

THE TOMBO

Oita's English Newsletter

May – June 2013

Issue 67

“Tread softly because you tread on my dreams”

My week in Musical Theatre: plenty of enthusiastic “amateurs”, but in Japan, is there really such a thing as an “amateur”?

REVIEW

第3回ミュージカル体験ワークショップ

2013年3月25日(月)～27日(水) 発表3月28日(木)
30日(土)

iichiko 総合文化センター / iichiko Space Be リハーサル室
小学生の部 (定員50名) 中学校・高校生の部 (30名)
一般 (30名)

一般3,000円 高校生以下2,000円

The Musical Workshop has been a regular Oita event since last spring. In March and again in August, a group of bright-eyed luvvies head down from Tokyo to give us Oita-folk a taste of what life on the stage is like in the Big City. However, even if they do begin the experience by counting down the seconds until they can return to Honshu, the talent and enthusiasm of the locals always wins them over in the end!

As a Musical Theatre obsessive this was my third time participating at the *taiken*. At my maiden performance, I was just happy to have remembered the words to the songs and to have not fallen over during the high-kicks. At my second, the look of intense concentration as I tried to remember the Japanese lyrics was replaced with an occasional smile. This time, I was determined to kill it (in a good way).

In 2012, it was really my dancing which was rife with misadventure. At my first rehearsal, it was commented, that my hips “did not move like a Japanese person’s”. At my second, I hit myself in the face while doing a complicated turn, causing the dance teacher to laugh hysterically to the point of passing out for 4 or 5 minutes. No one else had seen, but he kindly did an impression for my 39 peers. Brilliant.

I’ve been a Musical Theatre enthusiast since I first saw “Cats” at 8 years old, shortly after which my parents shipped me off to “Stagecoach”, the world’s largest network of part-time Performing Arts schools. But singing in another language, and in a generally much more reserved society, is a different experience. This year, we were preparing the 1956 classic, “Mame”, and “Do You Hear the People Sing?” from Les Misérables.



Something which has been of fascination to me during my life in Japan is that many Japanese people seem almost afraid to try new things unless they’re already confident that they will be good at them. This, as English teachers, is a challenge ALTs face every day.

Embarrassment and a sort of nationwide intrinsic shyness have their part to play of course, but it is striking that the feeling of “what the hell, I can’t sing, but I’ll give it a go” is entirely absent at this course. To the contrary, everyone appears to be a strong and knowledgeable singer. Granted, a course for which the publicity reads, “let’s sing” is most likely to attract people who are already interested in doing just that, but interest doesn’t necessarily indicate ability. So how come everyone is so... good?

This article’s title quote, from Irish Poet William Butler Yeats, is often deliberately taken out of context. In the poem, the man’s dream is to achieve the love of the woman he is writing for. He is poor, so he cannot spread any rich fabric under her feet, only his dreams, on which he asks her not to trample. But it is often used to refer to people being afraid to take criticism on the things that they deeply love to do, whether it be cookery, painting or tap dancing.

Many times in Japan someone has modestly told me that they play the piano ‘a little’ but that they are ‘very, very bad’, and then I hear them play better than anyone I have ever heard. That very special type of ‘*kenson*’ (modesty) is an article-worthy topic in itself, but I would focus on the fact that discipline and focus is a clichéd but absolutely true part of Japanese culture. People don’t tend to just “dabble” in different interests, and that kind of hard work

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

reaps rewards, even in situations where there might not be a strictly “natural” talent.

Each rehearsal starts with “*SUTURECHI*”. Noguchi-sensei, the dance teacher, is hilarious. Snake-hipped and permattanned, he is the ultimate choreographer; sarcastic, insanely fit and glamorous. But for all this elegant façade, he takes no prisoners. His favourite pastime is to get us to “plank” for 5 minutes, whilst he screams “*MADA! MADA DESU*”, moving around us military style, poking at our chubby bits with his perfectly ensneakered-foot.

At our first singing rehearsal we’re told that our singing is good, but “*sugoku nihonjinppoi*” (very “Japanese”). I quietly smile that I’m obviously not letting the side down yet. However, later, when dancing, I accidentally sing “Dixie land”, as per the Broadway recording of the song, instead of “*Dekishi Rando*”. The singing teacher notices, and asks if I would pronounce it for everyone. There’s a collective ‘whoosh’ as all heads turn to look at me. My cloak of invisibility has well and truly fallen, although, given that I am being referred to by the staff who haven’t met me before as ‘*gaikoku no kata*’, I think my chances of blending in were already questionable at best.

