

Report of JCDN Japan International Artist in Residence



2011-2012

JPN → FIN Contemporary Dance Residence Exchange and Co-production Program

2011-2012 日本-フィンランド
ダンス レジデンス エクスチェンジ 共同製作プログラム

「KITE」



ダンスと社会を結ぶネットワーク型NPO
Japan Contemporary Dance Network

目次

■ **Upon completion of the first JCDN International Artist in Residence Program**

■ **Project Goal, Details and Progress**

■ **Artists' Thoughts on Project Participation**

■ **About "KITE"**

■ **Artist Profile**

■ **Audience Survey**

■ Upon completion of the first JCDN International Artist in Residence Program

Ritsuko Mizuno / Artistic Director
Japan Contemporary Dance Network (JCDN)

We have finished the first year of the “International Artist in Residence” project, in which internationally active dance artists temporarily reside in various regions all over Japan, and we create the opportunity for dance production. This year’s project was a collaborative effort between JCDN (Japan) and Helsinki’s ZODIAK (Finland) to produce an exchange program between Finland and Japan.

In this project Japan and Finland’s choreographers stay in each other’s countries and carry out the production of a dance piece together with musicians, lighting designers, and dancers. Japanese choreographer Kosei Sakamoto and Finnish choreographer Ervi Sirén were chosen for this project in the fall of 2010. From that time it has taken two years to reach the production of the piece and its performance through a thorough process.

In the beginning we set up opportunities for Sakamoto and Sirén to introduce their choreographic works in each other’s countries and then held auditions to choose the dancers for collaborative production. After that, the choreographers resided in each other’s countries for about one month, produced a new dance piece, and presented it as a world-premiere; this whole process became a long-term project for the organizers as well as the participating artists.

In the international projects we have carried out in the past, there have been cases in which we have introduced the artists who will work together or coordinated the combination of artists. In this case, it’s undeniable that the placement of responsibility for the piece sometimes becomes unclear, and the act of collaboration exhibits its weaknesses and difficulties. Regarding Japanese choreographers’ works, the gap between domestic and international is being eliminated, and their activities are spreading throughout the world. Also, it is a fact that the possibility of producing dance pieces that feature an international perspective is also widening, as large amounts of information are easily accessible in this current age. However, in reality it is not easy to arrange the finances and environment in order to actually meet with a foreign artist with whom one wants to create a dance piece. In regards to the future, this project intends to lead Japan to become an environment in which the possibilities of an artist to create dance works internationally can be widened, and we aim to take on the role of creating a foundation for international efforts of creation. If this environment can become rich and fruitful, surely the quality of dance creations will also be elevated.

In this project’s production, the objective was for the choreographer, as the creator of the piece, to assume its overall direction, and the production members were chosen accordingly. In other words, rather than being a pure collaboration, the choreographer is the responsible creator of the piece, and members are determined by auditions and the choreographer’s requests.

Finnish choreographer Ervi Sirén is 64 years old. Sirén has a long career as a choreographer and also as an educator, having been a dance instructor for many years at Helsinki’s Theater Academy. In her mid-thirties she felt burned out from her intense dance career, which had been racing along up until that point. It became difficult to dance. Taking this as a turning point, she thought to face dance with more freedom and release, and her dance style completely changed from that point onward.

When watching Sirén's production period in Japan, I could see a connection between her history and her choreographic method. Sirén makes the dancers repeat the work of facing their own bodies and diligently crafting dance from themselves. This is repeated over and over again into a series of often daunting rehearsals. Sirén does not give pre-determined "choreography" to the dancers. It is as if the answer is already inside the dancer, as a thoroughness that is consistent in her work. When I visited Finland, the dancers I met there unanimously told me that Sirén's choreography is very wonderful, and it makes them feel like they are being reborn. Similarly, the Japanese dancers who participated in this project also gained many things. In a sense, it is a very primitive method of dance, a choreographic method that moves closer and closer. It's not a deliberate act of eccentricity, neither is it a direction style that emphasizes the presentation and look of the piece; rather, I think that it is as if very simple and genuine dance was expressed.

In one month these rehearsals finished, and they created a piece called "KITE" and performed it in Kyoto. The audience members' thoughts on the piece were clearly divided into two categories. One opinion was "I couldn't make out a point of access during the performance and didn't understand it well as a piece." On the contrary, some thought, "I felt beauty in the dancer's movements. I could feel the world of this piece, a world in which it was like seeing natural phenomena and true, sincere dance."

Even considering that Sirén selected dancers, whom she felt drawn to in auditions, this is a choreographic piece with foreign people whom she has met for the first time in a different country's cultural sphere. It could have been much easier creating a piece with Finnish dancers that she knows very well. However, intentionally, this is the creation of a dance piece with Japanese people that she has met in Japan for the first time. As the opposite of this, Kosei Sakamoto created a dance piece with Finnish dancers whom he met for the first time in Finland. What can be obtained from this?

