet

In 2017 internationally, the world reacted to Trump, the US president, and East Asia having increased political friction. Global warming resulted in significant damage in many locations worldwide. Nationally, the economic policies collectively known as “Abenomics” provided certain positive macroeconomic effects, yet they also accelerated disparity in economic development within and between local regions. In the aging Japanese society, many Japanese people found no improvement in their sense of quality of life. On the other hand, the Japanese government placed considerable focus on the success of the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, putting effort and resources into building national sports stadiums and training athletes, but not into the arts and culture. Now, the Japanese government is beginning to put more focus on culture and its proponents.

The Japanese ballet world is supported by children and their families. The number of children being born has been decreasing due to the decrease of the population in the current generation of prospective mothers.

The number of theaters has also been decreasing. Owners of

older theaters that require expenditures for earthquake proofing and barrier-free renovations must either close their theaters or change their facility's intended use unless they can both afford the cost of renovation as well as absorb the loss in revenue while their structure is closed for renovation. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure the use of performance venues.

Characteristics of the Japanese Ballet World

I intend to review the Japanese ballet world in 2017 given the situation above.

Before reviewing, I would like to raise three characteristics of the Japanese ballet world in comparison with the West.

First of all, the location of ballet companies and their activities are concentrated in a few metropolitan areas: the Tokyo Metropolitan area, the Kansai area (Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo), and the Chubu area (Aichi). If we define a professional ballet company as one that a) can produce all the acts of a piece; and b) can produce a couple of shows in a year, then thirteen companies in the Tokyo Metropolitan area meet these conditions. Under somewhat less strict conditions, eight companies in Kansai, and six in Chubu also qualify as professional.

In terms of the number of performances, the Tokyo Metropolitan area has significantly more than the other regions. These professional companies are all private except for the National Ballet of Japan. They are funded mainly from the tuition of students and ticket sales to students' friends and families, without much support from public and social sources. Also, it is a characteristic of Japan that ballet companies are not associated with a particular theater.

Other than the twenty-seven companies concentrated in these three regions, in all of the rest of Japan there are no additional

companies which meet the conditions, even though the rest of the nation has many sizable cities with populations of one to two million people. Regional disparity is evident. Yet, there are ballet schools nationwide, providing dancers to ballet companies and supporting ballet competitions, which will be discussed later in this paper.

The second characteristic of the Japanese ballet world are so-called “produce system” festivals and concerts, which gather and produce companies, schools, and dancers, showing small works, solos, and pas de deux. The “produce system” productions range from those with popular foreign dancers to those that introduce young Japanese dancers who are active abroad and in Japan. Performances unifying ballet companies and schools are seen nationwide.

Thirdly, the large number of ballet competitions is also a unique phenomenon of Japan, not only in classical ballet but many different categories of dance. The length of the competition period is from two weeks to just one day. There are many categories in competitions, including so-called “pre-competition” in which judges give advice to young dancers, as well as nationwide franchise-style competitions. Probably about 150 competitions exist across Japan, though it is hard to pin down the exact numbers.

The Creative Energy in Regional Disparity: Overview 2017

< The Tokyo Metropolitan Area >

The characteristics mentioned above basically had not changed during this year. Despite harsher financial conditions due to the decreasing number of children learning ballet, major ballet companies still produce performances by lessening the days of performances, or by minimizing creation of new works and new production.

Even so, this year some remarkable new works were premiered

by major ballet companies. These included long full-act works, unique middle-sized new works, remakes, and new works. The National Ballet of Japan produced a new version of *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* choreographed by Wayne Eagling. This production provided roles for a number of skilled and new dancers such as Ono Ayako and Fukuoka Yūdai, who are also active abroad. K Ballet Company headed by Artistic Director and Choreographer Kumakawa Tetsuya, premiered *Cleopatra* (Music by Carl Nielsen) in Tokyo, Aichi, and Osaka. The presence of Nakamura Shōko, who played the title role, as well as the idea and large scale performance garnered public attention. Also, NBA Ballet Company newly produced *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Martin Friedman utilized movement to deftly depict details of the work's human relationships.

These relatively young companies have been active. The New National Theater just celebrated its twentieth anniversary; it has repertoires like Roland Petit's *Coppelia*, and also premiered *Beethoven Sonata* by a contemporary choreographer, Nakamura Megumi. K Ballet Company has performed its repertoires such as *Giselle* and *The Corsair* a number of times. NBA Ballet Company got attention with *Nutcracker* utilizing projection mapping. Ballet Chamble Ouest employed young choreographers for triple-bill-type performances.

On the other hand, companies with longer histories – closer to seventy years – mainly perform their repertoires. Yet, In Matsuyama Ballet Company, with the legendary ballerina Morishita Yōko, whose dancing career spans sixty years, Director Shimizu Tetsutarō remade *The White-Haired Girl* (*Hakumōjo*), a ballet choreographed in 1955 based on a story depicted in a Chinese opera and movie. This ballet, which has a strong social message, has been performed in China

several times and was enthusiastically received by Chinese audiences. In Toyama prefecture, Asami Maki Ballet Tokyo company, which has a similar long history, mounted a performance of *Asuka* in 2016. Nina Ananiashvili, a 2017 recipient of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, was a part of this renewed work with a contemporary touch. Tani Momoko Ballet company, founded by the legendary ballerina Tani Momoko, who passed away in 2015, appointed a new artistic director, Takabe Hisako, who had been cultivated in this company.

Founded in the 1960's, a number of somewhat younger ballet companies recently appointed female artistic directors such as Saitō Yukari in Tokyo Ballet Company, Adachi Etsuko in Tokyo City Ballet company, and Oyama Kumi in Star Dancers Ballet company. The increase of female leaders shows the trend of our time. These ballet companies produced triple-bill-type performances of classic and modern large works together with Western middle-sized masterpieces. For example, Tokyo Ballet produced works by Maurice Bejart and Roland Petit, Star Dancers Ballet made performances of William Forsythe and George Balanchine, and Noriko Kobayashi Ballet Theatre produced Kenneth MacMillan programs with two premier works in Japan.

Public Juridical Foundation Japan Ballet Association, enjoying the membership of all the ballet professionals in Japan, produces performances unifying its regional branches and competitions. In terms of noteworthy performances of groups and individuals, Choreographer Shinohara Seiichi had a series of recitals primarily casting his famous dancer wife Shimomura Yurie, producing works such as *Romeo and Juliet*, which in 2006 received the Grand Prize at the National Arts Festival of the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Shakujii Ballet Academy got attention with *Pas de Quatre*, casting the world-class dancers Yoshida Miyako, 2017 Person of Cultural Merits; Sakai Hana; Nishida Yūko; and Oki Kanako. Sakai Hana, who received the Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon this year, assayed a wide range of performances in classical and modern works, as well as in collaboration with Japanese traditional performing arts. Chacott, the ballet-related goods maker and retailer, produced “Ballet for the Future” with Yoshida Miyako and Horiuchi Gen as the main cast in Tokyo, Osaka, and Sapporo.

< The Other Regions >

In the Kansai area, the most active group is Kobe’s Sadamatsu-Hamada Ballet company, which was awarded the Arts Festival Excellence Prize by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. It produces all the acts of classical pieces as well as modern creative works. This year it produced Jiri Kylian’s *Falling Angels* as well as *Die Toteninsel* (Music by Rachmaninov) with a contemporary atmosphere. These in-depth productions were choreographed by Mori Yūki, Artistic Director in Regensburg, Germany. A symbolical *Macbeth* was also performed as Mori’s production in Tokyo and Kobe. In terms of new production, previously mentioned Shinohara Seiichi choreographed a new work, *La Traviata*, for Sasaki Michiko Ballet Company. This gorgeous and tragic drama was one of the more fruitful works this year, casting Shimomura Yurie and Sasaki Dai. Homura Tomoi Ballet Company had its eightieth anniversary performance; Noma Ballet Company had its fiftieth anniversary performance. Jinushi Kaoru Ballet Company, a relatively young company, had a triple-billed performance in the theme of Ballet Russes. Okumura Yui received the Award of Arts Festival New Face Prize by the Japanese Agency

for Cultural Affairs. Arima Ryuko Memorial Academie de Ballet de Kyoto, which has a long history in Kyoto, had a memorial performance for Yvette Chauvire, who passed away in 2016, inviting dancers from Paris. Producer Arima Eriko received L'ordre national de la légion d'honneur.

In Nagoya, Aichi, *Swan Lake* productions were performed by regional leading companies: Ochi International Ballet and Matsuoka Reiko Ballet. On the other hand, Theatre de Ballet Company had reproduced works by Fukagawa Hideo and a new work *Ryūgū* by Iguchi Hiroyuki. Setsuko Kawaguchi Ballet company produced new works by Kawaguchi and others. This region has promising choreographers: the previously mentioned Fukagawa, Iguchi, Kawaguchi, as well as Ichikawa Tōru and Ōshima Masaki.

In regards to regions other than those mentioned above, Okinawan Midorima Ryōki held a performance in Tokyo, participating in the Arts Festival by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. Yet no other noteworthy activities of other regions were seen. The reasons could include reduction of population and economic problems, as well as large-scale damage from typhoons, cataracts of rain, and earthquakes.

The Touring Companies to Japan and Their Dancers

Japan invites numerous performances by foreign ballet companies, and this fact shows that there is a large market for foreign ballet. World famous companies visited Japan such as Paris Opera Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, Bejart Ballet Lausanne, English National Ballet, and the Kiev Ballet. Each of them showed characteristic programs and unique dancers. In particular, performances starring popular dancers in Japan like Nina Ananiashvili, Svetlana Zakharova, Manuel Legris,

and others attracted large audiences.

On the other hand, many Japanese dancers who joined foreign ballet companies won foreign competitions. Matsuyama Ballet Company and Tokyo Komaki Ballet Company (now renamed as International Ballet Academia) had successful performances in Mongolia.

On a sad note, as the last news of 2017 I would like to mention that Usui Kenji, the former chairman of Public Juridical Foundation Japan Ballet Association, well known worldwide as a ballet historian and researcher, passed away at the age of ninety-three on December 24th.

Urawa, Makoto

His autonym is Ichikawa Akira. He was formerly a professor in the Faculty of Business Administration and Corporate Culture at Shōin University. He works as the advisor to the Association of Theaters and Halls in Japan. As a dance critic, Urawa has written articles for newspapers and magazines, and has also held positions in various committees such as the committee for the Agency for Cultural Affairs. He has also worked as a member of the jury for a number of dance competitions.

(Translation: Satō Michiyo)

Contemporary Dance and Butoh

For Dance, Is Social Media a Friend or Foe?

Tsutsumi Hiroshi

Instagrammable and 'Building Buzz'

'Instagrammable' (*insutabae*) was chosen as the Japanese buzzword of the year in 2017. A YouTube video called 'Bubbly Dance' by the dance club at Tomioka High School in Osaka Prefecture, who came second at the 10th Japan High School Dance Championship, became a viral sensation. While we might not think that the popularity of social media has a direct connection with the performing arts, its influence on the dance world is growing stronger. Music artists around the world are increasingly releasing new music videos on YouTube, making the need for choreographers and dancers to express the vision of the songs ever greater.

Takase Fukiko has choreographed a music video for Utada Hikaru, while Hirayama Motoko has choreographed for Chris Hart, crewimburnny's Sugao Nagisa for Nogizaka46, and Honaga Yōko for Kyary Pamyu Pamyu and Yuzu, and the Butoh dancer Kudō Taketeru appeared in a Hirai Ken music video. Kudō also revived *The Love of Terror* (*Kyōfu no koi*) and Honaga revived *Diagonal Line Express* (*Naname rain kyūkō*), but the activities of choreographers and dancers are becoming more prominent online than in theatres. Morishita Maki directed a dance adaptation of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, asking different artists to choreograph one of the four movements: MIKIKO, who is known for her choreography for the music group

Perfume, the actor and dancer Moriyama Mirai, the photographer Ishikawa Naoki, and the Butoh choreographer Kasai Akira. Further professional opportunities are coming from corporations and government bodies, which are commissioning choreographers to create original dances and gymnastic routines, and make commercials. This social media-friendly attitude is becoming ever more conspicuous through ‘buzz-building’ events for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

Dance As Spectacle to Kick Off a (Politicised) Festival

Tokyo Caravan, which is the official preview project for the 2020 Cultural Olympiad programme, continued in 2017, holding performances around Japan with the likes of Ide Shigehiro and Kondō Ryōhei. Ide also choreographs for music videos, having previously worked with such artists as Hoshino Gen and Ringo Sheena (Shiina Ringo), and Avril Lavigne. Premiering *Job Title Junction* (*Katagaki jankushon*) with his company idevian crew to much acclaim and also supervising choreography for *Tokyo Gorin Ondo 2020*, a song and dance created by the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, he had a busy year indeed. At Roppongi Art Night, a one-night art event held in the district of Roppongi in Tokyo, photographer and film director Ninagawa Mika was selected as the main programme artist, and dance world contributors included Yasumoto Masako, Kuroda Ikuyo (BATIK), Kitamura Akiko, Yanagimoto Masahiro, Yamamoto Yū, and Kondō Ryōhei, but in the end it was an event dominated by ‘Instagrammable’ offerings.