I get chatting to my fellow performers; one lady is a dance teacher for children, another did a lot of Opera when she was at university, a lot of the participants are ex-ballerinas. One is a mother-of-two, and a beautiful dancer. “You have a LOUD singing voice!” the motherly dancer says. “YES, we can hear you really well” another lady chimes in. “Have you sung before?” they ask in unison. This is the moment, if I say no, then I’m some sort of prodigy! But I am truthful, “Yes, I’ve had lessons since I was 7 years old and I sing



everyday”. They visibly relax, probably thinking as I do that I should be better than I am given the amount of time I’ve spent on it!

I think it’s easy to forget how insanely lucky we are in Oita to have the lichiko Culture Center. It really is fantastic: clean, spacious, and amazingly technically equipped. I would recommend anyone to try anything they have to offer there. Information is readily available on <http://www.emo.or.jp/>, and there is a message board in the Be Plaza Music Centre with adverts for gospel choirs or free percussion lessons. There are also rehearsal rooms to rent, and instruments.

The performances came off very well, and the course is a great experience for body and mind, as well as being among the best Japanese-language practice you can have.

The next Musical Taiken Workshop will take place on **August 2013**.

---- Article by Megan Prosser

Kizuna: bonding beyond borders

What do bicycles, bingo, trombones, carrot ice cream, wedding proposals, and Bali all have in common? Not much, unless you came to the Oita AJET 2013 Charity Bike Ride. This year’s event brought together sixty-three participants from eight different prefectures and raised ¥907,385 for Foundation 18, an orphanage and elderly care program in Bali, Indonesia! Here’s a recap of the event:

On the morning of Saturday, March 16th more than one hundred people gathered at Tsukumin Park. Months of planning by the organizers was finally going to be put to the test. Bikers were prepping their gear, volunteers were distributing goodies, musicians were playing tunes, and spectators were taking it all in. After final announcements, the ride commenced with great fanfare. A crowd sent off the bikers with a countdown, accompanied by music from ファミリア・トロンボーン・アンサンブル, a touring trombone trio! Immediately after, the volunteers hopped into their vehicles and the ride was officially in top gear.



The Oita AJET 2013 Charity Bike Ride Team

(Continued on page 4)

Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
May 3 rd ~ 4 th	Ebine Festival - there will be exhibitions, game competitions, stage events, fresh agricultural produce for sale and a <i>yakiniku</i> corner!	Kitsuki City Yamaga-Machi	☎ 097-775-1211
May 3 rd ~ 6 th	Manbou Festa 2013 - the Oita Marine Culture Centre is holding its annual festival celebrating the <i>manbou</i> (sunfish). There will be events, workshops, lunches and a fish market (admission ¥300)	Saiki City, Kamae Marine Culture Centre	☎ 097-242-1311
May 4 th	The 22nd Ebisudani Festival - come enjoy fun events such as <i>taiko</i> and <i>kagura</i> performances, <i>mochimaki</i> , a lottery draw and more.	Bungo Takada City Ebisuyaba-noson Kouen	☎ 097-854-3111
May 4 th ~ 5 th	The 25th Kitsuki Castle Festival - centred around the castle town's "Edo village", there will be events such as basket races in addition to <i>taiko</i> performances.	Kitsuki City Kitsuki Castle vicinity	☎ 097-863-0100
May 6 th	Bungo Takada Soba festival - a fun event in Bungo Takada: the prefecture's biggest producer of soba! There will be soba eating events and more.	Bungo Takada City Spaland Matama	☎ 097-822-3100
May 11 th	Spring rice field exploration - a fun, educational activity for parents and children to learn about wildlife living in the local rice fields (participation fee ¥500, reservations necessary)	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 097-373-0001
May 11 th	Usa Air Base Peace Walk - a 10km walking tour will be held around the former Usa air base. The tour will include guided explanation of the area.	Usa City Yanagigaura	☎ 097-832-1111
May 12 th	Hita flower festival - visitors can purchase fresh flower, enjoy a flower fashion show and maybe even win a prize in the lottery contest.	Hita City Rose Hill Amagase	☎ 097-357-3147
May 25 th	Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou rice planting - participants can experience planting rice by hand whilst learning about the local wildlife (participation fee ¥1,500)	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 097-373-0001
May 26 th	Himeshima Karei festival - there will be a Himeshima <i>karei</i> (flounder) tasting, as well as other attractions including a <i>Kitsune-odori</i> performance (flounder tasting participation cost approx. ¥1,500)	Himeshima-mura Ferry port	☎ 097-887-2211
May 26 th	Yufuin Ride 2013 - various events for visitors to enjoy the sights of Yufuin by bicycle.	Yufu City Yufuin	☎ 097-785-4464
Jun. 2 nd	Mt. Kuju opening - events will be held at the mountain summit to commemorate the start of the summer mountain season.	Mt. Kuju	☎ 097-376-3150
Jun. 9 th	Tashibunoshou rice-planting festival - this is a yearly event where visitors can experience planting rice using traditional methods in the small historical rice-paddy village.	Bungo Takada City Ozaki area	☎ 097-822-3100
Jun. 16 th	Kimono Appreciation - held on the third Sunday of each month, visitors can rent traditional kimono and have their picture taken. People in traditional Japanese clothing can receive free or discounted entry to a number of sightseeing spots throughout the city, as well as discounts at participating stores and restaurants.	Kitsuki City Castle town	☎ 097-863-0100
Jun. 28 th 30 th	The 16th Yufuin Culture Documentary Film Festival - historical and cultural documentaries will be screened each day in the Yufuin Kouminkan.	Yufu City Yufuin Kouminkan	☎ 097-785-4464

EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Admission	Contact #
Apr. 16 th ~ Jul. 7 th	Satou Kei postwar sketches exhibition - a collection of pieces by Satou Kei of Oita Prefecture	Oita Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-554-5800
Apr. 16 th ~ Jul. 7 th	Forms as seen in industrial arts - this exhibition will feature a number of bamboo and pottery pieces representative of Oita Prefecture, including plates, vases and chests.	Oita Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-554-5800
Apr. 23 rd ~ May 26 th	The Samurai Figure Exhibition - featuring traditional swords, armor and helmets on display samurai dolls to give visitors an insight into the sense of beauty and spiritual world of a warrior.	Oita Prefectural History Museum	¥300	☎ 097-837-2100
Jun. 7 th ~ Jul. 7 th	People and the Earth: Present Day - an exhibition that looks at the livelihood and cultural history of northern Kyushu based on the history and culture of mining in Oita Prefecture.	Oita Prefectural History Museum	¥300	☎ 097-837-2100

Oita Art Museum= Oita-Shi Bijutsukan 大分市美術館 Oita Prefectural History Museum= 大分県立歴史博物館

Most Museums and Centers are closed on Monday, or Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday. Student admissions vary, highest cost shown.



STAGE & MUSIC EVENTS

May	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
9 th	18:00	Argerich's Meeting Point Music Festival Opening- concert by young musicians of Oita Prefecture (free entrance tickets available from major ticket agencies in Beppu and Oita)	B-Con Plaza	FREE (must have free admission ticket)	☎ 097-727-2299
18 th	16:00	"Sounds that weave together history" Gala Concert- featuring Argerich's Meeting Point in Beppu 15 th Anniversary Special Ensemble	iichiko Grand Theater	¥4,200 ~ ¥12,600	☎ 097-727-2299
18 th	18:30	Yoshimoto comedy and variety stage show- with a variety of comedians and newcomers (fund raising event)	Patria Hita	¥ 3,500 ~ ¥4,500	☎ 097-325-5000
19 th	13:00	Live Kagura- traditional <i>Kagura</i> performed by local groups	Kagura Kaikan	¥1,500	☎ 097-435-2372
21 st	19:00	Siena Wind Orchestra	iichiko Grand Theater	¥4,000 ~ ¥6,000	☎ 097-533-4004
25 th	18:00	Drum TAO- "Phoenix" performance as part of their 20 th anniversary Kyushu and Okinawa tour	iichiko Grand Theater	¥5,000 ~ ¥7,000	☎ 097-537-5515
29 th	19:00	Hanauta- acoustic live	Club SPOT	¥2,500	☎ 097-533-0467
30 th	19:30	Machiko Watanabe- 35 th Anniversary "Amor & Smile" tour	Brick Block	¥6,000 + drink	☎ 097-536-4852
June	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
11 th	19:00	PET Bottle Cap Charity Live Event- featuring blues and jazz performers (fund raising event, please bring a PET bottle cap)	Brick Block	¥1,500 w/drink	☎ 097-536-4852
16 th	13:00	Live Kagura- traditional <i>Kagura</i> performed by local groups	Kagura Kaikan	¥1,500	☎ 097-435-2372
18 th	19:00	No Regret Life- last tour 2013 "Memory & Record"	T.O.P.S BittsHall	¥3,000	☎ 097-533-0467
28 th	20:00	Akira Wada solo live	Cantaloop II	¥3,300 + drink	☎ 097-548-5363
30 th	18:00	Four Get Me A Nots- Pirate Ship 2013 tour	Club SPOT	¥2,800	☎ 097-533-0467

**Ticket prices range from student to most expensive general admission. Prices shown otherwise indicate price for purchase on the day of the event, they may be cheaper if purchased in advance. "w/ drink" prices include a drink, "+drink" prices require the additional purchase of a drink. Times shown indicate start times, doors usually open 30 minutes beforehand.