In my personal opinion, what the choreographer can obtain from this project is the reconsideration of their own methodology, which they don't notice in the easy creative process in their usual environment. Also, they can gain something by looking at the reality of whether their methodology will be accepted by the other person, who is unknown and does not share a common understanding or the same methodological background. In the end, what will remain? Will the choreographer's methodology hold valid? What could be gained here is the attempt to make up for what is lacking in this choreographic process and the knowledge of its results.

For the dancers, they can have the chance to acquire physical abilities and an allure, which they have possessed all along but have not yet used, by distancing themselves from habits and methods that they have built up or unknowingly carried with them while establishing their careers.

Then, we can take in what sort of influence this exerts when finally being viewed as a "dance piece" by an audience. We can make this challenge especially because it is an international artist in residence project. The piece created in this project "KITE" luckily has the chance to be performed in Finland in June and at a festival in Japan in September.

I would like to thank the sponsors, co-organizers and all of those who were involved for their support in providing an environment in which the artists could participate in and concentrate on this project.

March 20, 2012

■ Project Goal

With the goal of creating an international performing arts network throughout the country, JCDN is increasing the number of locations for the “International Artist in Residency” program, in which domestic and foreign dance artists can create new works. For this purpose both countries’ organizers create the necessary environment and methods.

■ Program Detail 2011-2012

“Japan- Finland Co-production Program” is a collaborative planning and creative project between JCDN from Japan and ZODIAK from Finland.

Dance creation and performance tours will be actualized in Japan and Finland to supplement and broaden both countries’ dance communities on an international scale.

Finnish artist Ervi Sirén will reside in Japan and Kosei Sakamoto in Finland, where they will each create a dance performance with that country’s artists.

■ Program Progress

2010

Nov @Japan & Finland

JCDN from Japan and ZODIAK from Finland choose Japanese choreographer Kosei Sakamoto and Finnish choreographer Ervi Sirén.

2011

Jul 24-29 @Pyhäjärvi, Finland

Kosei Sakamoto presents his choreographic works *Monster* and *Kizhashi/EDGE* at the Full Moon Dance Festival. He also holds a five-day workshop at which he selects five dancers to participate in the creation of his next dance piece.

Sep 22-Oct @Kyoto & Tottori, Japan

Ervi Sirén holds a four-day workshop at Morishita Studio in Tokyo and chooses Japanese dancers/performers for the creation of her next work.

Aerial Ferryman and *Street*, two pieces choreographed by Sirén, are presented at Bird Theatre Festival 4.

2012

Jan 25-Mar @Tokyo, Japan

Ervi Sirén and Aake Otsala work together with five selected Japanese dancers/performers and lighting designer Takayuki Fujimoto to create a new piece *KITE* at Tokyo’s Morita Studio.

Feb 15 @Yokohama, Japan

“KITE” work in progress presentation&showing is held at BankART Studio NYK (Yokohama) at 5:30pm.

Mar 2 & 3 @Kyoto, Japan

KITE is presented at Kyoto Arts Center.

Mar 5—Apr 10 @Helsinki, Finland

Kosei Sakamoto carries out the creation of a new piece *Ash is falling* with five pre-selected Finnish dancers and lighting designer Takayuki Fujimoto.

Apr 11-18 @ Helsinki, Finland

Kosei Sakamoto’s new work *Ash is falling* is presented in the program of ZODIAK’s spring season. <For more details, please visit <http://www.zodiak.fi/fi/>>

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Kosei Sakamoto’s choreographic work:

Ash is falling

Choreographer: Kosei Sakamoto

Performers: Johanna Ikola/Meeri Altmets/Kaisa Niemi/Jarkko Lehmus/Ville Oinonen

Lighting Designer: Takayuki Fujimoto

This piece considers dance and the body within the context of the potential problems of civilization, as approached from the “nuclear,” an issue that has differentiated this century from others and continues to cast the human race into turmoil. Early 20th century poet Tatsuji Miyoshi’s poem “Ash is Falling” provides the sub-text for this consideration’s vault into a dance piece.

For more information: <http://www.zodiak.fi/fi/>

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Jun 19&20 @Kuopio, Finland

KITE, choreographed by Ervi Sirén,

is presented at Kuopio Dance Festival as an Invitational Performance.



Jul @Pyhäjärvi, Finland

Ash is falling, choreographed by Kosei Sakamoto,

is performed at Full Moon Dance Festival as an Invitational Performance.



Sep @Tottori, Japan

At Bird Theatre Festival 5, *KITE* and *Ash is falling* are presented in a double bill.



■ Artists' Thoughts on Project Participation

□ Ervi Sirén (Choreographer)

An edited compilation of interviews with Sirén (interviewed by : Ritsuko Mizuno/JCDN)

As a choreographer, I begin creation with the dancers in an intensive production period, in which we develop themes of certain movements and focus on opening the energies of the body. I select the movement themes and the dancers work by searching inside their own bodies. I encourage the artists to understand the movement and from that understanding begins the internal narrative of the piece. A choreographer is someone who creates ideas and then develops the production. A choreographer chooses what kind of world will be seen from the piece. When creating choreography, the dancer and the dancer's work is the core of my major interest. The foundation is movement and unifying it in detail, that is, a holistic approach to human beings.

