

Interview

★★☆

The journey from Tokyo to the Great White Way

ニューヨーク・ブロードウェイでステージマネジャーとして活躍する

横尾沙織さんは、大好きな舞台に携わる仕事に就くため、舞台芸術を専門的に学べる米国の大学に進学し、夢を実現させた。9月から大ヒットミュージカル『ウィキッド』の「ステマネ」を務める横尾さんに話を聞いた。

Saori Yokoo had always wanted to work on the stage, but not necessarily as a performer.

“I went to an all-girls school with a **formidable** musical theater club,” says Yokoo. “I performed in our high school productions, but even then, I had an **inkling** that my place was backstage. One thing I was sure about was that I wanted a long-term career in theater.”

She set about looking for a university in Japan with a good theater department but couldn’t find one that matched her expectations.

“I hadn’t planned on leaving Japan but theater came first for me, and so I decided to go abroad where there were more options for stage **enthusiasts** like me.”

Yokoo discovered that U.K. and U.S. universities had theater departments **galore**, with plenty of work opportunities after graduation. So she set herself to study English to make the required TOEFL and SAT scores.

“All my classmates were bent over the red *akahon* books for Japanese college entrance exams. I was the only one with my nose in the blue TOEFL book.”

Yokoo was no stranger to English, though. Her school had a strong English education program and she used to go to a conversation school in her neighborhood as a first-grader.

“The teacher taught us pronunciation, like the difference between “r” and “l” sounds. I’ve kept in touch

with this teacher and we’re still friends.”

Performing in musicals during school gave Yokoo **enunciation** skills and a **knack** for self-expression. Once she got into a university in Ohio, she **hung out** with her American roommate and her friends instead of the international students who tended to stick together and avoid speaking English.

“I wanted my English to be good enough to work in theater. I asked my friends to correct me every time I made a mistake, and if I had any questions I never hesitated to ask. I listened to their conversations, talked and listened some more, **24/7**.”

Instead of going home to Japan during holidays and breaks, Yokoo worked as an intern. By junior year, she knew she wanted a career as a stage manager, and **was cold-emailing** theater people to get the position.

Yokoo now works as a stage manager on Broadway, the **coveted** Great White Way that has launched thousands of brilliant careers and fired the imaginations of generations of theatergoers. She currently works on the hit musical *Wicked*, one of the first productions to re-open under the pandemic.

“I produced *Wicked* in my second year of high school. It’s a musical I’ve always loved and now it’s come back into my life again. In theater, things have a way of **coming full circle**.” (Kaori Shoji)

Great White Way ブロードウェイのこと。formidable 非常に優れた。inkling 予感。enthusiasts 熱狂的なファン。galore 豊富に。enunciation 発音、発声。knack 才覚。hung out 時間を過ごした。24/7 四六時中。was cold-emailing ~に営業メールを出していた。coveted 誰もが憧れる。coming full circle 元の位置に戻る。

横尾沙織 (よこお さおり)

東京都出身。2009年に東洋英和女学院高等部を卒業後、オハイオ・ノーザン大学に進学。シアター・プロダクション、アーツ・アドミニストレーションを学び、卒業後はブロードウェイを拠点にステージマネジャーとして活躍する。9月から『ウィキッド』のステージマネジャーを務めている。



Christian Dionne

Words to live by

It’s OK to walk into the unknown.

未知の世界に歩いていっても大丈夫、という意味です。新しい世界に踏み出すことは怖い不安に思うけれど、何も知らなくても必ず誰かが教えてくれます。だから恐れずに夢を追ってもオッケー。私はずっとそう思ってきました。

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