VENUES

*B-Con Plaza= 1-53 Yamanote, Beppu City Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City Kagura Kaikan= 810 Kiyokawa, Bungo Ono City
Brick Block= 5-7-5 Ikushi, Oita City Club SPOT=3-3-18 Funai-Machi, Oita City T.O.P.S BittsHall.= Ikushi 5-783, Oita City
Cantaloop II=3-2-30 Miyako-Machi iichiko Grand Theater= Oasis Tower 1F Oita City Patria Hita= 1-8-11 Sanbonmatsu, Hita City*

(Article continued from Page 2)

The course took participants from Tsukumi City to Sumie Beach in Miyazaki Prefecture on Saturday and then returned along the same route on Sunday, for a total of about 200km. Along the way, cyclists were supported by volunteers who offered snacks, drinks, encouragement, and minor repairs. There were also a few rest stops along the way that offered rare treats such as carrot ice cream! The route was beautiful, but not without its fair share of challenging climbs. Only the most courageous riders dared to complete the last 20km on what should be known as "Hell Hill", while those with weary legs opted to catch a pre-arranged shuttle.

Despite everyone being exhausted from the first day's ride, the scene at camp was boisterous and fun! After a delicious Mexican meal, a group meeting was held where a surprise marriage proposal was given right before a game of bingo. Yes, that's right! One of the organizers got engaged during the bike trip!

The next morning, eager bikers hit the road and did so in record time. The ride started at 9:00am and the first biker arrived back in Tsukumi City just before noon! However, most participants stayed around and formed a raucous welcome for the last 4 bikers who arrived shortly before 4:00pm.

If you've never participated in the bike ride before, I highly encourage you to join next year! It's been one of my favorite events to participate in and organize and I'm sure you'll enjoy it just as much, if not more. Email oitajetcycling@gmail.com if you'd like to be kept up-to-date with details for next year's event. よろしくね!

--- Article by Rhianna Aaron



What's Going On?

From the Plaza

Free Legal Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations on **May 15th & Jun. 19th** from **13:00-16:00**.

The Oita Emigration/Immigration Affairs Council also organizes free consultations where emigration/immigration specialists are available to offer advice on a variety of topics from Immigration Bureau paperwork and procedures, to daily life matters. English interpretation available, other languages may be available with reservation two days in advance.

Date: **Jun. 2nd** from **13:00~16:00**

For more information contact the Oita International Plaza.

TEL: 097-533-4021

Free Tagalog Consultations

Date: Saturday **May 11th** & Tuesday **May 21st**

Saturday **Jun. 1st** & Tuesday **Jun. 18th**

Time: 13:00-16:00

Place: Oita International Plaza

Consultant: Rhodora Yoshitake

Free Chinese Consultations

Date/Time: Every Thursday 10:00-13:00 and the second and fourth Tuesday each month from 13:00~16:00. Place: Oita International Plaza. Consultant: Cui Wenyu (*Dates and times are subject to change. Please contact the Oita International Plaza before coming.)
TEL: 097-533-4021

Free Health Consultations

The Saiseikai Hita Hospital offers free health consultations and medical examinations at the Oita International Plaza to foreign nationals living in Oita Prefecture.

Date: **Tues June 18th** Time: 14:30-15:30

Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

For more information contact: Saiseikai Hita Hospital TEL: 0973-24-1100

(*Dates and times subject to change. Please call to confirm before coming.)

Japanese Lessons

Himawari Japanese Volunteers

Support for people learning Japanese in order to help them enjoy their lives in Oita, now at three different locations.