The international performing arts event Festival/Tokyo 2017 produced the lively *Toky Toki Saru*, conceived and directed by Pichet Klunchun. Almost like an outdoor disco convention, dancers dressed

up as monkeys gamboled with Tokyoites on a specially made stage in Minami Ikebukuro Park. Though promoted as the exploration of 'new territory' by an artist who had hereto pursued a contemporary interpretation of the traditional Thai mask dance Khon, it was unclear how its concept and background had emerged from his research conducted in Tokyo. In these kinds of free outdoor events organised at the behest of government bodies, dance functions as a way to launch the (politicised) festival that is the Olympics, transforming into spectacle for creating 'buzz' in the city. However, there is a problem with this in that the talent and expression of the artists is not deeply understood by audiences.

Programmes for Children and Shows for Foreign Tourists on the Rise

As we head towards the 2020 Olympics, nonverbal performances accessible for non-Japanese tourists are enjoying long runs. The experiential show *WA!! Wonder Japan Experience* by Fuerza Bruta was premiered in Tokyo as a special Japanese version of the popular spectacle by Argentinian director Diqui James, supported by a subsidy from Arts Council Tokyo as part of its Tokyo Cultural Program Grant that provides funding for 'projects to foster momentum'. Other examples of new shows include *W3*, a stage adaptation of a Tezuka Osamu manga featuring the ballet dancer Nishijima Kazuhiro in the lead, and *ALATA*, a dance and stage combat extravaganza that opened the Alternative Theatre in Yūrakuchō. *GEAR*, whose long run continues at a theatre in Kyoto for which it was specifically devised, opened in a new Kantō region version as the first production at Chiba Port Theatre with Fujisaki Ayane of the idol group Dempagumi.inc in the lead, who originally built up a following through her dance videos

on YouTube.

Dance that can be enjoyed regardless of language is also proving popular among programmes for children at public halls. At Kanagawa Arts Theatre, Moriyama Kaiji directed and choreographed an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* that attracted full houses for all shows thanks to the way it comically incorporated onomatopoeia and rap, performed by a superb cast including Tsujimoto Tomohiko, Shimaji Yasutake, and Shimotsukasa Naomi.

Condors head Kondō Ryōhei received the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Prize in the dance division of the 2016 Art Encouragement Prizes by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. The premiere of *Never-Ending Story: The Errors of Condors* (*NEVERENDING STORY machigai no kondoruzu*) at Setagaya Public Theatre included the presentation of a children's workshop and then went on a regional tour. Inspired by the lives of the performers when they were seventeen years old, *17's Map* was yet another popular show for the company.

The unit Nivante, comprising Fujita Yoshihiro of Condors and tap dancer Murata Masaki, performed *Light Brothers* (*Raito na kyōdai*). Developing a strange story of brothers infatuated with the Wright brothers into an accessible dance piece, Fujita won the New Artist Award in the dance division at the National Arts Festival, organised by the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

CHAIROIPLIN company head Suzuki Takurō choreographed and directed a stage adaptation of *The Magic Finger*, a children's story by Roald Dahl, for Toshima Art Summer Festival 2017. Performed by children recruited from the general public, it unfolded like an upturned box of toys spilling out fantastical elements. With *Ballo: Romeo and Juliet* (*BALLO—romio to jurietto*), Suzuki also tried his

hand at tackling Shakespeare.

Another of the characteristics of dance is the ease with which it makes collaborating with artists from different cultures or fields. Company Derashinera's Onodera Shūji staged *WITHOUT SIGNAL!* (*Shingō ga nai!*), an international co-production with Vietnamese performers. With his group Physical Theatre Company GERO, Itō Kim premiered *I Just Want to Say* (*Itai dake*), a collage of language, voice, and body, and expanded his dance activities into the fields of art and music.

Contemporary Dance Goes Global

Teshigawara Saburō's activities abroad are always conspicuous, as shown by his being made an *officier* of France's Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. He staged the world premiere of *Grand Miroir* for Ballet de l'Opéra National de Paris (Paris Opera Ballet), while in Japan his Update Dance Series, whereby he presents new work almost daily at his space Karas Apparatus, continued to draw acclaim. He and Satō Rihoko also won the Baku Ishii Memorial Award at Odoru. Akita 2017, and he revived *Absolute Zero* (*Abusorūto zero*) at Setagaya Public Theatre. Moreover, the inspiration that poetry provides for his work has become notable, such as Rimbaud for *Illuminations*, Hagiwara Sakutarō for *Howling at the Moon* (*Tsuki ni hoeru*), and Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*) for *Grand Miroir*.

Ryutopia Niigata City Performing Arts Center resident company Noism1 staged *Liebestod* (*Ai no shi*), a new work by the artistic director Kanamori Jō, in a double bill with *Painted Desert*, a representative work of director Yamada Yūki. In *Liebestod*, Kanamori returned to his creative roots by using music from the Wagner opera *Tristan and Iseult*, which he had stored in his heart ever since he first heard it in

Maurice Béjart's *M* at the age of eighteen. Niigata City also organised Niigata International Dance Festival 2017 (NIDE2017), inviting Daegu Contemporary Dance Company from South Korea, T.H.E. Dance Company from Singapore, and City Contemporary Dance Company from Hong Kong, China. Noisim1 revived *NINA*—materialise *sacrifice* (*NINA—busshitsuka suru ikenie*) with a young cast and engaged with the task of passing on its repertoire.

Hirahara Shintarō had an energetic year, choreographing *night to night* (*Yoru no chi*), a new work for Noism2. With his own company, OrganWorks, he premiered *Holy Beast: Live with a Sun* (*Seijū live with a sun*). Another work, *Time of Conversation*, was the accumulation of around fifteen years of exchange with the Spanish choreographer Carmen Werner.

Session House resident dance company Mademoiselle Cinema ventured out on a two-nation tour to Mexico and Ethiopia. While the group has continued to create Tanztheater-style work inspired by the childhood memories of the dancers, its homecoming performance of *Woman is a Journey* (*Onna wa, tabi de aru*) was based on the grandparents of the work's choreographer, Itō Naoko, and through dance wove a portrayal of the attitudes of women who emigrated to the United States as so-called 'picture brides' as well as of a sense of homesickness or nostalgia, and family memories and history.

With an eye on performing overseas, Tani Momoko Ballet Company had its first stab at contemporary dance, staging a triple bill of new work by Shimaji Yasutake, Yanagimoto Masahiro, and Hirosaki Uran.

Global Gazes Gravitating Toward Noh and Butoh

The year also saw many initiatives that re-examined Japan's

unique traditional dance forms. A co-production between Yokohama Noh Theater and the Japan Society in New York, *SAYUSA (Left-Right-Left)* was adapted from the Noh plays *Okina* and *Hagoromo (The Feather Mantle)*, based on guidance from Donald Keene, and directed by the Italian Luca Veggetti, and performed by Kasai Akira and Suzuki Yukio, who both come from Butoh, and Nakamura Megumi, whose background is in ballet, and Nagayama Rinzō, who is a child Noh actor. Bringing together performers in this way with very different physical qualities, the resulting production expressed a universal vision. On the other hand, Cerulean Tower Noh Theatre attempted a fusion of Noh and contemporary dance with *Mania (Kurui)*, based on the Noh plays *Dōjōji* and *Kanawa (The Iron Crown)*, and a version of *Oimatsu (The Aged Pine)*, directed and choreographed by, respectively, Endō Yasuyuki and Kuroda Ikuyo.

Endeavors to reconsider Butoh from global perspectives are also picking up pace. The Sapporo International Butoh Festival 2017 was held, calling for Butoh to be recognised as one of Japan's cultural assets. The New National Theatre, Tokyo launched the 'Butoh Today' programme, starting with Sankai Juku's revival of *MEGURI—Teeming Sea, Tranquil Land (Umi no nigirwai, oka no seijaku—meguri)*. The series is set to continue with a new work by Dairakudakan in 2018. It was as if, twenty years after it opened, this national theatre has finally given recognition to Butoh. Dairakudakan commemorated forty-five years since it was founded with two performances, *Super-human (Chōjin)* and *Pseudo-human (Gijin)*, on the theme of artificial intelligence and the singularity, suggesting that technological progress leads to the absence of mankind.

Interest is also growing in Butoh heritage and archiving. The nonprofit Dance Archive Network organised 'Clear-Eyed Spirit', a

series of performances and exhibitions that used new archiving methods such as 3D and virtual reality technology, including the first showing in the world of photographs taken by William Klein in Japan in 1961 of street performances by Hijikata Tatsumi, Ohno Kazuo, and Ohno Yoshito. Kōzensha head Waguri Yukio passed away at the age of sixty-five. He made a significant contribution to passing on the heritage of Butoh to the next generation by publishing *Transmission of the Butoh Flower (Butō Kaden)* (1998), a CD-ROM of Hijikata's oral instructions of his Butoh notations. Fujiyama Annet, led by Hasegawa Ney, premiered *ENIAC*, depicting the life of a Kōzensha dancer, Ishimoto Kae. Iwatabuchi Teita was able to surmount the death of Murobushi Kō with his solo performance, *missing link*, uniquely re-interpreting the Butoh-esque body.

Butoh research overseas has also entered a new phase. A Japanese translation was published of the French scholar Sylviane Pagès's *Le butô en France: Malentendus et fascination (Butoh in France: Misunderstandings and Fascination)* (2015), which analyzes how Japanese Butoh has been received in France since 1978. It offered a perspective on Butoh distinct from the research that is conducted in Japan. Brazilian prodigy Marcelo Evelyn premiered in Japan *Sick Dance (Yameru mai)*, based on Hijikata Tatsumi's concept of the 'weak body' (*suijaku-tai*) at Kyoto Experiment 2017. In order to investigate the legacy of Butoh, the Singaporean artist Choy Ka Fai stayed in Japan, summoning and interviewing the spirit of Hijikata Tatsumi in northeast Japan. The results of his work in progress were then presented at TPAM 2018.

The Millennial Generation and Dysfunctional Theatre

There are increasing opportunities in the Japanese dance scene

to present work at competitions. At Yokohama Dance Collection 2017, Kurosu Ikumi won the Jury Prize in the Competition I division. Moreover, Suzuki Ryū swept several accolades this year, winning the French Embassy Award for Young Choreographers, the MASDANZA Prize, and the Sibiu International Theatre Festival Award. In the Competition II division for newcomers, Shimojima Reisa broke the mould by taking home both the Best Newcomer as well as the Hungary Touchpoint Art Foundation Prize, which is usually only awarded to finalists in the Competition I category. Yokohama Dance Collection also partnered with dance festivals in Hong Kong and Seoul to launch a new East Asia dance platform called HOTPOT. For the first edition in Hong Kong, works by Seki Kaori, Yamada Un, and Kimura Reina were selected. At NEXTREAM21 2017, tantan (led by Kamegashira Kanae) won Best Artist, Imamura Akari won the Excellence Award in the solo and duo division and Suichu-Megane ∞ (led by Nakagawa Ayane) won for the group division. At Odoru. Akita 2017, Mitō Ruri received the Tatsumi Hijikata Memorial Award, while the Judgment Committee Special Award went to Kim Seoljin from South Korea and the Audience Award to Hung-Chung Lai from Taiwan.

However, we can also see a growing tendency among younger artists to seek out the kinds of bonds with audiences that cannot be obtained at competitions and such places where short works are presented. Hasegawa Tatsuya's DAZZLE used an entire building for *Touch the Dark*, an immersive theatre experience where the performance unfolded in various places as the audience moved around. Okamoto Yū's TABATHA, whose forte is performances in the style of parties that envelop the audience, premiered *CARNIVAL!! Rio!!!!* and revived its signature piece *FIESTA!! My Mexico*, both of which

portrayed the differences between South American and Japanese society. It also created a longer, standalone version of the 2015 show *Manual (Manyuaru)*. Uyama Ayumi (of TAG) opened the U.F.O. Club, a fictional 'show pub' (cabaret) for contemporary dance in the west Tokyo live music hub of Kōenji. Nakagawa Ayane of Suichu-Megane ∞ planned *1991*, a show featuring seven sets of young individual choreographers or choreography teams all born in the titular year. The omnibus performance presented an interpretation of our times by this generation born and brought up after the collapse of the economic bubble. Tokikatachi, led by Obana Aiko, launched a long-term project called 'Following the Path' (*Michi o tadoru*), a unique endeavour that choreographs the process of travel from the audience relying on a letter to find the performance venue and then encountering the human body in a space.

We can see increasing attempts to create places for experiencing dance more intimately in alternative spaces, shifting away from the dysfunctional aspects of the existing theatre system and forming a series of foxholes. On the other hand, Condors and Owlspot Theater teamed up to launch *Creatures of Potential 2017*, a festival that showcases this next generation of dance companies. The future dilemma for the dance world is surely how to motivate the millennial generation, for whom direct communication through social media is a default, to return to the theatre.

Tsutsumi, Hiroshi

Born in 1966 in Kawasaki City. He graduated from Bunka Gakuin's theatre course. He is an editor and performing arts critic. After serving as an editor for art, entertainment, theatre and drama magazines, he now works freelance. His writing and editing includes *The Flying Dangorō Party in the Sky: The Rebirth of Acharaka* (*Sora tobu kumo no ue dangorō ichiza: Acharaka saitanjō*), *Performing Arts Magazine Bacchus*, *Performing Arts in Germany Today* (*Gendai doitsu no pafuōmingu ātsu*), and *Peter Brook: The Way of Creation* (*Pita burukku: Sōsaku no kiseki*).

