

# Concert Tour in Japan

## *Consort de Danse Baroque*

*by Nobuko Yuasa*

In November 2004, CDDB successfully accomplished a concert tour in Japan. From an organiser's point of view, I would like to report the two weeks tour.

Six concerts were held in four venues: Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya (three major cities in Japan), and Okayama (base city of myself). The total number of the audience was 800, and 80 volunteer staff worked altogether. Quite a few staff joined the concert in another venue to enjoy it as audience. The internet communication helped spontaneous publicity between the cities, as the audience talked about and recommended the concert to each other. For example, after the first concert one audience member in Okayama, although she was not sure what the concert would be like until she experienced it, sent e-mails to her friends in other venues to strongly recommend it.

The project received both financial and moral support from Okayama City Office, Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and Fukutake Cultural Foundation. Okayama City government also supported publicity, authorising the concert as an official Arts Festival event of the year. The local government and the organisations had great understanding in the project, and expected that it would encourage Japanese people both in audience and staff to appreciate art and culture through this unique opportunity.

Two newspapers carried articles about the concert tour. One paper presented a very accurate article, since the reporter attended my lecture about Baroque dance beforehand. Another paper had an interesting interview article, which a reporter did with Philippa Waite when she arrived. Both articles contributed greatly to introduce the concert tour, CDDB, and Baroque dance to Japanese people.

The concert hall we used in Osaka was a beautiful restored ballroom. The hall in Nagoya was also an historical assembly hall with mercury ceiling light of Art-Deco design. In Tokyo the hall had fixed tiered seats and a deep, low stage. In Okayama a beautiful round shaped cathedral was used, which was rebuilt recently.

A variety of audience joined the concerts, from the new to the experienced to Baroque dance, some of whom came from a long distance. A great number of e-mails of admiration were sent to me and my staff after the concerts. They demonstrated strong enthusiasm, having been deeply impressed by the concert. Many of them wrote that they felt as if being in a cinema or the time of Baroque, and felt it hard to be back to real life. Some wrote that they could forget their sickness because of the concert. Another

described that air felt like flowing on the floor with the dance. Many letters pointed excellent programming such as an effective insert of the song by Jeremy Badcock and the attractive comedia section, also the variety of instrumentation including symphony, beautiful and elegant costumes, and ultimately the beauty of the dance, especially by Philippa.

Actually dancers could already tell during the performance how the audience was excited by their clapping to the dances, sighs of admiration and the big cheers at the end.

Three dance workshops were held in Tokyo, Kobe and Okayama. 70 participants loved Philippa's energetic teaching as well as her wonderful personality. Another unique programme was a lecture demonstration at a Buddhist temple house in Okayama, led by Baroque guitarist, Dan Jones. Participants enjoyed the professional but easy-to-understand discourse of the music and instrument, while getting to know him. We gave an English style tea break (with home-made scones by my friends and clotted cream from Britain!). During the tour, we also tried to facilitate opportunities for the British performers and Japanese staff to interact with each other, such as lunch meetings, get-together and party after concerts, which certainly contributed to develop good friendship among them. Those opportunities made the tour unique. They helped people to approach Baroque dance from a different angle more easily, to know performers, and to enjoy the concert more.

So many people talked about how wonderful the concerts and events were even months after them. For staff (mainly students of the dance), I believe it was truly a special experience which will inspire them to keep on learning.

Bringing CDDB performers to Japan and introducing the two cultures to each other has been my dream during the past several years. The greatest appreciation goes to Philippa, from whom I have learned so much since 1997. With her, Jeremy, Matt and Dan endured a long preparation and helped the concert greatly. Mr. Otani, a wonderful recorder and oboe player, gave a helpful hand to me, as always. Also my students, fans and friends supported to run the concerts and events. After all, our effort, passion and faith in the art of Baroque dance as well as the wonderful friendship guided this tour to a satisfying completion. I believe the CDDB concert 2004 engraved a lasting memory of the beautiful Baroque dance on people's heart.