Not ready for export
Show needs to engage audience if it’s to make grand debit abroad

Trying to cover too much of the history in a three-hour musical (with intermission) only makes the production seem rushed. The storytelling seems linear and predictable and the character come across as flat and underdeveloped. It’s hard to imagine much of a reaction to Ritz Chan’s show-stopping number, "Why Dream at Love" when everything that came before seems to have been rushed right past. Judging from past reviews of the musical, the core of the production remains unchanged and is thus open to the same sorts of criticism. However, the musical’s potential lies in its ability to get the audience involved in the story.

Nude wins UOB prize
Decision to award painting about women’s plight was an easy one, says chief judge
A YEAR after the nominee dominated the annual United Overseas Bank (UOB) Painting of the Year award as a tad too sexy, the interesting choice of art teacher Namko Chan Takahashi’s nude painting of a woman entitled Clairevue was announced on Saturday.

In clinching the top prize of a trophy and S$10,000 given by former President S B Nathan in the competition’s 25th year, 25-year-old girl student Takahashi outstripped over a record slate of 1,380 entries.

When asked whether the selection of a nude could be seen as controversial, chief judge Kevin Kain Chew, director of the Singapore Art Museum, responded with a laugh: "Is it?"

On a more serious note, he added: "The nudity was never talked about. It’s a perfect work through which the potential is seen, about the plight of women. All the judges agreed on this. It was an easy decision."

The improvement in the quality of entries from last year to this year was so dramatic that the issue was even addressed by the chief judge in his opening speech. This year’s competition saw a strong showing by Singaporean artists, with nearly half of the entries in the Junior (aged 6 to 12) and Youth (aged 13 to 18) categories.

"The fact that 50 per cent of the entries came from these sections was a lot about the interest in art here," said Mr James McGowan, judging member and UOB’s head of Art manpower director. "The quality level, especially in the abstract art and youth categories, is really, really high."

It remains to be seen, he added, how the artistic potential seen in young people is nurtured.

As for art teacher Takahashi, she looks to be taking a break from nurturing a passion for art in the young in favour of honing her own art.

She plans to leave the teaching profession to become a full-time artist.

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Students beat teachers in Sudoku contest

They beat two JC-level mathematics teachers who joined the general public category, solving their puzzles within 46 minutes. The teachers took five minutes longer.

When asked about their win, the JC team said it was totally unexpected.

"We faced some tough competition from the JC teams, so we didn’t think we’d win," said 22-year-old Sophia Ng. Shy and reserved, the picture "unsuitable", while maths teacher Jonathan Soon, 27, who took home first prize with his team in the general public category, called them "difficult".

Sixty teams competed in the finals, culled from 150 teams who had participated in preliminary rounds in July.

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