(Translation: William Andrews)

The Rise of On-demand Streaming Services and the Challenge of Screenwriters

Kotaki Tetsuya / Nakamachi Ayako

The hottest trend in the recent television drama scene is the rise of on-demand streaming services. As represented by *Spark (Hibana)* (Yoshimoto Kōgyō, NHK, Netflix / 2016), *Solitary Gourmet (Kodoku no Gurume)* (MBS, Netflix / 2016) and others, television networks and distributors are actively working on co-productions and some of the dramas are broadcast via ground wave, making their presence stronger both in volume and quality. Satellite television broadcasters are also continuing to produce original dramas, which include *Fujisawa Shūhei: New Drama Series - Bridge Stories (Fujisawa Shūhei Shin Dorama Sirizu - Hashi Monogatari)* on Jidaigeki Senmon Channel and *Weakling Pedal (Yowamushi Pedaru)* on BS Skapa!. The changes in the environment surrounding the media have affected the world of television dramas. With this trend in mind, a new category called “Satellite and Streamed Drama” was established for the Tokyo Drama Awards and in 2017, *Midnight Diner (Shinya Shokudo)* (Netflix) and *Weakling Pedal* (BS Skapa!) both won the Award for Excellence in the Satellite and Streamed Drama category.

Let us take a look at the world of television dramas in Japan during 2017. In terms of programming, the fact that TV Asahi

allocated *A Comfortable Home* (*Yasuragi no Sato*) to the afternoon time slot (12:30–12:50) drew attention. Fuji Television Network's Tokai TV has been broadcasting television dramas in the afternoon slot since 1964 with *Snow Burning* (*Yuki Moe*) but this trend ended after *Tears of the Storm* (*Arashi no Namida*) aired in February 2016 due to difficulties in the situation of programing and production. However, TV Asahi took on the challenge of inserting a drama series catered for the elderly into this time slot.

A Comfortable Home (director: Fujita Meiji and others, chief producer: Igarashi Fumio, producer: Nakagome Takuya) was a serial drama for the afternoon time slot that was planned by Kuramoto Sō, who is now 83 years old, as “a drama series about the elderly, made for the elderly and created by the elderly”, taking a realist approach to the rapid increase in the number of elderly viewers. Kikumura Sakae (played by Ishizaka Kōji) used to be a successful screenwriter during the golden age of television and he enters an exclusive home for the elderly called “Yasuragi no Sato (*A Comfortable Home*)”, which admits only people who were successful in the world of television. He reencounters actors and actresses who dominated the TV world (played by Yachigusa Kaoru, Asaoka Ruriko, Satsuki Midori, Nogiwa Yōko, Kaga Mariko, Fuji Tatsuya, Mickey Curtis and Yamamoto Kei), a singer (played by Arima Ineko) and a musician (played by Kamijō Tsunehiko) among others. Through the exchanges among the characters, the various yearnings that the elderly have are delivered through the dialogues that are rich in nuance such as “I want to meet my wife not when she was young but when she has aged and is about to die because there'll be more to talk about.” At the same time, the present television world is criticized with humour to give unbounded

tribute to the television culture. The drama won the Tokyo Drama Award for Best Screenplay in 2017.

This afternoon drama series was rerun in the morning time slot on BS Asahi and the initial goals, including the targeted viewing rate, were achieved. It was followed by *Totto-chan!* (director: Hoshida Yoshiko, cast: Seino Nana, Matsushita Nao and Yamamoto Kōji). The screenwriter Ōishi Shizuka turned it into a carefully-written family-history drama about Kuroyanagi Tetsuko (a famous actress and talk show host, etc.) and her family, and contributed to the ongoing development of the renewed afternoon drama series.

If *A Comfortable Home* was a challenge to the programming of drama series, TBS's serial drama titled *Quartet* (directed by Doi Nobuhiro, Kaneko Fuminori and others) was a mentally stimulating drama through Sakamoto Yūji's script, which could not be categorized into a certain type of drama. Four men and women in their thirties, who look like social dropouts, come to know each other when they are practicing their musical instruments in a karaoke box, form a quartet and start living together in a villa located in Karuizawa (a mountain resort in Nagano Prefecture). It was a drama based on dialogues among complete strangers, which made us think about life choices and human relations.

Each character's persistence (habit) is expressed subtly in their conversations right from the beginning. For instance, they start an endless discussion about whether lemon juice should be sprinkled on the fried chicken served on the dining table. They seem to be fooling around when they mock each other and persist in their own theories in all seriousness, but it also reflects their unconscious persistence (way of thinking). The drama elucidates the habits that are not even

distinct personalities of the characters and mirrors their respective family relations being jeopardized by their habits. Maki Maki (played by Matsu Takako) and her husband (played by Kudō Kankurō), who has disappeared, are both lying and their lies have consequences. The lie of Sebuki Suzume (played by Mitsushima Hikari) is clouded by her hatred toward her father. The complex toward his elite family creeps into the persistence of Beppu Tsukasa (played by Matsuda Ryūhei). The persistence of Iemori Yutaka (played by Takahashi Issey) has led him to divorce his wife. Above all, these conflicts are depicted not as symbols, but as feelings, expressed by words revealing uncertain and insecure states of mind, which is also the appeal of Sakamoto Yūji's new style of dramaturgy. The drama won the Award for Excellence in the Serial Drama category of the Tokyo Drama Awards 2017.

The good thing about NHK's Morning Drama Series (*asadora*) is that the producers are constantly trying to take on new challenges such as having a non-Japanese actress play the heroine in *Massan* (latter half of 2014) and setting the period of *Sunshiny Asa* (*Asa ga Kita*) (latter half of 2015) to the last days of the shogunate rule, which was an earlier time setting than the previous morning dramas. *Hiyokko* aired during the first half of 2017 was also a challenging scheme in a sense. The heroine was a girl, born to a very normal farming family, and in the drama, all she did was to go to Tokyo from Oku Ibaraki in the heart of Ibaraki Prefecture, and work at a transistor radio factory and a restaurant in Akasaka. Nevertheless, even though the heroine, the setting and the story were very plain and ordinary, the atmosphere and the stream of time that the drama created for half a year were quite relaxing to

watch. The screenplay was written by Okada Yoshikazu and it was directed by Kurosaki Hiroshi.

The story of *Hiyokko* is about an ordinary girl and it begins in 1964, which is the year when the first Tokyo Olympics was held during the peak of the high economic growth period in Japan. The protagonist is in her third year of senior high school and her name is Yatabe Mineko (played by Arimura Kasumi). She lives in Oku Ibaraki, where green fields spread out, and is leading an idyllic life surrounded by her grandfather (played by Furuya Ikkō), mother (played by Kimura Yoshino), and her little sister and brother. She has good friends called Tokiko and Mitsuo and commutes to school with them. However, she feels a bit lonely because her father (played by Sawamura Ikki) is away from home as he has gone to Tokyo to do some extra work for the family. First of all, plenty of time is taken to carefully depict how she spends time with her family, such as talking about things that happened that day, taking meals and tending the fields. The moments of life that are not dramatic at all are made to feel precious and irreplaceable. The atmosphere and time made by the family and how they spend time together become the drama in *Hiyokko*. Soon they stop hearing from her father, who had gone to Tokyo. Therefore, Mineko goes to Tokyo and starts working there in order to look for her father. However, even at the transistor radio factory, which is her first workplace, and then at the restaurant in Akasaka, she spends time in the same way as she has done with her family back in Ibaraki. In the last week of the series, she finds out from an actress called Setsuko (played by Kan'no Miho), who lives alone in the same apartment, that she used to live with Mineko's father and that he has lost his memory. Setsuko opens her heart and says to Mineko, "I've always wanted to live in a place like this...It's like

being with my family and I feel at home here. We can talk about anything, both good things and bad. We can laugh together and eat meals together...”

If the asadora series *Hiyokko* was a drama providing a sense of “relaxation”, the word “comforting” goes well with *Miwotsukushi Cookbook* (*Mi wo Tsukushi Ryōrichō*), which is a period drama series broadcast on Saturdays, also on NHK. The drama features a plain and modest girl called Mio (played by Kuroki Haru), who comes to Edo (i.e. former name for Tokyo) from Kamigata (i.e. Osaka), encounters various people and grows into a competent cook, putting male chefs into shame. The original story (written by Takada Kaori) was already interesting and to add to that, the “comforting” aura created in the television version was mesmerizing (screenplay by Fujimoto Yuki, directed by Shibata Takeshi and Satō Mineyo).

First, the viewer is attracted to how Kuroki Haru alluringly expresses the personality of the heroine, who has plain features but a nice smile. The storyline, which delivers the warm feeling of the people around the heroine without getting too sentimental, the set and lighting, which gently highlight the acting at the Inari shrine, shops and tenements, as well as all the other elements of the sort gently surround the drama about “eating”. Besides each character’s sorrow and how they show their compassion to others all the more for having experienced sadness, the drama portrays the difference between the food culture of Edo and the Kamigata region (i.e. Kyoto and Osaka) and the passion about the food ingredients. The elaborate and graceful rendering without any contrived depiction makes the “people” and “food” in this drama look beautiful.

Two dramas portraying overprotective mothers and their daughters, namely *Overprotected Kahoko* (*Kahogo no Kahoko*) (Nippon TV) and then *Mother, Can I Quit Being Your Daughter?* (*Okāsan, Musume wo Yamete Iidesuka?*) (NHK) were broadcast one after another.

Overprotected Kahoko (screenplay by Yukawa Kazuhiko, directed by Nagumo Seiichi and others) is a story about Kahoko (played by Takahata Mitsuki), who is inspired by a young man (Takeuchi Ryōma) she met at her university, and how she eventually gains independence. Kahoko is attracted to the young man, and her aspiration to leave home and to have a family of her own gets stronger. Her mother (played by Kuroki Hitomi) is attached to her daughter and is not able to let go of her, while her father (played by Tokitō Saburō) has no say, and their daughter Kahoko cannot do anything by herself. It was a comedy caricaturing such family but at the same time, it was a classic love comedy about a fine young man stealing the heart of a young woman, who had been living in a bubble. *Mother, Can I Quit Being Your Daughter?* (screenplay by Inoue Yumiko, directed by Kasaura Tomochika) is a family drama about the severe dependency relationship between a mother and daughter. Mitsuki (played by Haru) is a teacher at senior high school and whenever she encounters a problem, she would call her mother, whose name is Akiko (played by Saitō Yuki), to seek for advice. Akiko gives advices to her daughter thoroughly. For Akiko, who is a full-time mom, Mitsuki is her alter ego and motivation in life. Matsushia Taichi (played by Yagira Yūya) works for a house builder and is in charge of their new house. Akiko takes a liking for him but before long, Mitsuki starts dating him as if to turn away from her mother. Akiko gets shaken by her daughter growing away from her and starts falling apart as she tries to hold on to her daughter. The unfocused bewilderment of the

mother and daughter in *Mother, Can I Quit Being Your Daughter?* was painful to watch.

These two serial dramas were both based on original screenplays and reflected one extreme aspect of families in today's society with different touches.

Inoue Yumiko also wrote the screenplay for *Emergency Interrogation Room (Kinkyū Torishirabe-shitsu)* (directed by Tsunehiro Jōta and Motohashi Keita), which became a quality human drama. If *Mother, Can I Quit Being Your Daughter?* was a human drama with a strong focus on the workmanship, then the latter is more or less a piece of entertainment dealing with social subjects that was turned into a thrilling psychological suspense drama.

Makabe Yukiko (played by Amami Yūki) is an interrogator working for the Emergency Interrogation Department (*Kinkyū Jian Taiō Torishirabe-han*), which is commonly called “Kintori”, and she conducts investigations in a special interview room that is fully equipped with audio and video recording facilities for visualization. Of course she is not alone. With other staff members of “Kintori” (played by Tanaka Tetsushi, Denden, Ōsugi Ren and Kohinata Fumiyo), she wages seesaw psychological warfare with vicious criminals. The series began in 2014, and after the bills on criminal justice reforms were enacted in May 2016, police dramas conditioned on visualization seemed more real. Yukiko and her team deal with cases and face issues related to a broad range of subject matters such as solitary elderly people falling in love, the severity of the longevity society, the aid and abet of mercy killing, reinvestigation of false accusations, how investigations should be carried out, how compliance and apologies should be dealt with and so forth. Saying, “every behavior has a

convincing motive,” she probes into the psychology of the possible suspects and queries them eloquently. In this police drama, the verbal sparring and the exchange of words between Makiko and the suspects are full of thrilling implications. In other words, the dramaturgy of the “psychological investigation using words” presupposing visualization has borne fruit in the form of entertainment. There is also the appeal of the relationship among the staff of the investigative team. Yukiko spews venoms to the male team members, either right into their faces or by looking away at times. Moreover, even when people call her “Obahan” (derogatory way to call middle-aged woman), she does not care. However, instead of setting Yukiko against the team members unnecessarily, ordinary day-to-day workplace scenes are depicted to make the suspenseful team investigation, which is based on the members’ non-verbal synchronization, even more appealing.

