

**Saison Foundation × Kyoto Experiment: Creative Environment Improvement Program
Report Session + Symposium
Diversity in the Performing Arts—Community and Foreign Residents in Japan**



Photo by Takeshi Asano

10.8 (Fri) 2021

Part 1: 17:15-18:15

Part 2: 18:30-20:00

Venue: 3F Lobby, Park Plaza, ROHM Theatre Kyoto

Part 1: Creating a Diverse Audience—Stepping Stones For English Speakers Report Session

Introduction

For three years from 2018 to 2020, Kyoto Experiment was the recipient of a grant from The Saison Foundation under its Creative Environment Improvement Program, which the festival used to carry out the Creating a Diverse Audience—Stepping Stones For English Speakers project.

Project Aims

By involving a wide range of people in the performing arts, the project builds new audiences along with further developing people's relationship with the performing arts. Given that Kyoto is home to many universities and students from outside Japan, and that many other non-Japanese also live in the city, the project forms part of the festival's

efforts to reach new audiences, and aims to deepen its links specifically with English speakers living in Japan and people who have never had contact with the performing arts in Japan.

Main Measures

The festival set up two types of platforms accessible to English speakers—one online (social media channels), one offline (Meeting Point)—and aimed to use these as stepping stones to encourage people to buy tickets. The festival recruited ambassadors to run the platforms for interacting with English speakers, hoping to reach the target audience through the mediation of these ambassadors. As a concrete goal, the festival wanted to increase the proportion of English speakers among overall audiences (including people purchasing tickets to performances).



(2021 SPRING Meeting Points. Left: Festival Box / Right: Festival Living)

Summary

The festival understood the importance of a wider range of audiences visiting in terms of the function of the Meeting Point site. The festival is a place for audiences to output their impressions and opinions of the performing arts they experienced, and the possibilities for the performing arts expand by diverse audiences coming together. The festival sensed the need to consider in more detail about building platforms for diverse audiences to engage in better communication.

It became clear through the project that the “stepping stones” like social media and the Meeting Point were vital tools for envisioning new audiences, not only the project’s target of foreign language speakers living in Japan but also Japanese speakers. Close communication through these tools helped to create and maintain new audiences, ensure audience diversity, and facilitate interaction among those audiences.

(Please note this text is a summarized and edited version of the report session. Please also note this English text is a translation of sections of the Japanese text and is not a complete translation of the Japanese.)