In other words, when I make a piece with dancers, their production of movement, itself, is the thing that sparks my interest the most. I strive in particular to pull out natural movement from the dancers. I focus on creating a relaxed state and finding organic movement. By layering this movement in the body's center, various sensations are brought about from the dancer's body, and as a result perhaps we can feel life itself by watching each dance. Also, I am intrigued by how human natures will appear in the creation. Recently, I am interested in the courage, freedom, playfulness, lightness and weightlessness in life. These are elements that I aimed for in this piece, "KITE." In this piece, we held a collaborative production with sound designer Aake Otsala and lighting designer Kinsei. I was interested in and looking forward to how these two people would bring their own world and imagination into the creation of the piece. They actually brought very brilliant ideas with them.

This time, I chose the five dancers with whom I worked because their gender, age, and background are all completely different. On the one hand, one thing that they all have in common is that they can all concentrate internally on their own bodies, and they can all create their own original movement; these were two important points. Then, I felt that the actual rehearsal period was fruitful, as all dancers developed their own movement. Each dancer possessed a strong artistic sense. This was my first time choreographing on Japanese dancers, and I felt that they were very persistent and had great concentration. Even if I felt that we had done enough, they would surely say that they wanted to do it one more time. This tells, how dedicated they were to this work and they really wanted to do their best all the time.

From an artistic perspective, I think that a similarity between Finnish and Japanese culture is that both strip off the extraneous and try to find the essence. Already, Finnish artists have been receiving inspiration from Japan, and experiment with combining these two worlds in their art works. This production and performance were all in an approximate 40-day residence period, but, from now I am thinking up a plan to further make this a piece that produces empathy with its audience for the next opportunity to perform in June. I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to those involved in this project for giving me this opportunity.

Takayuki Fujimoto (Lighting Designer)
Ervi Sirén's 「KITE」

In general, for creating the artwork called “sculpture,” there are the techniques of chiseling away at a hard material (carving) and constructing a form by applying plaster (modeling).

Even though dance cannot be considered in the same manner as sculpture, because dance includes the time axis of movement as well as the 3D configuration of space that deals with the mass of the human body, I thought that dance is close to modeling because it includes that element of motion. First, there is some kind of idea for the completed image, and then working towards that image, various parts are created and joined together into a shape.

For example, in my case, since I think that I am not a specialist in physical expression, when I direct a piece, I design that situation in which the performer's bodies are placed. I suggest set conditions that transform the obligatory tasks and change the burden placed on the body as time progresses. Based on these tasks, I have them create movement that solves the problems under these conditions.

On the contrary, Ervi Sirén's choreography is a work closer to carving, and this was the most stimulating aspect of participating in the production of “KITE,” a choreographic piece by Ervi. Of course, it is not as if each individual's body is made of completely different materials like wood or stone, but, for example, even if the number of joints is the same in each body, the variations of movement are countless. This is probably a parameter depending on the individual's understanding of space and time, but I think that there is much more in this than that what we normally feel. Because of this, Ervi's choreography (calling it “choreography” for the time being), puts this parameter into order, simplifies it into several basics, and completely makes each person self-aware of this movement.

Regarding working on “KITE,” I could think about its creation process as such a thing, and for me, participating in this was, regardless of the peaceful days, a very stimulating experience.

Dancers/ Performers

Takiko Iwabuchi
Participating in KITE

My motivation for participating in this project is that I took a workshop audition last September and came into contact with Ervi Sirén's method of cultivating the body. My main reason for participating was to experience how this method would be reflected in the creation of a dance piece, and to take in this method continuously for a longer span of time.

My impression of actually participating in this project for five weeks, put shortly and with various meanings included, is that it was a very indulgent time.

First, about the environment, we could rehearse all day at a decided studio for the creation period which lasted about 1 month, the music and lighting staff participated in production from an early stage of creation, and we had a situation in which we could go through with creation on schedule. Then, since we had plenty of support for the financial aspect from the organizers, we were provided with an environment in which we could concentrate on working on production without being overwhelmed by other work. If you think about it usually as a job, it's probably a very obvious thing, but when you think of the situation of Japanese contemporary dance's creation environment, it is quite difficult to carry out creation in the typical kind of environment. In this project we were provided with the ideal environment for creation.

About the contents of the actual creation, Ervi's chosen method was very stimulating and interesting for me. First, there is a warm-up consisting of a series of exercises made up out of her many years of experience as a dancer and educator. These foundational methods are well informed of the functioning essentials of the body while being simple and adaptable to any and all performers. Because it was simple, it was very difficult to acquire these methods, but as we repeated them everyday, I could become self-aware of the sensations of the changing consciousness towards my body and have time to deeply approach my body. During this period, Ervi was always very patient, as well as possessing an eye for precisely seeing through to the body's core, and she gave proper advice to each one of us. There wasn't any discussion or exercises to sense our relationships to other people but, while we listened to the advice Ervi gave to each person, observed each other's movements and repeated these simple exercises in the same space daily, we naturally came to respect each other and I think that we became able to share a sense of the space as a group.

