

# The Japan Times

NATIONAL

## Niyama bags U.S. ballet contest

JIJI

**NEW YORK** – Japan’s Haruo Niyama on Thursday won the first place in the senior division for men in this year’s Youth America Grand Prix, one of the world’s largest student ballet competitions.

The senior division is for dancers between 15 and 19. Niyama, a 17-year-old high school student in Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, drew attention after winning the top prize in the 2014 Prix de Lausanne, a prestigious international competition for young ballet dancers, in February.

“I think he was under pressure after winning the top prize in Lausanne,” his 26-year-old sister, Hitomi, said. “I’m happy he was able to dance as usual.”

Jun Masuda, 13, from Osaka Prefecture, also won first place in the YAGP’s junior division for men aged between 12 and 14.

The U.S. ballet competition is held annually in New York and is open to student dancers of all nationalities ranging in age from 9 to 19.