When it comes to TBS’s serial dramas originally written by Ikeido Jun, screenplay by Yatsu Hiroyuki and directed by Fukuzawa Katsuo, we are immediately reminded of passionate corporate dramas including *Hanzawa Naoki* (starring Sakai Masato / 2013) and *Downtown Rocket!* (staring Abe Hiroshi / 2015). *Land King (Rikuō)* created by the same members was no exception. How the disadvantaged (the employees in weak positions and a president of a smaller business) challenge the powerful (big firms) to make their dreams come true is portrayed passionately. In *Land King*, the protagonist Miyazawa Kōichi (played by Yakusho Kōji) is the fourth-generation president of a traditional company called “Kohazeya” that has been manufacturing traditional tabi socks, and tries to revitalize the small company. Miyazawa is suffering because the demand for tabi socks is declining year by year but one day, by mere accident, he becomes interested in running shoes and sets out developing running shoes

by making use of the sewing technique and other skills that he had acquired through producing tabi socks. Meanwhile, Mogi Hiroto (played by Takeuchi Ryōma), who is a marathon runner having problems with his leg injury, is frustrated by the high-and-mighty attitude of his sponsor. In the drama, the passion and bond of the two characters are depicted by crossing their timelines. By creating a moving scene in every episode as well as using heroic music, images of the sun glaring down and large crowd scenes, the story is portrayed passionately and delicately. It is an entertainment sending rousing cheers to people who work, which is a consistent theme in Ikeido's novels. It may sound strange to refer to Agawa Sawako as a veteran rookie but she did shine with dynamic energy when she played the part of Masaoka Akemi, who headed the sewn products division.

As for one-off dramas, *Prison Break (Hagoku)* (TV Tokyo), which depicted the struggle between a runaway prisoner and a prison guard during the wartime, and *Kurara: The Dazzling Life of Hokusai's Daughter (Kurara - Hokusai no Musume)* (NHK), which depicted the crazy pathos of a female painter set in the world of ukiyo'e (i.e. woodblock prints of the fleeting world during the Edo period), were by far the best.

Prison Break was adapted into a television drama from Yoshimura Akira's famous novel for the first time in 32 years, and man's primordial aspirations and sufferings were depicted intensely through the screenplay written by Ikehata Shunsaku, the direction of Fukagawa Yoshihiro and the acting of Beat Takeshi and Yamada Takayuki. The drama takes place in the 17th year of the Showa Era (1942) when there was a growing sense of urgency in the midst of the Pacific War. Urata Susumu (played by Beat Takeshi) is the chief warden of Kosuge Prison

in Tokyo and he is informed that an inmate named Sakuma Seitarō (played by Yamada Takayuki), who has been sent to life in prison, has escaped from Akita Prison. The drama depicts the struggle between Urata, the prison guard, and Sakuma, a habitual jail breaker. In other words, “the meaning of life” is questioned under extreme situations of life and death. Sakuma shows his tremendous desire to escape in the super-cold Abashiri Prison because he longs to be free; the prison guards are driven into the corner by Sakuma’s strong desire to escape; Urata acts heroically by saving the lives of prisoners in the Great Kanto Earthquake but loses his family as a consequence; and Sakuma’s wife (played by Mitsushima Hikari) lives in poverty but still talks about her love for her husband. *Prison Break* turned into a heavy human drama because each member of the four parties were full of energy. “If Japan is destroyed, everyone will forget him. And then he’ll be free...I want Japan to lose the war!” The madness acted out by Yamada and Takeshi’s quiet but intense gaze were wonderful but these words written by Ikehata Shunsaku also struck home. It won the grand prix in the Single Drama category of the Tokyo Drama Awards 2017 and the Grand Prix of MIPCOM BUYERS’AWARD for Japanese Drama held in Cannes, France.

Kurara: The Dazzling Life of Hokusai’s Daughter (original novel written by Asai Makate, screenplay by Ōmori Mika and directed by Katō Taku) was aired as NHK’s special drama and it portrayed half the life of O’ei (played by Miyazaki Aoi), who was the daughter of the genius painter Katsushika Hokusai (played by Nagatsuka Kyōzō) and also an accomplished painter in her own right. The visual tone of the drama leaves us feeling the deep aesthetics of the female painter. O’ei’s eyes sparkle when she sees the flame from a fire that has broken out faraway, saying, “What a bloody colour!” She is fascinated by the

deep blue pigment (Bengalese blue) used by Zenjirō (played by Matsuda Ryūhei), who studied painting under Hokusai, and shed tears when she identifies her affection toward Zenjiro with the soft blue colour. While she paints Yoshiwara Night Scene (*Yoshiwara Kōshi Sakinozu*), she reaches a deep state of mind and says, “The world is made up of light and shadows. Shadows give shapes to everything and light makes them emerge.” Hokusai teaches her how to prepare herself to become a professional painter, saying, “You must clamp your teeth together and show the world your works even if you are not satisfied with them.” O’ei continues to paint single-mindedly and mutters, “I want to be a good painter, too.” Each character is full of burning passion for beauty. Through light and shadow in the studio, the illumination from the licensed quarters in Yoshiwara, the bright colours, and the background pictures of Edo painted with light ink, it was elevated into a deep human drama about art. The drama won the Grand Prix in the National Arts Festival of the Cultural Agency.

In 2017, the Tokyo Drama Awards held under The International Drama Festival in Tokyo, which is aimed at delivering Japanese television dramas internationally, marked its tenth year. With the international market in mind, dramas with high marketability have been awarded for ten years and nowadays the award is well known domestically as well. Among the award-winning dramas in 2017, the drama that deserves special mention is the Turkish television drama titled *ANNE* (the international title is *Mother*, directed by Merve Girgin Aytekin and screenplay written by Berfu Ergenekon) that won the Special Award for Foreign Drama. It was a remake of *Mother* (directed by Sakamoto Yūji, Nippon TV) that won the Award for Excellence in the Serial Drama category of the Tokyo Drama Awards

2010 and it was very popular in Turkey, where it had the highest viewership (originally it consisted of ten 46-minute long episodes, which was then remade into thirty-three 110-minute long episodes). Additionally, *ANNE* has been sold to more than twelve countries including Latin American countries such as Mexico and Chile, East European countries such as Croatia and Serbia as well as Indonesia. Moreover, in October 2017, *Kadin* (the international title is *WOMAN*), which is a remake of Nippon TV's *Woman - My Life for My Children* went on air and on the day it was broadcast, it achieved the second highest rating among all the programmes broadcast in entire Turkey. The sale of *Mother* as a scripted format in South Korea closed before it entered the Turkish market and the remake version is on air from January 2018.

“J Series Festival” is held as part of the International Drama Festival in Tokyo to publicize Japanese television dramas abroad. Up till now, it has been held in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and other countries, and at the 2017 festival in Indonesia, Isomura Hayato, who appeared in the asadora series *Hiyokko*, Ōgoe Yūki, who starred in *Weakling Pedal*, and Yahagi Honoka, who starred in *Playful Kiss (Itazura na Kiss)*, among others took part in talk shows.

While selling formats for television dramas has been successful, regional television stations have started to look for foreign counterparts to work on co-productions. A drama titled *Under the Same Sky (Tōku Hanareta Onaji Sora no Shita de / Dnoi Bau Troi Xa Cach)* (screenplay by Shimojima Mieko and directed by Matsuda Ayato, Vu Truong Khoa and Dao Duy Phuc) was made through a collaboration between Ryūkyū Asahi Broadcasting and Vietnam Television, which is the state-run broadcaster of Vietnam. The story is about Eri (played by Miyagi Karin), a reporter working for a local television

station in Okinawa, who starts collecting information on the relation between Okinawa and Vietnam after encountering a student from Vietnam, who is called Hai (played by Quang Su). Other than their conversations about the warplanes that departed from Okinawa to head for the battlefields to fight in the Vietnamese War and the respective country's distressing memories of war, the cultural differences are depicted as well. Through the drama, you can also learn about the different styles of expression in both countries' television dramas such as the elements that make up romantic dramas and likings for particular dialogues. It won the Award for Excellence in the Local Drama category of the Tokyo Drama Awards 2017.

I would also like to add that *The Full-Time Wife Escapist* (*Nigeru wa Haji daga Yaku ni tatsu*) (TBS) broadcast in 2016 won The Grand Prix of the Serial Drama category at the Tokyo Drama Awards 2017. It also won the Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association Award for Best Drama.

Kōtaki, Tetsuya

Kōtaki Tetsuya is a critic and also a professor emeritus at Nihon University (specializing in the history of television culture). He has also held positions as the executive director for the Association of Broadcast Critics, Special Advisor to the Executive Committee of The International Drama Festival in Tokyo, the director of the Consortium for the Promotion of Japan Broadcast Script Archives in Japan (NKAC), a member of the Broadcast Program Collection Advisory Committee, the Chairman of Galaxy Awards Recommended Project Committee, a member of the Reviewing Committee for the National Arts Festival of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, a member of Broadcast Ethics & Program Improvement Organization (BPO) among others. He has supervised *A Handbook for the History of Television (Terebi Doramashi Handbook)* (published by Jiyū Kokumin-sha), co-written *The Fifty Years of Television Scenario Writers (Terebi Sakkatachi no Gojūnen)* (NHK Publishing) and has worked on other publications. He is currently working on *The History of Television Dramas (Terebi Doramashi)* (Eijinsha), which is scheduled for publication this year.

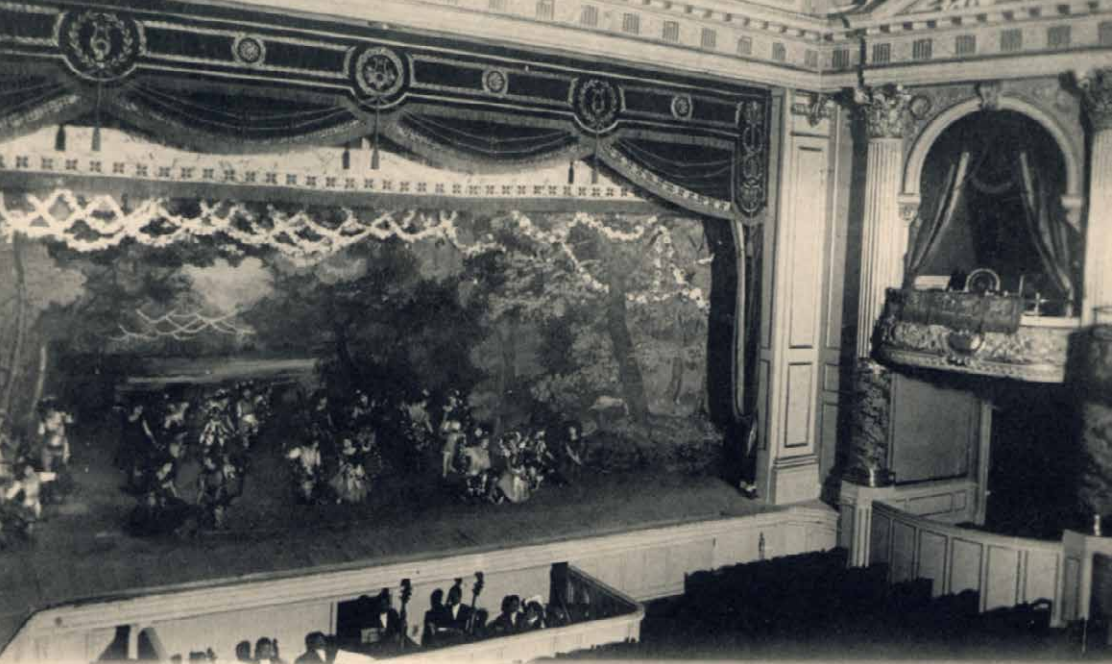
Nakamachi, Ayako

Nakamachi Ayako is a professor at Nihon University College of Art. She is also a member of the Reviewing Committee of the National Arts Festival of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and a member of reviewing boards of various awards related to broadcasting such as serving as the Vice Chairman of the Tokyo Drama Awards of the International Drama Festival in Tokyo. She has written critiques on television drama, mainly in newspapers such as *This Line from That Drama (Ano Dorama Kono Serifu)* in Nikkei Newspaper and "Antenna" in Yomiuru Shimbun. Her published works include *21 Quotable Lines in Japanese Television Dramas (Nippon no Terebi Dorama Nijūichi no Mei-serifu)* (published by Kōbundō).

(Translation : Sumida Michiyo)

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Developments in Japan and Overseas



The Imperial Theatre was completed in March 1911.
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DEVELOPMENTS IN JAPAN and OVERSEAS

The Birth of Shingeki

Ozasa Yoshio

In 2017, Bungaku-za Theatre (i.e. Literary Theatre), which is the oldest “shingeki” (modern theatre) troupe in Japan, celebrated its eightieth anniversary. On this occasion, I would like to look back at the history of shingeki.

Looking from another angle, this subject is related to how Western theatre was introduced to Japan. In this regard, as with so many other things, the big turning point was the Meiji Restoration. In 1868, Japan officially opened the country and joined the

international community. Among historians, it is conventional to define the time before the Meiji Restoration as the pre-modern period and the time afterwards as the modern period and I will follow these definitions in this report.

Pre-modern Japanese theatre consists of Noh, Kabuki and Bunraku puppet theatre. They have all been designated as UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage. They are also forms of entertainment that still attract many audiences today and are not museum relics as one may imagine from the word "heritage". All of these forms of theatre have continued for hundreds of years. Although they have undergone some changes, they have continued as living traditions. This is very different from ancient Greek theatre, which is regarded as the origin of Western theatre but is not a living tradition. We can only guess at how it might have been performed from the remaining texts, masks and the remains of theatres. On the other hand, you can still go and see Noh, Kabuki and Bunraku at theatres dedicated to these traditional art forms.