Also, another thing that was fresh about Ervi's approach was that her exercises and dance piece creation were completely connected. This piece's title is "KITE," but during the creation process we didn't talk within the group about the piece's concept and the work was just only repeating the basic movement exercises. But if I think about it now, the concept of the piece was just to find how we exist there, and I feel that it was a specific method for embodying Ervi's image of the piece. Regarding this work, Ervi called us dancers "brave," but I feel that she herself was brave for choosing this technique. I think it is uncommon to believe in and go through with a dance piece wherein dancers, who simply face their bodies, are placed onstage, in the midst of the current contemporary dance world that stresses concept and has the tendency to emphasize dramaticism and a visible theme. I think this took determination and bravery. By working on "KITE" I could stop and think again "what is dance exactly?" This was for me, personally, a very big gain. I think this is because there was an environment that allowed concentration, an environment that allowed this fruitfulness.

Since there are opportunities to perform this piece again in Tottori and Finland, we will convey what we received through this creation process once again and I would like to raise the level even more so that we can impart this rare experience that we gained in the creation process to the people watching.

Something that Ervi said to us that left a lasting impression on me were the words: "No one can take away the sensation which you all have learned about your body. The things you can see, physical things may go away depending on the environment, but the things which you learn will not. You can always carry it with you into the future as your own." Ervi is a very good choreographer and educator. Currently, I am often in the position of educator, director or choreographer, and mostly I am in the role of giving output. But, with this project I could participate in someone else's piece for the first time in

over ten years, and it was a really fresh and rich experience to be able to learn from someone. I could feel that there are still many things that I do not know, that I want to learn, and I must learn, and I think that this will be a driving force for my own dance activities from now. Thank you very much for this valuable experience.

□ Yumi Tateishi

I have been interested in different cultures since I experienced living abroad for up to half a year, and I have had an interest in exploring and thinking about how my body and self will transform in the process of creation and at the same time what I already can do, what I possess as a Japanese person. Then, I have also been interested in Ervi Sirén's choreographic method, her original technique for creating a piece, and also in her approach. The recruitment period was at a time when I was searching out my dance career, and so I applied with the hopes of finding some kind of new possibilities.

Various things were very new and fresh but, in the midst of all of this, the contents of her exercises were very excellent.

By working very slowly and gradually, I was conscientious of my spine, and by moving along my skeletal structure and corporeal orbit I experienced new movement. The more we repeated this exercise, the more I could intuitively and sensitively feel my body, strip off any unnecessary exertions, have the actual feeling of the body's spontaneous natural healing, be lead to new possibilities of the body, and thus be allowed to discover all of this. The creation method was also very unique.

The exercises that we did everyday, without fail, had the effect of preparing the body with exercise and concentrating the mind. Then, under her instruction, we repeated the work of moving the body section by section, such as the joints, thighs, feet, and hands. I think that she was carefully looking at how us dancers were approaching our own bodies and how we were transforming. We diligently spent much time and moved our bodies. Then I imagined the culture or national character of Finland as having a fruitful lifestyle that respects the individual, like her stance of allowing for the time to give the dancer's physical condition the utmost respect. For myself as well, from this method I felt the time lag between by mind and body disappear and became able to directly respond to the body. Then, I became able to feel the body sensitively and subtly, little by little, and experienced a new realm.

Upon completing the composition of the piece, the method of directly making these exercises a part of the piece was an act of throwing out our self-consciousnesses, and we needed time to think about how to face this. However, working under her clear stance in attempting to present the realm of the body's soul, it was not just moving our bodies from the simple desire of wanting to dance. Her work is searching and presenting the source by her own creative approach, without being confined by pre-conceived ideas. I think that this is a very deep and meaningful thing that penetrates the true nature of things, and again I would like to express my gratitude for being able to receive this priceless time and encounter.

I think it is true that the work of facing the body, without being confined by currently pre-existing dance or techniques, is devised by various methods. However, this work requires time and effort, and I

think that for us dancers it is a work that seems possible but is in fact impossible in order for us to make a living, and I think the present situation is very ambiguous. But, in this creation, I experienced Ervi's choreographic method, and through this work that establishes her original methodology, I could truly feel a self-confidence that produced something sufficiently strong and unshakeable, clearly more so than dance, which requires the acquisition of existing techniques. Also, in this project I also thought from the perspective of "What is a piece?" In the midst of a move to focus on conceptual pieces, her piece generally devoted itself to and spun a composition from the moving body (the dancer), and the composition of the space was almost unnecessary. Especially because this is a steady and thorough dance piece, I thought that the method of deriving the piece from dancing made this a very meaningful dance piece.

