

Toyooka Theater Festival Participation Report by Yukio Nitta

18 December 2023.

I had the opportunity to participate in the Toyooka Theater Festival and gained a highly fulfilling experience. This festival provided a fantastic opportunity for theater enthusiasts and artists to connect and share new ideas. The atmosphere at the Toyooka Theater Festival was vibrant, filled with diverse art and theater-related events both inside and outside the venue, fostering camaraderie among participants. Particularly striking was the passion of local students and citizens, generating an infectious excitement.



▲ Takehiro Nagaoka x Rika Megumi "Super Relaxing"



▲ Fringe Street "Otto-chan"

All the theater productions were incredibly diverse, each presenting its unique worldview. One standout piece, Theater Collective HANCHU-YUEI "BANANA FLOWER CAN BE EATEN", captivated me with its originality and moving performances, and I believe it will attract international festival invitations in the future. The thematic diversity of each work highlighted the richness of the festival's appeal. Throughout the event, there were ample opportunities to interact with other participants and artists through free talks and networking events, creating new connections. This experience went beyond being a mere spectator, evolving into a shared journey of enjoying art with like-minded companions. Participating in the Toyooka Theater Festival provided a fresh perspective on theater and art. Even after the festival's conclusion, the bonds formed with new friends and the inspiration from the art continue to enrich my daily life. I look forward to actively participating in Toyooka Theater Festivals again, eager to keep experiencing the charm of Toyooka.

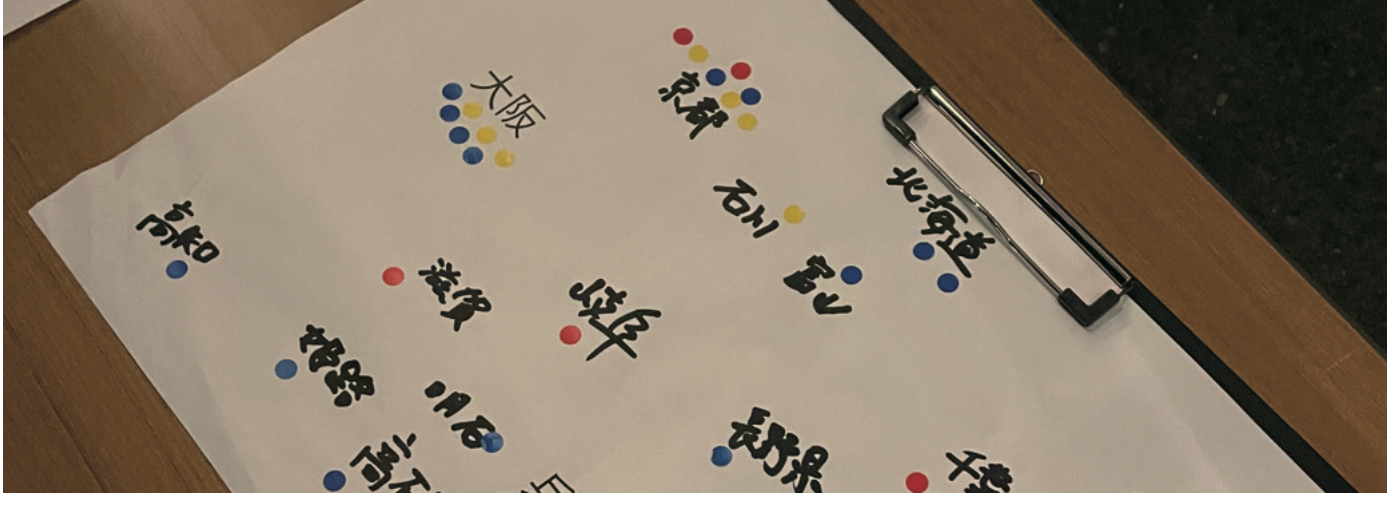


▲ Meeting Spots "Ebura 101"



▲ ON-PAM x Toyooka Theater Festival 2023

The Toyooka Theater Festival was a stimulating and meaningful theatrical event. For those interested in theater and art, I highly recommend participating. I eagerly anticipate the next edition, and this experience has further deepened my international network.



Below, I summarize personal experiences and opinions:

Strengths:

- The landscapes and unique venue settings added to the beauty of the festival. Enjoying delicious and affordable local cuisine combined with sightseeing enhanced the overall experience.
- The energetic and enthusiastic volunteer efforts from students, coupled with high local resident participation, showcased the festival's ability to unite the local community.




Weaknesses:

- Transportation is inconvenient, and there is a lack of English guidance. The limited schedule of trains, especially with only one per hour, and the usage of unmanned stations make it challenging for foreign tourists to arrange theater visits. Consider increasing shuttle buses or providing an official production schedule that would be helpful for reference.
- The English website does not display information until the week of the event, requiring international visitors to spend more time planning their itinerary. It is recommended to provide English information at least one month in advance.
- The ticket purchase process is divided between the official and fringe programs, which can be confusing for non-Japanese-speaking audiences. Providing an English information desk for the theater festival is advised.
- There is a shortage of hotel and accommodation options, and adequate preparations for large group visitors are still lacking.



Future Recommendations:

- Collaborate with international producer groups to invite influential individuals to the festival. This not only enhances promotion but also increases opportunities for co-productions and international exchanges with foreign artists.
- Capitalize on local tourist attractions by actively recruiting international volunteers and utilizing them as frontline ambassadors to welcome foreign audiences.



Nitta Yukio
Born in Tokyo, Japan, and graduated with an MA from Graduate Institute of Arts Administration and Management, Taipei National University of the Arts. He is a prolific independent producer in performing arts, dedicated to co-productions that transcend domains and borders, and works on a regular basis with the Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group and Huang Yi Studio. With production and marketing experiences for Kuandu Arts Festival, Taipei Fringe Festival and Taipei Arts Festival, he is also responsible for TPAM Exchange project in Performing Arts Meeting in Yokohama, Japan. In recent years, he works as director, creator director and consultant for concerts, major events and award ceremonies in Asia. In addition to envisaging ways to combine different resources on a daily basis, he initiated many culture and information exchange projects between Taiwan and Japan, hoping to continue engaging the world in different ways. Occasionally, he writes, translates and dances, insisting on traveling between Tokyo and Taipei at his own pace.