The three theatre styles, namely Noh, Kabuki and Bunraku, are also referred to as Japanese classical theatre or traditional Japanese theatre and they share certain characteristics as described in the following:

- 1) Only men can take part, whether it be actors, playwrights or staff.
- 2) Music and dance are deeply imbedded in classical theatre forms. For instance, Noh will not work without the chanting, *hayashi* flute and percussion music called *yōkyoku*; in Kabuki,

musical accompaniment called *geza* is often used during the play and *gidayū* was indispensable for Kabuki plays that originally came from Bunraku, and the actors perform to the music. Moreover, dance was and is still considered an independent act on its own and therefore, good Kabuki actors are also excellent dancers; in Bunraku, puppeteers manipulate the puppets to the *gidayū* sung by a narrative singer called a *tayū* and to the music played by shamisen players.

- 3) As mentioned above, each of these theatre forms had to be performed at specific theaters, such as Noh at Noh theatres, Kabuki at Kabuki theatres and Bunraku at dedicated spaces, and not elsewhere.
- 4) As can be seen from the fact that men play female roles, at a very fundamental level, classical theatre forms are unconnected with realism.
- 5) All characters are portrayed as being examples of “*yakugara*” or “role types” rather than unique individuals.
- 6) Theatre existed just for the sake of entertainment and for nothing else whatsoever.

Now I would like to look at what kind of theatre the Japanese people discovered when Japan came into contact with the West for real.

Briefly speaking, women performing on stage as actresses must have been the most striking discovery.

From the end of the Edo Period till the early years of the Meiji Period, the Shogunate (i.e. feudal government) and the new Meiji Government sent delegations abroad several times. Acknowledging that

Western culture and civilization were more advanced, for Japan to catch up and overtake the West became a national policy by the motto of increasing wealth and military power as well as “De-Asianization and Entering Europe (*Datsu A Nyū Ō*)”. The latter means “leaving Asia that is backwards in every respect and to take a place among European countries.

The delegations that were dispatched overseas to prepare for implementing the new policies were invited to theatres at every Western country they visited. Each country had its own state-run theatre or royal theatre, where people socialized regardless of class or social status. The members of the delegation were at first surprised by this fact because in Japan, people from the upper class were prohibited from entering theatres, which were considered as places that should be excluded from the society.

When the members of the delegation realized that it was quite normal to be invited to theatres, they thought it would be better to have prior knowledge of the shows performed there. That is why it became necessary to have someone explain to the group about the plays and these people began to read the plays beforehand so that they can explain the storyline to the rest of the delegation before watching the play. Fukuchi Ōchi was one of them. Ōchi, who later became a journalist and eventually a playwright, was also one of the



Picture of Fukuji Ōchi by Kobayashi Kiyochika (from Instructions in the Fundamentals of Success (*Kyodo Risshi no Motoi*) published in 1885) © The Trustees of the British Museum

people who worked on the creation of the Kabukiza Theatre.

Under the slogan of catching up with the West, there was a big wave of “reform” in every field during the early stages of the Meiji Period. The word “reform” was combined with words such as literature, women, clothes, food and beverages, houses, schools, education, bureaucrats, novels, religion, manners and chignon hairstyles to create idioms. Theatre was also no exception.

The delegations’ experiences were used for “theatre reform”. Fukuchi Ōchi, who had been reading plays before watching them in order to explain to the members of the delegation, came to know that plays considered as works of literature existed. Up till then, plays were written by the writers or actors who belonged to a particular theatre. Seeing the conditions in the West, Ōchi could justify the idea that anyone, not just a writer could write a play. As with Ōchi, who became one of the founders of Kabukiza Theatre, the system was changed so that everyone was able to build theatres at their own free will. Additionally, women played female characters in plays that the delegation saw in Europe. The actresses also performed in proscenium theatres, where a curtain divided the stage and the audience seating, which did not exist in Japan—though there were curtains at Kabuki theatres, there were also permanent *hanamichi* runways that were extended outside the curtains. Therefore, people began to feel that it was necessary to create Western-style theatres, where the world of the stage was clearly divided from the audience by a curtain that was raised and lowered, and also to encourage the birth of actresses in the real sense.

As part of this flow of events, there were various plans to build a

national theatre like the ones the delegations saw in the West. However, there were various obstacles to this particular goal and it was not until March 1911 when the Imperial Theatre, built by leaders of the business world, became the first Western-style theatre with a stage and audience area that were completely divided by a proscenium arch and raised curtain. At the new theatre, actresses, who had learned Kabuki-style acting, performed on stage with Kabuki actors.

Of course, there were actresses in “new theatre (*shin engeki*)”, (*) which was the first form of theatre that emerged in the modern period, besides Kabuki. Kawakami Otojirō, who had actually visited the West and was the leader of the new theatre movement, made it a principle to cast women to play female roles in plays and the actress in his theatre troupe was his wife Sada Yakko. However, there is a crucial difference between Sada Yakko and the actresses in shingeki



The Imperial Theatre © The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University

that emerged slightly later. She used to be a geisha (i.e. professional female entertainer) and as a geisha, she danced old-style dance and was also familiar with traditional music, which meant she was not alien to the old theatre system for better or worse. Moreover, “new theatre” had a deep connection to Kabuki both in terms of acting style and direction. The actresses who performed at the Imperial theatre and in new theatre productions were so to speak a bridge for the birth of shingeki actresses.

Then how were actresses born in shingeki?

When Japan entered the Meiji Era, the elites who were interested in novels and plays came to know that plays existed as literature and could be separated from live theatre. This was how translated literature came about. As people thought that Western literature were superior, works by Western literary giants were translated and introduced one after another. It included works by writers such as William Shakespeare to begin with as well as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Victor Hugo, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Anton Chekov, Maxim Gorky, Leo Tolstoy, Henrik Ibsen and Maurice Maeterlinck.

As a matter of fact, Kawakami Otojirō, who was the founder of “new theatre”, also had his eyes on plays written by Western playwrights. However, when it came to putting them on, since the Japanese were still not familiar with foreigners or their livelihood, he worked on the plays by transferring the world and the characters in the plays to those of Japanese settings. In other words, he turned the plays into adaptations. However, this approach created distortions in many ways and reversely led to misunderstanding of the writers and plays. Some scholars of literature believed that Western plays should

be translated rather than adapted when they were mounted and actually took action, setting this stance as the main goal. The foremost figure was Tsubouchi Shōyo, who was also a translator of plays by Shakespeare, and a group called the Literary Society (*Bungei Kyōkai*) was founded in 1906 led by Tsubouchi. The members sought to indicate the future direction of theatre through Shakespeare's plays. After a preparatory stage, the group presented the full version of *Hamlet* in May 1911. It was put on at the Imperial Theatre and female characters were played by actresses, namely Ophelia by Matsui Sumako and Gertrude by Kamiyama Uraji. It turned out to be an epoch-making incident for being the first translated play in Japan with men and women performing together and the moment Japanese theatre departed from its classical tradition.

Needless to say, preparations were being made behind the scenes



Hamlet (Hamuretto) presented by the Literary Society (May 1911) / Gertrude played by Kamiyama Uraji (back left) © The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University



Hamlet presented by the Literary Society (May 1911) /
Ophelia played by Matsui Sumako

© The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University

that enabled actresses to emerge at this timing. In 1909, the Literary Society inaugurated a drama school and started to train actors, both men and women. In other words, an education for amateurs, who initially had nothing to do with theatre, to become professional actors had already started. The training bore fruit as the said production of *Hamlet* and it had reputedly solved the

problem of the absence of actresses. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* presented by the Literary Society in November that year at the Imperial Theater made this point even clearer. Through the success of Matsui Sumako playing Nora, the heroine, a new profession of shingeki actresses gained citizenship. At the same time, it consequently expanded the notion of theatre beyond entertainment.

Nora decided to leave her family, abandoning her husband and children. Nora is not a character that can be approached through the classical ideas of role types. Moreover, the example of Nora went against traditional Japanese ideas about women. The way Nora acted stirred a controversy. The people in charge of education for women, which had begun when Japan entered the Meiji Period, banned students from watching the play, saying that Nora's behavior went against the basic education policy. On the other hand, some women saw the future of Japanese women through Nora's choice of living for



A Doll's House (Ningyō no ie) presented by the Literary Society (November 1911) / Nora played by Matsui Sumako © The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University

her own sake, as Japanese women had been subservient to men for a long time during the feudal era. In short, one stage production captured the attention of the society and some audiences began to identify their own way of life with Nora. Theatres are not just for entertainment and can at times provide time and space to influence both the people's way of living and the society. The Japanese had never had such experience before and it was also the first time for them to encounter an individual like Nora, who had her own identity and had decided to live independently.

The plays that made the audience think about those kinds of issues were also made up of dialogues and were mounted as straight plays purely based on text. There was neither dance or music to overshadow the drama as in classical Japanese theatre, and the stage and the audience were divided in the theatre. On the other side of the curtain that served as the fourth wall, living spaces were replicated, and the plays were founded on aesthetics of realism. They were plays born in the modern era and were different from previous plays.

Therefore, they required a new naming and the name “shingeki” was devised in due course. Regardless of whether the play was original or translated, the word “shingeki” indicated pure spoken drama performed by both men and women. These were the essential characteristics of shingeki, which were different from classical plays and these type of plays are most often and widely performed as of today.

* This “new theatre” developed by Kawakami Otojirō later developed into a melodramatic style of theatre with both onnagata and eventually actresses called “shinpa” or “new wave theatre” to distinguish it from Kabuki, or “old wave theatre.” However, “shinpa” in its later form is very different from the situation when Kawakami was first working, so the term “new theatre” will be used here instead.

Ōzasa Yoshio

Ōzawa was born in Osaka in 1941 and graduated from Waseda University. After working as an editor for a theatre magazine, he became a free-lance theatre critic. He worked as a professor at Osaka University of Arts from 1998 to 2007. He has written books as represented by *History of Japanese Contemporary Theatre (Nihon Gendai Engeki-shi)* (consisting of 8 volumes and was published by Hakuishisha Publishing Co., Ltd.) and is currently writing *The Whole History of Shingeki in Japan (Nihon Shingeki Zenshi)* (consisting of 3 volumes and to be published by Hakuishisha Publishing Co., Ltd.). He has received many prestigious awards such as Yomiuri Prize for Literature and Minister of Education Award for Fine Arts.

(Translation: Sumida Michiyo)



The gods in the "Great Prelude." Upper level, from left: Daikokuten (Bandō Rakuzen), Shiva (Onoe Kikunosuke), Naraen (Onoe Kikugorō), Bonten (Onoe Matsuya), Lower level, from left: Taiyōshin (Ichikawa Sadanji), Taishakuten (Nakamura Ganjiro). © Shochiku

Developments in Japan and Overseas

Creating the New Kabuki *The Wars of Mahabharata*

Aoki Go

When there is an order to write a play, I think that there are basically two approaches. One is to listen to the voice inside myself and write. The other is to listen to the heart of the person who has requested the play. In the case of *The Ultimate Indian Epic: The Wars of Mahabharata* (*Kiwame-tsuki Indo-den Mahābārata Senki*) from the very beginning, it was very clear that the second approach was needed.

I think it was the winter of 2014 when theater critic Hasebe Hiroshi introduced me to Onoe Kikunosuke, who said that he was very moved when he saw Miyagi Satoshi's production of Mahabharata and wanted me to write a kabuki version. I was very flattered, but wondered, "why me?" and I wondered if I was up to the job. I've loved kabuki since I was an elementary school student, but I've never studied it seriously and I have absolutely no knowledge of India or the Mahabharata. Kikunosuke said that he was interested in having me do it because he knew that in 2008 I had taken the very long Manga story *Glass Masks (Garasu no Kamen)* and boiled it down into a script for a musical play directed by Ninagawa Yukio, so first I read a digest of the Mahabharata. I was overwhelmed by the scale of the epic and considered refusing, but I was drawn by the happy temptation of the opportunity to work with kabuki and finally decided to accept the challenge.

I had seen the SPAC (Shizuoka Performing Arts Center) production of *Mahabharata - Nalacharitam* directed by Miyagi Satoshi and he would be directing the kabuki production, so to begin with, I thought it would be interesting to have Kikunosuke play two roles, Damayanthi, the wife of King Nalan and as a male role, Karna and mapped out an overall plot. But none of the others agreed. The aim of both Kikunosuke and Miyagi Satoshi was to create a totally new kabuki Mahabharata different from the SPAC production, so I made Karna the center of the play and set to rewriting the plot.

It is said that the original of the Mahabharata is about 4 times as long as the Bible and it is so long that the Japanese translation from the original text is still not complete. The title translates as "the great Bharata clan." It is a story of the gods and human beings, with the Bharata clan the center of focus. Simplifying ruthlessly, you could say

that the story of the second half of the Mahabharata is the story of a struggle for the kingship between 5 princes and the 100 princes that are their cousins. But these 5 princes are not actually the children of the previous king. The previous king was burdened with a curse that said if he had sex with a woman, he would die. These 5 princes are the children produced when the queen Kunti used a magical spell to attract the gods. The three older princes have Kunti as their mother. The younger two princes are the children of the king's secondary wife. But Kunti learned this magical spell when she was still a virgin and she threw the boy that she had with the Sun God into a river. This boy was raised by a carriage driver. He becomes Karna. When Karna grows up, due to certain events, he becomes the enemy of the five princes and instead allies with Duryodhana, the oldest of the 100 princes.