Regarding my career from now, I truly felt all over again the necessity of devising an original methodology under an unshakeable stance that does not rely on pre-existing choreographic methods or techniques. I think this is the most meaningful and solid work, as an indicator of space and the body.

Koji Tamamura

The recruitment guideline of "people who are sensitive to their own bodies" was a big motivation for me to think of participating in this project. Originally I was doing theatre direction and scripts, and then approximately one year ago I thought, "Perhaps I cannot direct people (or put into words) about something that I have not experienced myself," and I began dance. If I think now about why I have been a dancer until now instead of a stage actor, the impetus for this was my encounter with the genre of improvisational dance. It was a very fresh and new thing for me, at the time, to try to honestly put forth what I think in the form of physical movement.

Of course, I don't think that it is that simple of an idea, but even now I think the idea of "honest presentation" is very important. Improvisation was also my motive for dancing, and all the less I was pulled in by that recruitment guideline. Without having much experience in dance, I thought that my only strength is the "sensitivity towards movement" which I cultivated through improvisation. Luckily, I passed the audition, something which I cannot believe even now.

When rehearsal started I was a little confused, also because I couldn't speak English. However, I think I became used to it little by little as the piece was improvisational, and I really sympathized with Finnish choreographer Ervi's way of thinking. It was different than the movement I have been doing until now, movement which prioritizes my own feelings, and has the techniques of feeling the sensation of floating in water, loosening the joints and moving the way that my body wants to move. By doing Ervi's method, little by little, I think that I became able to understand in which direction my body wants to move and what my body is saying. Moving by feeling is also one way of becoming honest, but I learned that movement following the body is another method for honesty of movement. It was fundamentally the same as the way of thinking to "honestly put forth what I think as movement," which is what I felt at the beginning when I encountered improvisational dance.

Except, I had to have a dialogue with my own body in order to move in the way my body wants to move. That result was an inclination to be completely led into my interior. Transitioning from that state

to what will be presented to the audience as expression, I didn't really feel any blank space to allow for thinking about how to make the appearance of the movement better. Upon doing something very simple, I felt that when various compositions or methodologies are added to improve the appearance, what is being done, that subtle, sensitive and therefore essential thing that we want to show, would become difficult to see.

I think the next matter for this method from now is how to present this sort of subtle action to the audience as one piece. I, myself, don't have the answer to this issue. However, I feel a possibility for the expression of Ervi's method to be relatable to many people. The method of making a piece by looking at the body as one material that everyone possesses should be able to pull out the possibilities of each individual's body. I think a different sensation can be given than the sight of something grand, something different than the audience viewing the idiosyncrasies or ingrained habits within the body-material as a spectacle. Especially because everyone has a physical body, it is easily accessible for the people watching, and perhaps easy to become bored by due to it's closeness to everyday life. However, although it appears simple, if this was made by having a dialogue with the body, which we are inseparable from in order to keep living, it should have the possibility to convey something to many people.

I, myself, have had trouble with elements such as the means of composition, the problem of appearance, and the act of continuously dancing honestly, and I haven't been able to fit these together well. I think that people who make expression all have this distress, and I don't think it is the case that I solved this problem because I participated in this project. But, I feel that I could confirm again that the foundation is not the appearance, but at the end, it is the body.

If it was a Japanese choreographer I would understand the words and then move; although there was translation, there was also the fact that I did not understand English. I thought about many things for myself, and I think there were many parts where I understood with my body rather than understanding with words. I also felt impatient towards the things, which I did not understand, but it was a new experience. It was good that I could meet the staff and the fellow performers with whom I danced. I hope that we can make dance that is even stronger and more graceful than the Kyoto performance in June.

Masaru Kakio

In the present day, something without purpose or use is considered to have no value. Sometimes I think the same way and waver in my feelings. The value of an action that, at first glance, accomplishes nothing and has no usefulness- after this is found and confirmed, we present it to the world as having value not just as art but especially as something in society, and also as being one of human being's happiness, more than anything else.

To be honest, intuition and timing are what led me to participate in this project. However, when I considered it afterwards, I noticed a variety of elements supporting my motivation for participating. First, the recruitment of dancers with experience, an interest towards Finland, a country whose dance I don't get much information about, an interest towards Ervi Sirén, who is an educator with a long dance

career, and an encounter with a far away person from a distant country. Then, a large motivation for participation was that this project offered a situation in which I could carefully confront the universal and fundamental value of the aforementioned “act that accomplishes nothing and has no usefulness,” and I had the intention of making this confrontation.

In the actual one-month rehearsal, oddly enough, Ervi’s views of the body and dance approach were the acts of rethinking fundamental values by deliberately spending time and approaching the body honestly. As a dancer and as a human being, it was a peaceful and rich time, and it was educational. Including the presentation at Yokohama, with the performance at the Kyoto Arts Center, we have held a presentation of this performance on stage in two performances. As a performer in the piece, I will not write down the good and bad aspects of it, but if I put it simply into words, I thought, “If only everyone danced...”

