

Message from Li Ao



1. How did you come to apply for this competition?

Actually, the first time I heard Shizuoka opera competition is when I was in high school. My voice teacher said this competition is the best and the hardest competition in Asia. He hoped I could sing this competition in the future. It looks like a dream came true:). For another reason, I saw the flyer of Shizuoka competition on the San Francisco opera's advertisement wall when I was an Adler Fellow in SF opera. And my coaching and voice teacher both told me I should do this great competition.

2. Did you have any changes after winning the prize compared to before? If any, what are they?

I think I got more courage after winning the prize. After Shizuoka competition, I got the third prize of the queen Elizabeth competition of Belgium. I got lots of concerts contract in Europe and opera contract. So, I appreciate Shizuoka competition gave me a huge courage to sing on the stage.

3. Tell us about your working situations since the competition.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, lots of my contracts had been canceled. But I found another way to keep working and singing—internet. I made 5 online concerts during the COVID-19 and I also teach students by zoom or WeChat. It works very well.

4. Please give some advice to future applicants for the competition.

You should come to join Shizuoka opera competition if you love opera. This is the best opera competition ever I did. You need to prepare your 6 arias very well in case the jury choose any one from them. The most important thing is your semi-final for my experience. You should prepare your whole role at least one year. Otherwise you will be risky on the stage when you sing the whole role on semi-final. At last, you have to definitely have a grilled eel over rice* before your singing. This food can make you very happy and confident. It really worked for me. Good luck!

*a grilled eel over rice = a famous local dish of Hamamatsu