

shandongspecial

Qunxing Awards for top art by amateurs

By WANG QIAN
wangqian2@chinadaily.com.cn

The Ministry of Culture granted the top prize for amateur artistic works, the Qunxing Award, to a total of 220 shows on Oct 25 during the 10th China Art Festival in Shandong province.

The works covering dance, music, drama and folk arts were selected from 884 performances created over the past three years by artists from all over the country.

A total of 353 shows were final candidates for the awards — including 109 musicals, 89 dances, 88 dramas and 67 folk artworks — staged for review during the 16-day art gala that closed on Oct 26 in Qingdao.

"The Qunxing Awards have been established for more than 20 years, and have driven a large number of artists to create quality works and promote development of mass culture and art in the nation," said Minister of Culture Cai Wu at the awards ceremony held in the coastal city Weihai on Oct 25.

Competition judge Xu Lijiao, vice-president of China Opera and Dance Theater, said "these works performed by amateur artists from all walks of life are full of vitality and creativity."

"Most of the works depict the daily life of ordinary people, so are easier to touch the audience's hearts," she said, adding that she believes the most impressive artwork is usually based on real life.

Xu said some of the perfor-

mances are even adaptations of true stories of good deeds, which reflects grassroots culture and the spirit of the Qunxing Awards.

One example is the dance *Haiying and Her Mothers* presented by the Lucheng Cultural Center of Shanxi province. It is based on the true story of Zhao Haiying, a farmer in Shanxi, who has taken good care of 54 women without families at her home for the past 30 years.

The award-winning works also include various kinds of Chinese folk art forms such as ballad singing, story telling, comic dialog, clapper talk and cross talk, which won over audiences with their local features.

"China has numerous kinds of folk arts and each has its own local character," said Liu Lanfang, honorary president of China Folk Art Association.

"I'm also glad to see that many performances in the competition have innovations to cater to younger audiences. That's pretty good."

A total of 110 mass culture and public service projects were also granted Qunxing Awards including exhibitions, lectures and art training, as well as cultural and art festivals.

The Shandong Culture Bureau along with the cities of Jinan, Qingdao, Tai'an, Yantai and Weihai were given Outstanding Organization Awards for their contribution to the art festival.

Held every two or three years since 1987, the China Art Festival has developed into the most comprehensive high-level art event in China. It presents the Qunxing Awards to the amateurs and the Wenhua Awards to professional artists.



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Qunxing Award winner *Xiaoman*, a dance by the Shandong School of Performing Arts.



Wenhua Award winner *Children Hoping to Fly*, a drama by Beijing Children's Art Troupe.

WU SIQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Arts 'by the people and for the people'

By ZHAO RUIXUE
zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

The 10th China Arts Festival has set an example for how to stage a national-level event in a down-to-earth way, said a senior cultural official during the festival's closing ceremony on Oct 26 in Qingdao, Shandong province.

"The festival enabled as many people as possible to enjoy artistic efforts. It also provided rare opportunities for art groups to find markets," said Culture Minister Cai Wu.

More than 600 arts companies attended the Performing Arts Products Fair held during the 16-day festival, when contracts for 86 programs valued at 900 million yuan (\$147 million) were signed.

Yu Jian from the Shandong Performing Arts Group noted that "more art programs are being staged to wider markets as China's cultural reform deepens."

"Meanwhile, more art companies have been established providing professional services for art groups."

Guo Shuqing, governor of Shandong, said the festival was "made by the people and for the people". A total of 150 exhibitions were staged for free.

The most popular was the European Classics Exhibition that received 13,000 visits every day on average since its opening on Oct 15.

The exhibition featured the Lucan self-portrait by Leonardo da Vinci and more

than 350 works by other renowned artists including Michelangelo Schiavoni, Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali. Its run was extended to Nov 16 to cater to the huge number of visitors.

The event also presented 2,000 performances that ranged from symphonies and orchestras to dances, musicals, operas and ballets.

Tickets for these performances were as low as 20 yuan (\$3.29). More than 20,000 tickets were distributed for free to migrant workers, senior citizens, students and those with physical disabilities.

Among the performances, 87 competed for the 14th Wenhua Awards, the top arts award granted to professional

performers by the Ministry of Culture.

Fourteen shows including the Peking opera *Ruifuxiang*, the Kunqu opera *Dream of the Red Chamber* and the Qinqiang opera *The Story of Xijing* won overall awards.

Created by the Shandong Peking Opera Theater, *Ruifuxiang* tells the story of how a time-honored cloth brand survived the hard times of the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

On the last day of the festival, 21 artists including Yin Xiumei, Zhang Jian and Ruan Yuqun announced the winners of the Wenhua performance awards.

The next China Arts Festival will be held in Shaanxi province in 2016.