I had a hunch that by making Karna the focus of the play, I would be able to tell the story from the side of both Karna and the world of the five princes and set about writing my rough first draft.

In this first draft, I modeled the first act on the kabuki play *The Thief, Ishikawa Goemon and Hideyoshi (Sanmon Gosan no Kiri)*.^(*) In the world of the gods, the Sun God falls in love with Kunti and wants to have a child with her, but the god Taishakuten stops him. The SPAC production began when the gods fall in love with Damayanthi



In rehearsal: (center) Onoe Kikunosuke (Karuna), (back) Nakamura Mantarō (Gatōkicha). © Shochiku

and I was taking the same kind of starting point. Moreover, I wanted to show events in the world of the gods as though they were taking place on top of the gate of Nanzenji temple and then to have the set piece rise on a stage lift to reveal the human world below.

When I read my first draft to the production staff, the overall reaction was a desire to shape the entire story of the wars over the kingship so that it was clearly a war where humans are fighting in place of the gods. The other request was to show Karna not as a dark anti-hero, but as pure and noble hero that strives to carry out the wishes of the gods.

It was at this time that all of us had to re-recognize that one of the main themes of this working process was thinking very carefully about what aspects of the original could be changed and what aspects must not be changed. Another request that emerged was the idea that somehow, the different scale of existence of human beings and the gods had to be distinguished very clearly theatrically. For this reason, instead of *Sanmon Gosan no Kiri*, it was decided to model the opening

scene on the “Daijo : Great Prologue” of *The Forty-seven Loyal Retainers (Kanadehon Chūshingura)*.^{(*)2} Also, even though this became a part of the plan at this very early stage, I could not write speeches in proper kabuki style. For the final script, the actual



Finale: The final fight scene with Karuna (Onoe Kikunosuke) using his bow and arrow, © Shochiku

lines were re-written by Kikunosuke and the literary department of the Shochiku production company so that the use of words could clearly indicate the differences in scale of existence of the gods, royalty and non-royal humans.

With regard to this problem of what could be changed and what had to be preserved, I think that it was Miyagi Satoshi who gave me the hint that the key to this was probably in having a feeling of respect. He said that if you approach this production with the proper respect for kabuki and the proper respect for the Mahabharata, to answer to the question of what to preserve and what to change will probably emerge naturally.

There was no risk that I would lose my respect for kabuki and there were so many people around me that could give helpful advice that I didn't have to worry. For example, when I suggested that the five princes announce who they are like the five thieves in *The Five Thieves* (*Shiranami Gonin Otoko*),^{(*)3} Kikunosuke had his own suggestion, that he wanted one scene to be a kabuki *shosa* ^{(*)4} dance and that could be when Bhima, the third of the five princes falls in love with the daughter of a monster in a forest. When I suggested that although the climactic fight between Karna and Arjuna is with bows and arrows in the original, that might be hard to show in kabuki and maybe this should be a fight with swords, Miyagi Satoshi said that if we use banners in the fight it will be interesting and look right for kabuki, so let's keep it a fight with swords. Every time we had a script conference, there were all kinds of ideas and I was always careful not to miss any of these opinions, including my own. I watched several kabuki plays on DVD that I had missed watching previously that might provide hints for this production. While so doing, I completed a second and a third draft of the script.

To pay proper respect to Indian culture and philosophy required quite a bit of study. Miyagi Satoshi has spent years studying the subject and when I had questions about the nature of the different gods or the caste system, he was a ceaseless source of helpful advice. I was full of questions, like the word “*dharmā*” is translated into Japanese with the word “*hō*,” meaning “law,” but what does *dharmā* really mean? How should I read and interpret the original Mahabharata? How are the stories of the Mahabharata changed in the Indonesian shadow plays of Wayan Jawa? How should I understand the section called Bhagavat Gita, known as “the poem of the gods”?

After conference after conference the discussion turned to casting. When Nakamura Shichinosuke was selected to play Duryodhana, the oldest of the one hundred princes, since he plays both male and female roles, the idea popped up of transforming Duryodhana into a woman. Gradually the overall plan for the stage set became clear. Finally this piece that was created by assembling everyone’s voice took a shape that could be seen by everybody’s eyes.

In the end, I have no idea how many drafts I went through. When I finally completed my script, Kikunosuke went through every line himself, then, with the help of the literary division of Shochiku made many fine changes in the exact wording. After that, finally the script was complete and the summer of 2017 had already passed.

A play cannot be created by a person alone. Even a script cannot be completed by one person. This is the experience I have every time I write a script, but I have never felt that so strongly as I did with this play. I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all the people whose cooperation made this play possible.

*1 In the kabuki play *Sanmon Gosan no Kiri*, the larger-than-life thief Ishikawa

Goemon wants to kill Mashiba Hisayoshi (the name used in the theater for the historical Toyotomi Hideyoshi) since he is the killer of Goemon's adoptive father. In the key scene which is the only part commonly performed today, at dusk, Goemon sits on top of the gate to Nanzenji temple in Kyoto. He looks out calmly at the view with the cherry trees in full bloom and gloats that this is the realm that he rules. Men attack Goemon, but he handily defeats them in a brief dance-like tachimawari fight scene. Then the entire set piece is raised on a stage lift to reveal Goemon's quarry standing under the gate disguised as a humble pilgrim.

- *2 The “*Daijō*” or “Great Prologue” is the very stylized opening scene of a *jidaimono* history play originating in the Bunraku puppet theater and it is full of ritualized conventions and has a very solemn mood. Usually there are very high-ranking characters like the emperor and imperial court aristocrats or the shogun and high-ranking samurai lords and it takes place in the imperial palace or an important temple or shrine. When the curtain opens, all the characters look down and do not move, then when the narrator speaks their name, they start to move as though a Bunraku puppet were coming to life. Although this is a standard part of *jidaimono* plays in the puppet theater, in kabuki, today it is only performed regularly in *Kanadehon Chūshingura*.
- *3 In the “Inase River” scene of *Shiranami Gonin Otoko*, or *The Five Thieves*, the thieves appear grandly on the *hanamichi* runway with big paper umbrellas and then, while they are being threatened by arresting men, one by one describe themselves in leisurely speeches full of colorful images in a poetic rhythm of alternating lines of seven and five syllables.
- *4 In kabuki, a *shosa* is a dance or a dance drama.

Aoki, Gō

In 1997 he organized the theater troupe “Gring.” Since that time he has been playwright and director for the group until it stopped activities in 2009. He received acclaim for creating plays with dialogue deftly using the words of ordinary people. In 2013, he was sent by a special program of the Japanese National Cultural Agency to spend a year studying in London. In recent years he has tried a wide range of writing styles and in addition to his own productions, has written a rich variety of plays for many other theater troupe. He is also highly regarded for his television dramas.

(Translation: Mark Ōshima)



Ninagawa Macbeth, the enormous *butsudan* with the screen painting of a cherry tree by Senoh Kappa (stage designer) © Watanabe Takahiro

Developments in Japan and Overseas

Thirty Years On, Remembering *Ninagawa and Macbeth*

Rosalind Fielding

Thirty-two years since Ninagawa Yukio's production *Ninagawa Macbeth* was first seen in the UK, and exactly thirty years since its London premiere in 1987, it was brought once more to Britain. The original production received high critical acclaim and irreversibly launched Ninagawa into the awareness of UK audiences, and Ninagawa's relationship with the British theatre-world was very

fruitful and resulted in a number of tours and co-productions. It is therefore entirely fitting that the revival of *Ninagawa Macbeth*, the production which began it all, should be performed at the Barbican Theatre in London in celebration of Ninagawa's achievements. Part revival and part memorial, the production ran for four days at the Barbican (5-8 October) and a further two at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth (13-14).

To mark the tour, a number of related events were held around the UK, including a pre-show talk at the Barbican with Ninagawa's long-term collaborator Thelma Holt. Waseda University, the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute and the Japan Foundation hosted an event at the Embassy of Japan in the UK entitled 'Ninagawa Shakespeare: A Memorial Symposium', attended by the Japanese ambassador, Tsuruoka Kōji, academics, Shakespeare students and admirers of Ninagawa's work. I participated in a panel called 'Ninagawa Remembered', alongside Shakespeare Institute director Michael Dobson, *Guardian* theatre critic Michael Billington and director Phillip Breen. Dobson, a preeminent Shakespearean academic, spoke of his recollections of seeing Ninagawa's productions over the years, marking out *Pericles* (2003) in particular as a remarkable and unforgettable performance. Billington, who reviewed the original with the much quoted 'achingly beautiful', spoke of his feelings about finally seeing *Macbeth* again after thirty years. He delivered a powerful and moving tribute to the beauty and empathy inherent in Ninagawa's work, based on decades of watching his productions. Breen, who had worked with Ninagawa and attended his rehearsals in Saitama, also spoke of his experiences and memories of Ninagawa the man and director. As a researcher working on contemporary Shakespeare performance in Japan, I discussed the power of his

Michael Dobson (left) and Michael Billington (right)



Phillip Breen (left) and author (right)



2015/16 *Richard II* and its connections to contemporary social anxieties, as well as his use of Matsuoka Kazuko's translations in the *Sai-no-kuni* Shakespeare series. Finally, we spoke about his political vision and influence on the theatre world, both in Japan and overseas. The event concluded with Kodama Ryūichi (Vice Director of the Theatre Museum, Waseda) interviewing Nakamura Kyōzo about his experiences performing as a witch in *Macbeth*, his memories of working with Ninagawa, and his thoughts on the place of Shakespeare in Japanese theatre. The event provided a timely opportunity to share vivid memories of Ninagawa's productions from various perspectives to an audience of around ninety, and to consider what both artists and academics can do with his legacy from here. In his talk Breen had said that Ninagawa was 'as responsible as anyone for Shakespeare becoming a world figure, not just an English export', and this event, delivered to an international audience, only served as a reminder of that.

Nakamura Kyōzo, who played the witch in *Ninagawa Macbeth*

Ninagawa Macbeth is a legendary production both in Japan and overseas, famed for moving the play to Japan in the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568-1600), and for the enormous *butsudan*



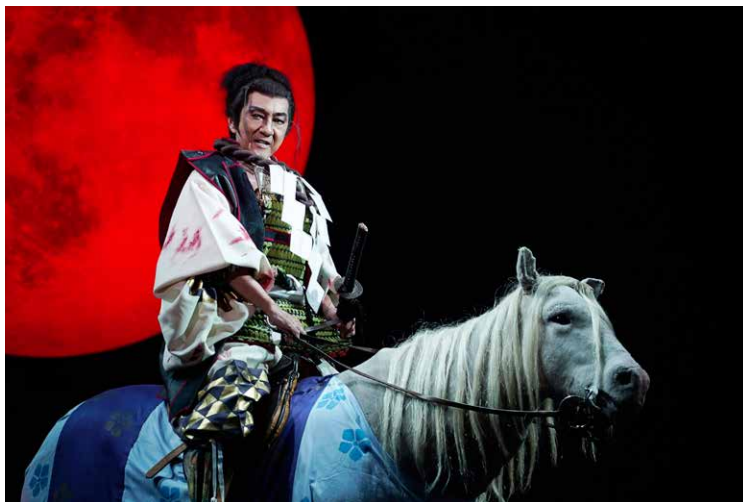
Ninagawa Macbeth, Macbeth (Ichimura Masachika) under the cherry tree. © Kiyota Seigo

(Buddhist family altar) framing the stage. I saw the 2017 production three times, once at Ninagawa's base in Saitama and twice at the Barbican. Watching it for the first time in Saitama I was very aware of the production's long history and influence on subsequent years of Shakespeare adaptations in both Japan and the UK, and its part in the Ninagawa legend. I saw it from a different perspective at the Barbican, this time more aware that history was being re-played to a mixed audience, some of whom were returning to the production and others who were seeing it for the first time. In Saitama we were in Ninagawa's home theatre, but among the London crowd there also seemed to be a sense of the production finally 'coming home'. For those who were lucky enough to see it (since every performance was sold out), there was an undeniable sense of excitement and expectation in the auditorium. Each time it received a standing ovation, intensifying when Ninagawa's photograph was brought on during the

curtain-call.

Times have changed in the interim between performances, and, arguably ushered in by Ninagawa and Holt's collaboration, British audiences are more familiar now with Japanese theatre than they were thirty years ago. It's much harder now for critics to dismiss a non-English language production purely because it is missing the familiar Shakespearean lines, and this was evident in the almost overwhelmingly positive response to *Macbeth*. It received a sweep of four- and five-star reviews, with many critics responding to its visuals and stylisation, as well as to the overlying sense of melancholy and tragedy. Billington for example wrote that what made the production so powerful was that 'Ninagawa's gift for painterly spectacle is accompanied by a sense of sadness at mankind's folly and impermanence', and *The Stage* described it as 'beautiful, horrific and deeply moving'. The reviews acknowledged its legendary status and the importance of seeing it in the post-Ninagawa age, and for those who were watching it first time there was a sense of its freshness and deep insight into the play. Ōishi Keita, in particular, was praised for his affecting performance as Macduff, but the ensemble as a whole were well received.