Of course, I think there is something being told in the piece, and this significant is great. I dance because I want to dance, however, the reason why I honestly thought so this time was that Ervi’s view of the body and approach were something that has an influence coming from the foundation of human beings, and I felt that this could be shared with various people. In order to live a better life, I felt that human beings living in modern Japan have a necessity for a situation and experience that directly addresses and affirms usefulness, beauty, ephemerally, intensity, and the joy of accomplishing nothing.

What can be done through the more-than-ever approved contemporary dance and the act of living? What are the possibilities? What I thought strongly through this project was of dispelling the snobbish image of dance in Japan and reclaiming the perception of dance as a natural and common thing. Then, in Japan today there is a growing interest in the body, such as martial arts, walking, jogging, LOHAS, organic products, mountain climbing and yoga; but when dance is compared to such things, it is hard to clearly see dance’s usefulness as it cannot be analyzed scientifically and also has a snobbish image. However, dance includes that uselessness and purposelessness, and therefore is more human, light, heavy, extending the world for oneself, possessing comprehensive possibilities, and one meaningful method in the present-day.

It’s no good if it is only carefree and easy-going, but also it is meaningless if we simply replace the current value and say that it’s good as long as it is purposeless or as long as it is art. But, what I think regarding my own activities from now is that there is life in a place that transcends doing and non-doing, and I intend to naturally face both as a fundamental job for mankind that is not to be forgotten and present this in a high-quality manner as much as possible. Specifically, if I have the opportunity to hold a workshop or such from now on, I want to first face the body, like Ervi has been doing, and do it in a style that carefully and deliberately affirms the body. This is because, as I said before, in today’s Japan I think this is necessary and useful for those who have not yet experienced dance, regardless of their age or occupation. I would like to carry out a workshop centered on improvisation and with the purpose of seeing a momentary glimpse of freedom.

Also, every day I felt the importance of actually making face-to-face contact with people of different cultures and languages and furthermore the possibilities of dance as a tool to go beyond words. Personally I want to re-consider dance from an anthropological and historical viewpoint and go on to do this sort of work as fieldwork, regardless of whether it is official or private.

Lately I feel modernity in dancing improvisationally. I thought that I want to do more activities with improvisational dance. Through this period, I feel that my cognizance of my own improvisational dance has deepened. In this project, Ervi's choreography was (first, with the precondition of facing the body) establishing several tasks, such as moving from the eyes, moving from the hands, and deciding direction, and then entrusting the body to these tasks, grasping the movements that naturally arose from inside ourselves, and developing these with as little ego as possible- a style that is different from typical choreography. I was surprised that her viewpoint was Eastern (if I had to call it Eastern or Western.) I could feel and respond to her style, and I also learned from Ervi's thorough behavior.

If an example of this kind of living through tasks is taken from everyday matters of going to work at a certain time, making money, and being considered attractive by others (although the choice of the task and the way of limiting them is important), I feel that it connects to the objective of living a fruitful life, a methodology of living better. The key points of how to limit these and face the body are important keywords for me that will connect to making a dance piece, dancing improvisationally, and even the act of living from now on. This was a great opportunity that made me think about various things, of what I want to convey, through what kind of style, and to what sort of people.

However, for now what I find interesting in watching dance and dancing is that it lets me think that human beings are interesting, deep, and unknown. Even at this point I think and think, live on, and in the instant that I suddenly transcend the words of "let's just dance for now, I'll try dancing," an overwhelmingly invigorating moment begins. From now, we will present this piece in Finland and Tottori. I feel, with my own body, the importance of this long-term project on modernity and gratitude for this kind of opportunity. I want to make this a good dance piece.

Takao Kawaguchi

For me, as someone who has for the past several years mainly had been creating so-called performance pieces by putting together text or film, facing pure physical movement was one big challenge. I am naturally an impatient person and soon end up chasing after composition or story. I have been putting off the things that, in the verbal sense, come before the story, or before the written word or vocabulary, things like "breath" and "sound" that do not make meaning by themselves- speaking of dance, these are things like balance, approaching the center of movement, stretching, opening, tension and release, and the weight of the body.

Since I have primarily been working on creating my own pieces and do not have much experience dancing other people's choreography, I am very grateful for this valuable opportunity to dance Ervi's choreography in this project. I felt that I could find something that had been missing in myself until now, and that was opening the body deliberately and carefully through a repetition of simple exercises in Ervi's workshop last September. Then, this winter, I was very happy during the one-month of continuing this work in which we listen closely to "sound" and "breath" through simple exercises. The skin of the bottoms of both of my feet almost gave in many times, but, in the same way, my way of thinking about the body or dance was also peeled off once or twice. One friend who saw the performance said that my old habit of over-exerting myself was gone, and another friend who I saw immediately afterwards said that, compared to a performance from a few years ago, my movement had become much clearer, and

my walking had become stronger. I was really moved when I thought, myself, that I had received a lot of sustenance.

