

Activities

Japanese Centre of ITI (Asia/Pacific)

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Left: A Letter of Water,
International Exchange

Right: international
workshop of the Japanese
traditional theatre, 2011

Activities of the Japanese Centre of ITI

International Exchange

In Yeosu City (Korea) was held Yeosu International Exhibition on the theme "The Living Seas and Coasts – The Diversity of Natural Resources and Activities to Make Them Sustainable" from May to August 2012.

On this occasion two plays "Mizu no Tegami" (A Letter of Water), written by the late Hisashi Inoue, and "Watashi no Na wa Kawa" (My Name is River), written by Ko Yoen Ok, were performed at Yeosu City Jinnamje Literary Hall located near the venue of Exhibition in a stage reading style. These Japanese and Korean plays were under the theme of the connection between the natural environment and human beings.

On August 8, there was an international symposium "The Awakening of a Sensibility of the Global Environment" with ITI Japan and Korea to consider Theatre and the theme of the Exhibition.

Theatre Born in Conflict Zones

This event was carried out successively since 2009 as part of ITI Japan's yearly publication project to introduce works of theatre created in disputed regions, in the style of staged readings. The plays presented were as follows:

2011 (the 3rd edition), 3 days program in December.

- "The Boiler Man's Wife" by Mo Yan, China, translated by Yoshiaki Hishinuma
- "La Trappe" by Kouam Tawa, Cameroon, translated by Yasushi Sato
- "Ngapartji Ngapartji" by Trevor Jamieson and Scott Rankin, Australia, translated by Kenji Sawada

2012 (the 4th edition), 4 days program in December.

- "Au Bord" by Claudine Galéa, France, translated by Yasushi Sato
- "Destination" by Pradit Prasartthong, Thailand, translated by Miho Sentoku and Toshihiro Yoshida
- "Dritte Generation (third generation)", co-production between Habima National Theatre of Israel and Schaubühne Berlin, script and composition by Yael Ronen, translated by Morihiro Niino

- 2013 (the 5th edition), 3 days program in December.

- "3 in 1" by Ihab Zahdeh, Mohammad Titi and Raed Shuyoukhi (Yes Theatre), Palestine, translated by Ayumi Yanagiya
- "Infinite Incompleteness" by Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO), Afghanistan, translated by Ayako Goto
- "Le Cadavre Encerclé" by Kateb Yacine, Algeria, translated by Satoshi Udo
- These translated plays were issued together with the 'Theatre Year-Book'.

World Short Plays Research Series

German Edition. The year 2011 marked the 150th anniversary of exchange between Japan and Germany, and the 3rd edition of this series was dedicated to contemporary German short plays performed in a stage reading style. The theme chosen for the series was 'German plays after the collapse of the Berlin Wall'. The following were presented as contemporary plays in December 2011. "Bildbeschreibung (Description of a Picture)" by Heiner Müller, "Land ohne Worte (Land without Words)" by Dea Loher, "Der Kick (The Kick)" by Andes Veiel and Gesine Schmidt, "Kein Licht (No Light)" by Elfriede Jelinek, "Unter Eis (Under Ice)" by Falk Richter, "Idomeneus" by Roland Schimmelpfennig.

Representations in a Stage Reading Style

"These Children's Summer 1945, Hiroshima, Nagasaki" is composed of corresponding letters between children and their mothers which were to be cut and be finished unexpectedly by releasing the A. Bomb.

The play was constructed and directed by Koichi Kimura and was performed in August on the same date or thereabout of the releasing of the Atomic Bomb every year since 2011 at Setagaya Public Theatre. In Japan, August is a special month to consider antiwar, and hopefully, we, Japanese Centre, will continue to present this play every August to raise awareness for a peaceful world.

International Workshops

Japanese traditional theatre workshop

- 2011, Japanese classical Dance (Nihon Buyo)
- 2013, Noh theatre

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The workshops were both supported by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Ministry of Culture), and were organized by ITI Japanese Centre.

The former was directed by masters from Hanayagi school and Fujikage school for 12 days in August 2011 at Suitengu-Pit and National Noh Theatre, with the participation of 22 artists (7 of them were from abroad – China, Korea, Poland, Latvia and Germany). The program covered not only Nihon Buyo which connects various Japanese performing arts, but also many theoretical and practical lectures.

The latter was held at the end of August 2013 in Tessenkai Noh Theatre for 9 days with 26 participants (8 of them were from outside Japan – 1 from Singapore, 1 from China, 3 from Korea, 1 from Germany and 2 from Poland).

The instructors were 11 in all, the famous shite masters from Kanze school. As a text to learn and practice, the play “Hagoromo” (The Feathered Robe) was chosen because of the fundamentals of Noh movement, standing and dancing, containing strong elements of both story and dance (the story of this play is celebrating peace). These are the most crucial things to learn and are useful to all performing arts in the East and in the West.

Lecture Series

In autumn of 2012 and 2013, we held several sessions of lectures titled “Exploring World’s Contemporary Theatre” co-organized with Setagaya Public Theatre. Following are some of the topics presented at the sessions by the invited lecturers: “Theatre and Society”, “Performing Arts and Critique”, “Present View of Theatre Education”,

“Social Mechanism Supporting Theatre”, “Design of Arts Council”, “Contemporary Arts and Theatre”, “Theatre in Francophone Africa”, “Contemporary Theatre and the Arab-Islamic World”, “Nuclear, Native People and Storytelling in Present Australia”.

In 2014, following topics are programmed: “Theatre People and Workshop”, “Theatre and Journalism” “Theatre Education and Central Theatre Academy in China”, “Trend of Czech Theatre”, “Human Rights and Theatre in Latin America”, and so on.

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Submitted by Yoko Odagiri