There were differences between the audience reactions in the UK and Japan, with the London audience laughing in unexpected places, for example, and some people applauding when Banquo and Macbeth appeared on horses. Subtitles were displayed on screens on either side of the stage, which some argued were distracting, although others wrote that the meanings were evident enough through the acting and visuals. It's certainly arguable that for a play as familiar as *Macbeth* is for many people, subtitles are an unnecessary crutch that inevitably draw attention away from the stage itself, and at some points there was a dislocation between the subtitles and what the actors actually



After London, *Ninagawa Macbeth* performed in Singapore. © Piet Defossez / HoriPro Inc.

said, with for example ‘England’ substituted for ‘southern country’. But their inclusion also led to moments of frisson when the screens failed to catch up with the actor and displayed nothing: in these moments, were the actors gaining agency, or were they, like Malcolm at the end of the production, shouting into the darkness?

During the event at the Embassy, I referred to *Richard II* as a baton for the next generation of theatre makers to take up, and despite its age *Ninagawa Macbeth* is surely another. In his talk Nakamura said he believed that this production should be preserved and performed again and again ‘in ten, twenty, thirty, forty years time’. I had wondered at the time how the production would age, whether it would still retain its meaning after another thirty years. And yet, leaving the matinee on Saturday, I overheard one young audience member exclaiming to his parents that he had ‘never, and probably wouldn’t again for a very long time’ seen anything like it. *Macbeth* is therefore another baton, a tangle link with everything Ninagawa achieved

and came to represent, and is a powerful testament to his ability to move audiences in spite of age, location, and time. Ninagawa has gone, but there's no reason why his work cannot continue on without him. The soldiers leave for war, and the two women watching at the side of the stage cry as they hold up paper cranes.

A photograph of Ninagawa is brought on, and those in the audience not already standing surge to their feet. In London, in Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong...

Fielding, Rosalind

Rosalind Fielding is a fourth-year Doctoral Candidate at the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham. Since March 2017 she has been a Visiting Research Fellow at Waseda University. She graduated from the University of Manchester with a degree in Japanese Studies. Her current research is on the contemporary hybrid performance of Shakespeare in Japan and Britain.

Talk Event

“Theater Reviews and Theatrical Journalism”

Theatrical Criticism as an Instrument to Raise Theater to the Level of Culture

Uchida Yoichi

In recent years, I have increasingly been considering the question of why theater reviews exist. In the past, newspapers and magazines monopolized the forums for expressing opinions on theater, but now with SNS and blogs, anyone can express their opinions about a play. But even though it may look like theatrical criticism is flourishing, I can't help but feel that theatrical criticism is actually losing the impact that it should have. What will become of theatrical criticism in the future?

When the Japan Centre of the International Theater Institute gave me the assignment of writing on the theme of “Theater Reviews and Theater Journalism,” to be honest, as someone working for a newspaper company, I was very hesitant. Both theater reviews and theater journalism are right in the middle of a period of transition and I was afraid that I couldn't give a clear answer. But I was also tempted, because this would be a chance to encounter many people with interest in this question, so in the end, I accepted the assignment.

In order to organize the talk event “Theater Reviews and Theatrical Journalism” on which this article is based, I was fortunate to have my senior colleague in the newspaper business Kitajima

Takashi asking questions. He runs an unusual site that contains reviews of small theater performances. In addition to Kitajima's reliable guidance, I was also supported by the enthusiasm of the 40 participants on his site. Through them, I learned of the site NESTA (Next generation Stage Alliance) run by college students, which posts theater reviews and reports. Learning of all this activity, I was ashamed that my ignorance led me to believe that theater criticism was in a state of decline.

Nakamura Kichiemon is a kabuki actor who is constantly seeking to raise the artistic level of kabuki. He once told me that kabuki is supported by the common people and that it reached maturity in the early 19th century because of the advice of the many audience members who had seen a lot of kabuki and had very discerning eyes. Even though kabuki is a commercial art form that depends on ticket sales to survive, it is only because it also has an aesthetic of not just pandering to the public that it has reached high levels of achievement. Theatrical performances vanish with the end of a production, and therefore criticism is necessary as evaluations and records of these ephemeral events, raising and maintaining them at the level of culture.

In "The Empty Space," the internationally famous director

Peter Brook said that an art form without critics is in much greater danger than an art form with critics. He also said that in short, critics search for flaws in what we do and that always works to the benefit of theater.

Brook discussion of theater critics is filled with sarcasm, but



that is because theater must view itself objectively. The readers of a novel can endure some tedium, but you cannot expect the same from a theater audience. It is a heavy responsibility to demand the public to be in a space together for two hours. If they think it is dull, that is two hours of imprisonment. But there are all kinds of problems and restrictions in creating a theater piece and there is a tendency for things to develop as the result of a halting process of trial and error. Brook continues that it is the unfortunate fate of a theater critic to be called out night after night to watch and judge the products of this process. For Brook, theater critics are annoying, but at the same time, absolutely indispensable.



Sometimes, performers will be furious at what a critic says. Backstage, there are usually all sorts of problems before opening night, and the performers are easily swayed by all kinds of changes of mood. It is a big job just to overcome all these problems. But when the curtain opens, a theater reviewer must not be blinded by the strength of passion of the performers. The poet and critic Paul Claudel wrote that criticism is to evaluate if the result carries out the intention of the creator. That is indeed the mission of the critic.

But it is not easy to become a person capable of making these kinds of judgments. To actually do this unthankful task requires a logical mind and rich experience of watching theater. Before you get to the position where people will give you free tickets, you have to be prepared to spend a good deal of your own money seeing theater in order to gain the capacity to be a theater critic. It probably requires much more money than for a literary or art or film critic. I believe



that for this reason, a theater reporter for a newspaper who gets free tickets from the start must be resolved to the idea that precisely because of that, they have the responsibility of taking up the burden of theater criticism.

To my mind, theater journalism always has serious theater criticism at its base. Articles that only pursue the activities of popular celebrities have nothing to do with proper theater journalism.

However, in the group discussion, someone asked the difference between a reaction piece and a theater review. This was a very sharp question and I felt that behind it was a sense that this person was stung by the fact that many simple reaction pieces are labeled as serious theater criticism. This is actually a very difficult question to answer and at the time, I made do by saying that a true theater review required specialized knowledge like the history of theater and a rich experience of actually watching plays. But that is really not quite it. I believe that the difference between a mere reaction piece and real theater criticism lies in the level of commitment, how firm your commitment is to doing this thankless task properly. This has always been difficult, but is even more difficult today when declining circulation is leading many newspapers to cut theater reviews and every year it becomes more and more difficult for theater magazines to survive economically. Even though you can't eat on theater criticism, you have to be prepared to go to the theater almost every night and to perform

the thankless task of writing theater reviews. The late newspaper theater critic Senda Akihiko once said that, “I’ve wasted my entire life, but from the bottom of my heart, I’ve enjoyed it.” In the deep commitment concealed in this paradoxical offhand statement lies the difference between a mere reaction piece and true theater criticism.

Gradually the forum for theatrical journalism is moving from print media to the Internet. But it is still too early to see what shape theatrical criticism will take in the world of the Internet.

Uchida, Yōichi

Cultural journalist. Born in Tokyo in 1960. In 1983, graduated in government from Waseda University and started working for the Nihon Keizai Shinbun newspaper. As a cultural journalist he has covered theater, art and music and has repeatedly reported on the cultural activities of private companies with the Japan Meceret Association for Corporate Support of the Arts and government cultural policy. A book he edited, “Nihon no Engekijin Noda Hideki (Noda Hideki: Japan’s Man of Theater, Hakusuisha)” won the AICT prize for theater criticism from the International Association of Theater Critics. Other books include, “Gendai Engeki no Chizu (Map of Contemporary Theater)” and “Kiki to Gekijō (Crisis and Theaters)” from Bansei Shobō, “Kaze no Tenshudō (The Basilica of the Wind)” from Nihon Keizai Shinbun Shuppansha and “Aruhi Totsuzen, Izoku ni Natta: Hanshin Daishinsai no 10 Nen (That Day, We Suddenly Became the Bereaved Family: Ten Years After the Great Hanshin Earthquake)” from Hakusuisha.

Note: There were also three programs for high school and university students sponsored by the Tokyo Theater of the Arts, with the cooperative sponsorship of the Committee for the Grand Prize for a Theater Review by a High School Student and the planning and production of the Japan Centre of ITI: Saturday, October 28, 2017 – Theater Review Workshop on *Richard III*, Saturday, November 11, 2017 – Theater Viewing Cafe *One Green Bottle* and Monday, January 8, 2018 – Talk Event “Theater Reviews and Theatrical Journalism.”

(Translation: Mark Ōshima)

SPECIAL FEATURE

'Theatre Born in Conflict Zones 9'





Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da'ish / Lilac (Urabe Fusako) and Duhaa (Tateyama Hayata)

SPECIAL FEATURE

A Report on 'Theatre Born in Conflict Zones 9' Two Arab Playwrights Cutting Through the Darkness of Night

Goto Ayako

'Theatre Born in Conflict Zones' is a special series of the Japanese Centre of the International Theatre Institute implemented as part of the Theatre Yearbook project that is commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Japanese government and it was held for the

ninth time in 2017. It is the Japanese Centre's original project that is modelled after the International Theatre Institute's longtime research project called 'Theatre in Conflict Zones' and plays from various countries and regions of the world are researched and introduced by translating them into Japanese for the first time, carrying out reading performances and talk sessions and then compiling and publishing the translated plays.

Fortunately, the project is attracting an increasing number of collaborators, including information givers, and inquiries from the media each time. Additionally, plays and playwrights that have been introduced through this series have developed into new projects in various ways. For instance, *Djihad* (written by Ismaël Saïdi), which was introduced at 'Theatre Born in Conflict Zones 8', is planned to be produced by Saitama Arts Foundation and presented at Saitama Arts Theatre.

In 2017, two plays from conflict zones were introduced through readings and talk sessions held between December 14 (Thu) and 17



Khail Taiha (Lost Horses) / Khail (Matsuyama Aika) and Taiha (Inatsugu Miho)

(Sun) at Atelier West of Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre as an event co-hosted by Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture).

In October, Ghannam Ghannam, who is the author of *Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da'ish)* that was introduced this time and also operates the Arab Theatre Festival as the PR Manager of the Arab Theatre Institute, was invited from Sharjah in United Arab Emirates (UAE) and he gave a special lecture titled 'Arab Theatre Today' (at Atelier East of Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre), which was jointly hosted by Festival/ Tokyo.

<< Reading >>

Khail Taiha (Lost Horses)

Written by Adnan Alaoda, Syria

Translated by Nakayama Toyoko / Translation supervised by Aya Khalil

Directed by Sakata Yukari

Cast: Matsuyama Aika (Bungakuza), Inatsugu Miho, Hayashi Shūichi (Füren Dance), Shirasaki Emi (Tōhoku Rokken Roll Show), Ōhira Kiyoshi.

Performance dates: December 14 and 15



Khail Taiha (Lost Horses) / Taiha (Inatsugu Miho) and Hozan (Hayashi Shūichi)

The author Adnan Alaoda (1975-) was born and bred in a village in northern Syria and studied in Damascus. Besides writing poems, novels, plays, screenplays for short films and lyrics, he is also a popular writer of historical dramas. However, he was arrested



Khail Taiha (Lost Horses) / Emi Shirasaki (vocal) and Ohira Kiyoshi (oud)



Khail Taiha (Lost Horses) / Khail (Matsuyama Aika)

by the Syrian authorities for taking part in a peaceful demonstration led by artists in Damascus in March 2011 and he was demanded to support the Assad regime. Then he sought for freedom of expression and applied for residency in ICORN (International Cities of Refugee Network) (*2), which is a shelter for writers and artists who were deprived of freedom to express themselves due to censorships and other constraints. He found an asylum in ICORN through an invitation from Rotterdam and he is now continuing his writing based in Verhalenhuis Belvédère, which is located in the city.

Thinking that Syria can be identified by its diversity, Adnan has been carefully integrating different cultures, namely dialects, lifestyles and folkways of several tribes and ethnic groups in Syria. *Khail Taiha* was also written in a dialect spoken by the people living in the plains of northern Syria. To quote the words of the translator Nakayama



Khail Taiha (Lost Horses) / Mohamad (Hayashi Shūichi) and Khail (Matsuyama Aika)

Toyoko, Adnan is a writer who sheds light on the people that have been forgotten.

Khail Taiha is a narrative set in the fifty-year period between the late 1950s to around 2008 and depicted through half the lives of a daughter named Khail ('horse') and a mother named Taiha ('lost'). It was published in Arabic by Mamdouh Adwan Publishing House in 2008. Then it was premiered by Yes Theatre ^{(*)3} based in Hebron, Palestine, at the Arab Theatre Festival in 2015, and won the Sultan Al-Qasimi (Ruler of Sharjah-UAE) Award for Best Arabic Play in the Arab Theatre Festival held in Rabat, Morocco, in January 2016 (cf. *1).

In the deeply-rooted conventional tribal society, the mother chooses to live with a Kurdish man that she loves instead of abiding by the codes of the community, while her daughter leaves the rural town and goes to the rapidly-changing capital city, Damascus, to study. The tough heroines, who live in different times and places and dispel their confusions to hold to their decisions, give us courage.