This work was with Ervi, and at the same time it was a collaborative work with four other dancers. Since I always used to rehearse by myself, dancing together with them was exceptionally enjoyable. To witness that the changes happening in my own body were visibly occurring in their bodies as well was a refreshing surprise, and I could notice many things.

From now when I go back to working on my own performances, I think that I will again definitely be tormented by composition or story but, I intend not to forget an extremely basic thing, that the story is made by the layering of each “sound” and “breath.” KITE is scheduled to go on to Finland in June and Tottori in September. I am looking forward to it very, very much.



When I look at the kite in the air I see
lightness, joy, playfulness
stillness and waiting
unexpected moments
courage speed and freedom
life itself and it changes me

Fri March 2 at 7:30pm, Sat March 3 at 3:00pm
(Doors Open 30 min Before Showtime)
Post-Show Talk on both nights.

Choreographer: Ervi Sirén

Sound Designer: Aake Otsala

Lighting Designer: Takayuki Fujimoto

Performers: Masaru Kakio, Takao Kawaguchi, Koji Tamamura, Takiko Iwabuchi, Yumi Tateishi

Stage Manager: So Ozaki

Translation/Production Staff: Caitlin Coker, Sonoko Chishiro

Advertising Photographer: Sho Ohashi

Location: Kyoto Art Center <http://www.kac.or.jp/> Tel: +81 (0)75-213-1000

546-2 Yamafushiyama-cho, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604- 8156 JAPAN

Ticket Information

Day of Performance 2300 yen

*Advance Purchase

2000 yen General Public/ 1800 yen JCDN Members and Students

4000 yen Ticket Set [KITE+ “We’re Gonna Go Dancing!!” II vol.2 in Kyoto (3/10-11)]

■ **KITE: work in progress** <PRESENTATION & SHOWING>

Wed Feb 15, 2012 at 5:30pm

BankART Studio NYK NYK Hall 3-9 Kaigan-dori, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-0002 JAPAN

500 yen (No Reservations)/ Free for TPAM pass holders

Inquiries: Japan Center, Pacific Basin Arts Communication (PARC)

Tel: +81(0)3-5724-4660 info@parc-jc.org

Performing Arts AIR Meeting @TPAM Participation Programs <http://www.tpam.or.jp/>

■ **JCDN International Dance Residence Exchange Project** ■

Japan-Finland Contemporary Dance Residence Exchange and Co-production Program

Co-Production Partner in Finland: ZODIAK

2011 Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Arts: Overseas Artist in Residency Project

Funding: Saison Foundation Cosponsor : Kyoto Art Center

■ Artist Profile

Choreographer

Ervi Siren

Throughout her career spanning over three decades, Finnish dance artist Ervi Sirén has studied and developed her unique concept of movement. Her sensitive, subtle and profound understanding of the dancing body has impacted the dance training of Finland during her years as teacher at the Theatre Academy (1980-89) and as a professor of the Dance Department (1998-2007). At the age of 60, Sirén once again entered the freelance dance field and became house-choreographer of Zodiak – Center for New Dance for 2010-2011.

Ervi Sirén's working method is movement-based. She has an incredible gift of seeing the inner potential of each dancer individually, and the ability to bring out the uniqueness – the pearl – within. Her method includes practices that open up and reveal new skills and new movement qualities in dancers.

Composer /Sound Designer

Aake Otsala

Aake (b. 1976) is a musician, composer and sound designer from Finland. He has worked with many renowned choreographers in Finland, including Alpo Aaltokoski, Arja Raatikainen and Ervi Sirén. Otsala has also a long career in Finnish popular music and his discography contains over 20 albums, e.g. the records of his own progressive rock band Absoluuttinen Nollapiste. Otsala's solo album "Songs From a Closed Room" was released in 2010.

Lighting Designer

Takayuki Fujimoto / Kinsei

Director/ lighting design artist. Began working with multi-media performance group Dumb Type as the main lighting designer and technical manager. Recently creating many works and collaborations featuring LED lighting design. In 2007 he presented “true/本当のこと” with 9 artists, including Tsuyoshi Shirai and Takao Kawaguchi. Currently creating his latest works “Node/The Old Man of the Desert” and “Seeing Red”.

Dancer / Performers

Takiko IWABUCHI

Studied Contemporary Dance at the Laban Centre. After dancing with artists such as HerveRobbe and Ted Stoffer, founded Dance Theatre LUDENS in 1999 as director and choreographer. Major works include “Be,” “Es,” “Distance,” and “Against Newton.” Has performed in 11 countries to great critical acclaim at major festivals including ImpulsTanz (Australia) and ADF (USA). Awarded the French Embassy Prize for Young Choreographers and the Yokohama Culture Foundation Prize for “Be” in 2001. Received the Japan Dance Critics Newcomer Award for “Distance” in 2005. Recently has broadened her work to include solo performances, international choreographic collaborations with artists such as Julie Nioche, and Tokyo International dance workshops.