Wasada Public Hall Wed. 10:00-12:00

Meiji Akeno Public Hall Wed. 14:00-16:00

Tsurusaki Public Hall Sat. 10:00-12:00

For more information contact Fukata Miharu TEL: 097-527-2614

Email: nihongo_himawari_oita@yahoo.co.jp

Nihongo Rakuraku-talk

Beppu City Hall offers free Japanese lessons every Tuesday from 14:00~15:30. For more information contact Beppu International Affairs Division TEL: 097-721-6133

E-MAIL: int-ma@city.beppu.oita.jp

Sakura Japanese Class

Come study Japanese with friendly volunteers and teachers in a pleasant atmosphere. Sakura Japanese Class is held every Monday from 10:15-12:00 at the Oita University International House in Nishiki-Machi, Oita City. Classes are FREE. For more information call Ms. Ohashi

CELL: 090-7866-2486

AIUEO Japanese Lessons

Volunteers offer free Japanese lessons on Tuesday and Friday from 10:20-11:50 at I-NESS near Oasis Tower as well as Thursday nights at Compal Hall from 18:30-20:00. Lessons are also offered in Beppu at the Oita International House on Tuesday mornings from 10:30-12:00. For more information contact:

Ms. Miyase 090-8353-2485 (day lessons)

Ms. Kato 097-532-5940 (night lessons)

Community Classes

International Kempo (Self-Defence Classes)

Ever thought about being able to defend yourself? Join us to keep in shape and to learn martial art-based self-defense techniques and *bo-ryutsu* (stick fighting).

Place: Souda Dojo (Near Oita University)

Time: Every Friday 19:00-21:00

For more information on times and places, please contact Katsunori Tsujita at 097-583-0959.

SHAKE YOUR SOUL/ Kripalu Yoga Dance

This body-spirit fitness program incorporates elements of yoga, dance, movement therapy and 'qi kung' with rhythms of music from around the world. Free *Taikun* lesson **Friday night May 24th 19:30 – 21:00**. **Sunday 'Breath and Stretch' classes on the first and third Sundays of the month 10:30-12:00**, and **'Night Yoga Dance' on the fourth Friday of each month at 19:30-21:00**. All held at the Nakajima Chuo Kouminkan.

*For more information, to make reservations, or to organize reiki training or group/one-on-one sessions, please contact Joanne TEL: 090-1165-5567

CAN YOU FIND IT IN OITA PREFECTURE?

These are our suggestions from the last issue:

Y: Yozakura (night time cherry blossoms)- "You can find night cherry blossom viewers at Oita's Castle Park, Jo-shi Ko-en. The park, which is fairly quiet all year round, becomes active with hanami groups who become lively with barbecues and beer and sometimes a guitar or other music. This year was fairly cool and I was surprised to have the chance to cycle by the park at night at peak season, and to find it quiet. It was magical to see the blossoms lit up by the moon, and to revel in being the only one there."
--Joanne Yoshida

Z: Somewhere you can experience traditional Zazen (seated Zen meditation)- Zazen workshops are offered at the Anjyujji Temple in Kitsuki. For info and reservations: info@kit-suki.com

Free Health Consultations: change of dates

Necessities of Life

The Saiseikai Hita Hospital now offers free health consultations and medical examinations once every two months to international residents living in Oita Prefecture. For people who have a health concern but are not sure where to go, these free consultations offer a good place to start. The service is particularly aimed at those who are on a low income or are unemployed, victims of domestic violence and people concerned about medical costs. The hospital staff can offer advice on medical treatment and welfare. If you have a health insurance card, please bring it with you to the consultation.

Now held on **Tuesdays**, the next consultation date is Tuesday **June 18th**.

For inquiries please contact the Saiseikai Hita Hospital TEL: 097-324-1100

*Consultations may be subject to change. It is recommended to confirm the date and time prior to visiting.



国際交流プラザ
財団法人 大分県文化スポーツ振興財団

大分市高砂町2-33 OASISひろば21 (B1F)
☎ 097-533-4021 FAX: 097-533-4052

Oita International Plaza
Oita Prefecture Cultural & Sports
Promotion Foundation

OASIS Hiroba21 (B1F) 2-33 Takasago-Machi, Oita-Shi 870-0029

THANK YOU !!

A special thanks to all those who co-operated with us for this issue. Your help was very much appreciated.

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Oita International Plaza Oita Prefecture Cultural & Sports Promotion Foundation

2-33 Takasago-Machi

Oita-Shi Oita-Ken 〒 870-0029

☎ 097(533)4021

Fax 097(533)4052

E-MAIL: in@emo.or.jp

<http://www.oitaplaza.jp/english/>

HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:30am-7:00pm

(closed weekends and the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. We

are open on the Saturdays before these Mondays)

Closed national holidays & Dec 29th - Jan 3rd

The International Plaza is located on the basement floor of OASIS Hiroba 21 (iichiko Culture Center).