The author sent us the following message for the reading of his play:

“Before the rise and fall of the Islamic State, a fascinating world continued in Syria’s Mesopotamian area and the vast plains of the Bedouins. I was born there and my grandmother taught me songs. *Khail Taiba* is a play like Akira Kurosawa’s films and is rooted in my fascinating childhood experiences. In a world that has fallen apart, our voices are for peace and love. I invite you all together with the chirping birds. Wishing for a new bright morning.”

<< Reading >>

Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da’ish)

Written by Ghannam Ghannam, Jordan/Palestine

Translated by Watanabe Maho / Translation supervised by Nahed Almeree

Directed by Manabe Takashi (Haiyūza Theatre Company)

Assistant to the Director: Nakamura Keigo (Haiyūza Theatre Company)

Cast: Urabe Fusako, Tateyama Hayata (Saitama Next Theatre), Takayama Haruo (PRODUCTION ACE), Uchida Kenshi (Saitama Next Theatre), Sudō Saya (P Company, Ltd.), Ishikawa Shūhei (Haiyūza Theatre Company)

Performance dates: December 16 and 17.

Ghannam has Palestinian roots. He decided to “defy bloodshed through art, music, songs and theatre”^(*) and wrote *Lilac Duhaa*, which is a play about a village under the rule of the Islamic State.

In 1948, the year the state of



Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da’ish) / Humud (Uchida Kenshi)



Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da'ish) /
Abu Bara' (Ishikawa Shūhei)



Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da'ish) /
Fatima (Sudō Saya)

Israel was founded, the Ghannams fled Kafr 'Ana, which is located in the suburbs of Jaffa and a place where his family had lived for many generations and thousands of years, and moved to Jericho. Ghannam was born in Jericho as a Jordanian and was educated as a Jordanian at his primary school. At school, he was taught that Palestine had close relationship with Jordan. In other words, it meant that Palestine was regarded as a foreign country. However, at home, he was leading a life with his Palestinian family that was involved in the Arab Nationalist Movement. Because of these circumstances, Ghannam started to question his identity.

In 1967, his family was forced to leave Jericho and moved to Jerash. Ghannam, who was thirteen years old at that time, felt the need to express who he was. He was also involved in music and theatre activities that were related to Palestine. Around that time,

an armed resistance movement against Israel was launched and he met the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani (1936-1972), who served as a spokesman for PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). Kanafani's early works were engraved in Ghannam's mind "like tattoos" and he started writing poems and plays, aspiring to become the "New Kanafani".

Ever since Kanafani was brutally murdered in 1972, Ghannam has been engaged in theatre activities, holding in his mind a line from Kanafani's play, which is "Do not die until you get square with your enemy". Moreover, Ghannam's magnum opus as an actor is based on Kanafani's short novel titled *Returning to Haifa*, which he adapted into a play himself.

In regions ruled by the Islamic State, women are forced to offer sexual services to or to marry jihad warriors to boost their morale, which is the so-called 'sexual jihad' and it is widespread. Ghannam was shocked by the news of a Syrian couple that committed double suicide because of sexual jihad and wrote *Lilac Duhaa* in 2016, for which he won the Creative Prize from the Ministry of Culture of Jordan. This reading performance in Tokyo became the world premiere of the play. It was also directed by Ghannam himself and presented on March 15, 2018 as part of Sharjah Theatre Days.

"Da'ish" used in the secondary title is a derogatory term for



Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da'ish) /
Sheikh Baldawi (Takayama Haruo)

Islamic State. Many Arabs and Arabic media that do not support the Islamic State use this term to address the organisation.

The play is set in an imaginary rural village under the rule of the Islamic State and beyond the reach of the central government. There is a young couple living there. The Muslim husband called Duhaa and the Christian wife called Lilac both teach art to young people. One day, the village elder approaches Lilac and says, “A jihad warrior is planning to execute Duhaa in order to get hold of you, Lilac. After he has slept with you for a couple of nights, he is going to give you over to his men to share and then abandon you in front of a mosque. If you want to avoid this dangerous scheme, you must convert to Islam under my mentorship and marry me.” Soon the school is turned into a military base and their students become fighters, so the couple decide to commit double suicide.

Ghannam added the following introduction to this play: “No one can say that he or she lived during the days of Da’ish. In the age of Da’ish, life dies. I wrote this play so that ‘lilacs’ (‘flowers’) will not die and ‘duhaa’ (‘morning’) will not be killed at the doorway to night. I also wanted children to be able to love and sing as they grow up.” He concluded, “I am not calling out to death through this play. If one does not do anything to protect life, death is inevitable. Therefore, I am calling out to go against this trend.”

Suicide is forbidden in both Islam and Christianity. Some people in the Arab theatre world who read this play gave their comment and said, “It is a good play but please change the ending in which the couple commit suicide.” In the January 18th edition of Bukkyo

Times, Kōno Takashi wrote, “The Arab Spring that occurred in Tunisia was initiated by a young man who burned himself to death to make a protest to the police. To commit suicide, which is religiously forbidden, is nothing less than an act demonstrating against an extreme situation.” In *The Christ Weekly*, Fujimori Tōru wrote, “It was an ultimate conclusion of the Muslim husband and the Christian wife. The ghastly dialogue between the couple that leads to death turns into a desperate appeal for life and I was shocked.”

In October, Ghannam was interviewed by Yamane Yukiko of *The Asahi Shimbun* and he said, “Sexual jihad is a vicious practice under the guise of religion and it makes society retrograde to the past. I depicted various aspects of the society, such as love relationships and destruction of social connections. Presenting the play in Japan could possibly become a new doorway to know about the mental conditions of the people living in the state of war.”^{(*)5}



Special Lecture: Arab Theatre Today / (from the left) Watanabe Maho (interpreter), Ghannam Ghannam, Ichimura Sachio Photo by Festival/Tokyo

<< Special Lecture: Arab Theatre Today 1 >> **'Arab Theatre Festival'**

Date: October 6

Lecturer: Ghannam Ghannam

Moderator: Ichimura Sachio (Director, Festival/Tokyo)

Interpreter: Watanabe Maho

<< Special Lecture: Arab Theatre Today 2 >> **'Theatre in the Arab World and I'**

Date: October 7

Lecturer: Ghannam Ghannam

Moderator: Oka Mari (researcher of modern Arabic literature/ Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University)

Interpreter: Watanabe Maho

Notes:

*1 Arab Theatre Festival: It is the largest theatre festival in the Arab world and has been held every January since 2009. Each year, a different country and city hosts the festival and it has been held so far in Cairo, Tunis, Beirut, Amman, Doha, Sharja, Rabat, Kuwait and Algiers. The Arab Theatre Institute (ATI) and the host country's theatre-related organizations, both public and private, work in tandem to operate the festival. There is one condition to host the festival, which is not to censor.

During the festival period, works selected from among applicants are presented and the Al-Qasimi Award is given to excellent works. The prize bears the name of His Highness Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi the Sultan Al-Qasimi (Ruler of Sharjah-UAE), who is the president of Arab Theatre Institute (since 2011). Adnan Alaoda's "Khail Taiha", which was introduced at the latest event of the "Theatre in Conflict Zones" series, also received the award.

The conditions for applying to the festival include the following:

- It must be a work presented in the past year.
- The work must reflect important issues in the Arab world.
- The writer, director, cast and staff must be from Arab nations.

- The text should preferably be written in Standard Arabic.
 - The text should preferably be newly written, etc.
- *2 ICORN: A shelter for writers and artists whose freedom of expression have been limited due to reasons such as censorship. Its headquarter is located within Stavanger Cultural Centre (Sølvberget) in Norway. Its predecessor was INCA (International Network of Cities of Asylum).
- In July 1993, over three hundred writers around the world launched an appeal in reaction to the assassination of writers in Algeria during the civil war. In June 1994, IPW (International Parliament of Writers) was formed and Salman Rushdie was selected as its first president. Wole Soyinka, Russell Banks, Václav Havel, Harold Pinter, Margaret Drabble, J. M. Coetzee, Jacques Derrida and Pierre Bourdieu were among its members. Soon after IPW was founded, they created an inter-city shelter network called INCA for endangered writers and twenty-five cities took part.
- *3 Yes Theatre: A theatre troupe with a playhouse based in Hebron, which is the largest Palestinian city in the West Bank. Yes Theatre's production titled *3 in 1*, was read and introduced at "Theatre Born in Conflict Zones 5". Ihab Zahdeh of Yes Theatre was also invited to take part in the event.
- *4 From Ghannam's message sent for the reading performance of *Lilac Dubaa* (*Death in the Era of Da'ish*)
- *5 From the December 12th digital edition and December 13th paper edition of Asahi Shimbun

Ayako Gotō

Ayako Gotō was born in Sendai in 1982. She studied at the University of Vienna while she was attending the Department of German, Faculty of Foreign Languages at Dokkyō University and then completed the postgraduate course of Language and Society at Hitotsubashi University. She has worked with the marionette theatre company Yūkiza, Shizuoka Performing Arts Center (SPAC) and then received on-the-job training at the Dramaturg Division of Residenz Theatre (Munich). She is now a staff member working for ITI Japanese Centre. Her published translations include *Infinite Incompleteness* by Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO).

(Translation: Sumida Michiyo)

Khail Taiha © Miyauchi Katsu
Lilac Duhaa / cover photo © Ishizawa Chieko

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Theatre Born in
Conflict Zones series

— since 2009 —

The Theatre Born in Conflict Zones series is a response to the Theatre in Conflict Zones project organized by the ITI headquarters and Cultural Identity and Development Committee.

Launched in 2009, it has now introduced 24 plays from various countries and regions around the world, conveying the raw reality of conflict zones and attracting great interest in the local theatre scene.



**Scripts of plays in the
Theatre Born in Conflict Zones series (2018)**

Khail Taiha (Lost Horses) by Adnan Alaoda (Syria)

Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da'ish) by Ghannam Ghannam (Jordan / Palestine)

-
- 2014** *3 in 1* by Yes Theatre (Palestine)
Infinite Incompleteness by AHRDO (Afghanistan Human Rights Democracy Organisation, Afghanistan)
Le Cadavre Encerclé by Kateb Yacine (Algeria)
-
- 2015** *Ballad of the Burning Star* by Nir Paldi (U.K./Israel)
Burqavaganza by Shahid Nadeem (Pakistan)
-
- 2016** *Madmen and Specialists* by Wole Soyinka (Nigeria)
Ismail at Isabel by Rody Vera (Philippines)
Before Dinner by Yaser Abu Shaqra (Syria)
-
- 2017** *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* by Nassim Soleimanpour (Iran)
Djihad by Ismaël Saïdi (Belgium)
-

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ITI Japanese Center accepts new submissions for plays in the Theatre Born in Conflict Zones series. Please contact us at mail@iti-j.org.

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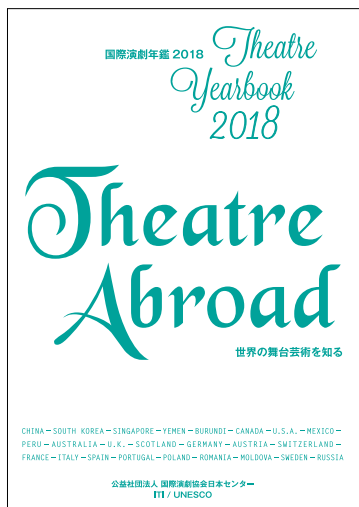
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by Wèrè Wèrè Liking, Maya Zbib, Ram Gopal Bajaj, Simon McBurney, Sabina Berman

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Critique: Formalism Demonstrated in a Tale of Narration:

Adnan Alaoda's *Khail Taiha (Lost Horses)* ————— Takahashi Hiroyuki

Critique: On Ghannam Ghannam's *Lilac Duhaa (Death in the Era of Da'ish)* ————— Oka Mari

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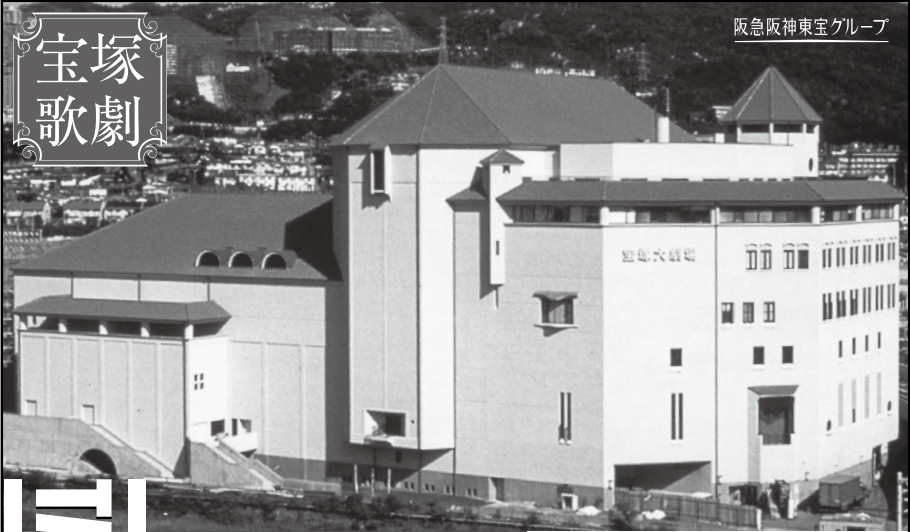
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