Masaru KAKIO

Started dancing after being impacted by Jackson Pollock’s paintings and seeing pictures of Kazuo Ohno. Studied modern dance since 1995 and began his own work in 2000, with projects such as outdoor documentary movies. Active member of Contact Gonzo from 2006 to 2009. Participated as a dancer in the works of companies such as Ensemble Sonne and Dance Theatre Ludens, and of director Zan Yamashita. Based on a dance with fundamental gratitude and joy, from an approach equivocal to surviving a predicament.

Takao KAWAGUCHI

Established ATA Dance in 1991 with Atsuko Yoshifuku’s group and began dance. Participated in the performance arts group Dumbtype and also performed as a solo artist since 1996. After 2003 worked with artists who span the fields of music and art. Has been developing these collaborations into “a perfect life” series, with himself as the theme, since 2008. Without being confined by any one genre, is constantly exploring new means of expression and thematic matters in his works.

Yumi TATEISHI

Began jazz dance at a young age with the influence of her mother (former Takarazuka Revue member). In 2001-2007 performed in an array of classical ballet, jazz, and tap dance stage productions. Debuted her self-directed, choreographed works “Peace” in 2008 and “Spiral” in 2009. Studied dance in Berlin in 2010. Presented her original work in the 2011 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space.

Koji TAMAMURA

Established the unit “Tori to Tora” as director and scriptwriter in 2007. Began dance as Yoko Mutou’s apprentice in 2009. Performed his original work “Rain” at the Chiyoda Arts Festival in 2011 and received the Itou Chie Award. With a style rich in improvisation, expresses the actual sensation of the here and now.

■ Audience Survey

【March 2, FRI 7:30pm performance】

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- ◆ I really like the sense of the space's power being formed fluidly when the five were dancing, and the sound was good. The lighting was also good due to its mysterious nature.
 - ◆ It would be easy to express my ideas if there was easy-to-understand choreography, even just partially, but I wanted more places where the five dancers come together, more pacing and tempo. I couldn't really see the differences in the five dancers' personalities. However, I could relax as it was calm and beautiful. On the other hand, I felt like it ended with no stimulating parts.
 - ◆ When they moved, it looked like they were moving, and this was interesting and felt good. From about the third time that they were all moving together, I started to feel completely like I was also up there with them. When the scene sometimes shifted from casual solo dancing to decided choreography or multiple dancers interacting with each other, it made me suddenly realize that these things, such as groups dancing decided choreography, is thought as dance obviously and naturally although this distinction is not obvious or natural. At that moment, it was interesting because the world looked differently. It was also interesting specially. I am interested in what kind of songs sound designer Aake made. (Female student, Age: 20-29)
 - ◆ The very simple, streamlined world was captivating. (Housewife, Age: 30-39)
 - ◆ It was my first time to experience a performance with only sound and movement. It felt comfortable to be able to really focus on the performance. (Housewife, Age: 60-69)
 - ◆ I listened to the after-talk and understood what they wanted to express. (Male, Age: 60-69)
 - ◆ It was too bad that it was not complete as a stage performance. The space composition as a physical body was extremely weak, and completely depended on the music and lighting. I couldn't see the points being made from the space and flow of air with each dancer's movements. The level was showing what kind of workshop they had been doing. I don't understand well what Ervi felt in Japan, what she has been doing, and what she wants to produce from Japan and Finland. I felt the limits of European contemporary dance with this performance. (Artist, Age: 40-49)
 - ◆ I could deeply enjoy the relationship between the sound, lighting, and dance. I could concentrate incredibly well and felt pulled in by each dancer's sensitivity in each movement, which was expressed to the tips of each of their toes. I thought it was awesome how the dancers go on finding this movement. I felt that each dancer could express his or her own kite through "KITE", and find the kite that each one feels. It was very enjoyable, as it seemed like they were communicating without using words. (Female, Age: 20-29)

【March 3, SAT 3:00pm performance】

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- ◆ I was moved by how the piece was made by feeling the sound and making the body still and move. It was a different world than my usual life. It was also my switchover to tomorrow. (Housewife, Age: 50-59)

 - ◆ The continuity of their movement was beautiful just like fish in the current. (Male, Teacher, Age: 30-39)

 - ◆ I could feel soft movement in the midst of pleasant lights and sound. Tateishi's movement was good. (Male, Age: 20-29)

 - ◆ I had the feeling that my heart was cleansed. It was a beautiful piece with absolutely nothing objectable about it. (Female, Office worker, Age: 20-29)

 - ◆ I felt that I saw new dance. (Female, Office worker, Age: 20-29)

 - ◆ I felt that it was fresh dancing. The performance was over in the blink of an eye. I want to see it again. (Female, Age: 50-59)

 - ◆ I felt that I could see many possibilities possessed by the human body. I think that there were definitely already rules in place for each scene, and my first impression is that rule or quality of movement. However, it was a mysterious space and time, in which things looked like they are organic, and tangible substances are suggested when watching this piece for a certain period of time.