

Nebuta Prizes

Every year a small number of floats are awarded prizes. These awards are decided by a panel of judges. Festival organizers, members of the media, and other experts well versed in the Nebuta tradition or the arts, as well as representatives of local citizens, all vote. The awards are not only for the quality of the Nebuta float; they also take into account the participants and the overall performance. Approximately 60 percent is judged on the Nebuta float itself, 25 percent on the parade and the *haneto*'s participation and costumes, and 15 percent on the *hayashi* ensemble's music. To achieve a high score, it is important for the participants to follow all the rules of the festival, including wearing the full costume.

The panel members rank each section with a point system and the float with the highest total number of points is awarded the Nebuta Grand Prize. The Governor Prize is handed to the runner-up, the Mayor Prize to the third-best float, and the Chamber of Commerce President Award and the Tourism Convention Association President Award to the fourth- and fifth-best teams, respectively. Category prizes are handed out for best *hayashi* ensemble, best overall float and *haneto* performance, and superior design. Only full-size Nebuta floats paraded on at least two days between August 2 and 5 are eligible for the prizes, which are announced on the evening of August 5. The winning floats display large placards signifying their awards at their front during the following day's evening parade.

The prize-winning Nebuta floats are paraded on boats in Aomori Bay near the Aomori Bay Bridge on the evening of the festival's last day (August 7) along with a two-hour fireworks show. After the festival, some of the winning floats are displayed in the Nebuta Hall in the Wa Rasse museum until the following year.