



2014



Dec
The Chushingura: The
Story of the 47 Ronin



Nov
Transformation of
Tokyo



Oct
Yoshiki, X Japan



Sep
The Moon Shines in
Haiku



Aug
Obake in J-pop
Culture



Jul
Craftsmanship in the
Sky
Hanabi: Firework
Festivals in Japan



Jun
Thoughts from the
First Godzilla
Generation



May
Motoyuki Shibata



Apr
Patricia Field



Mar
KANSAI YAMAMOTO



Feb
YUKA C. HONDA,
CIBO MATTO



Jan
ATSUSHI
FUNAHASHI

2013



Dec
Jonathan Morr



Nov
Kenichi Ebina



Oct
Ushio and Noriko
Shinohara



Sep
DAVID A. HALL



Aug
TATSUYA NAKADAI



Jul
KEN SUZUKI



Jun
NAOKI INOSE

Up until now, the audience has gotten pretty excited and often cheered for me. So I would say the reactions to my performances on stage are not that different. However, off stage my life has dramatically changed. When I am out in public, the chances of people recognizing me is much more likely now than pre-AGT, and the amount of times I am asked for pictures or autographs can't even be compared to before. I previously had also appeared on television, but this has made me once again realize the great influence of AGT. The amount of recognition I receive is exponentially greater now.

You've lived in America for close to 20 years, so what would you say makes you happy about being Japanese?

I think that Japanese in America are basically respected. This is the result of all the hard work of the Japanese until today. I myself haven't encountered much discrimination here in the States, though it somewhat still exists.

Also, Japanese are not skilled at making something from nothing, but I think that they do excel at the ability to further develop things that already exist. This is the ability to not just imitate something, but to create things that go one step further. I think this is something that is in the Japanese DNA. For me as well, my dance skills are not that amazing, but I am particular about composition and how to perform effectively. In regard to things like detailed timing, I am pretty loose compared to Japanese standards. But compared to world standards, my level is comparatively high and it looks perfect.

What have you learned here in America?

I have become proactive in my actions, and I think this is thanks to studying in the U.S. When I was in Japan, I felt like studying was a duty. But since coming to the U.S., it has become fun. I began studying dance after coming here, and it has become enjoyable for me to strut my stuff in front of others.

What advice do you have for others who are pursuing the American Dream?

In order to succeed in America, I think that you have to become the best or the only person in that industry. In my case, I understand that I am not that skilled at dancing. So instead of practicing to become better, I try to show a different performance than others. If you have originality or something that you can call your own, your competitors will fade away.

As a last question, can you give recommendations of places to visit in Japan for Chopsticks NY readers who want to go there?

100 yen shops! They have a much richer variety than dollar stores here in the States, and even though the items are cheap they are of good quality. They serve as a symbol of Japanese technology which enables the cheap production of highquality items.

—— Interview by Kasumi Abe, Noriko Komura Translation by Stacy Smith

Kenichi Ebina

Born in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan. Dance/art performer, producer, choreographer. Came to the United States at age 20 to study dance for the first time. In 2001, his self-created dance team BiTriP won the annual Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater. Starting in 2006, he made a solo appearance on the television show version of this competition, and won the annual contest again. In the 8th Season of America's Got Talent, he knocked out the competition with his original "dance-ish" style, and was declared the winner on September 18th.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cn-NsWRtaSY>

America's Got Talent Live™



For eight years running America's Got Talent® has entertained viewers with its own unique blend of incredible talent and one-of-a-kind performances, in celebration of the American spirit. With a lineup led by the show's brand-new Million Dollar Winner, Kenichi Ebina, the "America's Got Talent Live™" stage show features many of the performers and fan favorites who received millions of votes from viewers across the country.

Official Tour Lineup: Kenichi Ebina, The KriStef Brothers, Collins Key, Cami Bradley, Jimmy Rose, Taylor Williamson and Tone The Chiefrocca.

(Northeastern area tour schedule)

Nov. 7 Verona, NY Turning Stone Casino
Nov. 8 Lowell, MA Lowell Memorial Auditorium
Nov. 9 Buffalo, NY Shea's Performing Arts Center
Nov. 10 Atlantic City, NJ Golden Nugget
Nov. 11 Staten Island, NY St. George Theatre
Nov. 13 Bethlehem, PA Sands Casino
Nov. 17 Westbury, NY Theatre at Westbury

<http://agtlivetour.com/>