

An Unforgettable Year, a Season to Give Thanks

We have been touring throughout Japan this year on the [Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour](#), and in [December](#), our domestic tour reaches its climax and finale. The tour is currently in Nagoya and heading to Osaka, Tokyo, Nagaoka, and Niigata before returning home to Sado Island to perform the last concert of the year to a home audience. With natural disasters this year creating havoc in Japan and abroad, we reflect on a year of safe travels and 30 years of wonderful connections and experiences with feelings of gratitude to everyone that supported us along the way. This December, lend your ears to Japan as we drum out the year! We thank you all for your support over the past year, and the past 30 years, and look forward to the next 30 and beyond together.

Celebrating 30 Years of Kodo in Europe

The final concerts to round up Kodo's 30th Anniversary will be hosted in the New Year by wonderful performance venues and concert promoters in Europe, making for a tour of 36 concerts in eleven countries.

The [Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour Europe 2012](#) is a priceless opportunity for Kodo to hold concerts at a number of Europe's exemplary theaters and concert halls, including [Munich's Philharmonie](#), [Amsterdam's Carré](#), and [Brussels' Bozar](#).



"Honoka"

Furthermore, Seido Daiko, the only taiko team in Denmark and the recently formed first Kodo concert committee abroad, will host Kodo at the premier concert hall [DR Konserthuset](#). In Switzerland, Maria Zehnder, one of Kodo's longest acquaintances and dear friends, will present 5 concerts at [Lucerne's KKL](#) concert hall. Also, in February, Kodo *Dadan* directed by Tamasaburo Bando will be performed abroad for the first time ever at [Théâtre du Châtelet](#) in Paris, France. We sincerely hope that the final concerts of Kodo's 30th Anniversary celebrations, and our new production *Dadan* alike, will be enjoyed heartily at these wonderful halls around Europe.

Here are some words from both Kodo's veteran and newest presenters in Europe about their connection with Kodo and the upcoming tour.

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Celebrating 30 Years of Kodo in Europe*continued from page 1***The Call of the Taiko** - Maria Zehnder, Zurich, Switzerland

“When I look at Kodo’s history, it has many similarities to my life over the last 30 years: Always on the road, living, learning, creating and taking responsibility for a future in harmony with the potential of an unfolding evolutionary process of music and art. The sound of the Japanese taiko first reached my ears in the early morning

*Maria Zehnder*

hours of the night July 11th 1979. At that time I was a press officer at the International Montreux Jazz Festival. I met thousands of artists, but there was only one group that changed my life: Sado no Kuni Ondekoza, (which later became Kodo). Listening to the sound of the taiko played by Kodo, I always feel this is much more than just the living expression of a Japanese tradition. The Kodo members have understood how to be open to an urgent and ever-present creative impulse over several generations. This impulse is not something that can be found within the mainstream by picking up ideas here and there and turning them into new arrangements. Kodo’s inimitable creativity is like throwing ourselves into the fire again and over and over again. Kodo does not just play the taiko. Kodo is the taiko.”

“As the quality of Kodo’s performances continually grew, I took the decision to

book only the most prestigious halls in Switzerland for Kodo and to encourage Kodo fans to make a pilgrimage to Kodo’s performances in Lucerne and Montreux. Today it is a great pleasure for me to be on the road with the new Kodo generation in Switzerland. My deep gratitude goes to all Kodo members past and present, and to all the many musicians and friends who accompanied us along the way. A young Kodo generation is now creating a new day, a new dawn, a new living art form. Our vision is that Kodo will continue to touch the hearts of people all over the world.”

Profile

Maria Zehnder has organized and promoted musical concerts, art festivals and theatrical events in more than a dozen countries on four continents, including her native Switzerland. As an experienced coordinator for individual artists as well as multi-event musical festivals, her expertise has won the confidence of diplomats as well as artistic communities, and has gained worldwide respect for Agency Inter Media. Since she met Sado no Kuni Ondekoza, the antecedent to Kodo in 1979, Maria Zehnder has produced over 60 performances with Kodo in Switzerland.

Kodo in Denmark - Peter Martin Fogh, Seido Daiko, Copenhagen

“I have been practicing karate for more than 30 years now. In my sparetime I help volunteer at Seidokan Japan Center here in Copenhagen, but I’m currently work as the shop manager in a martial arts supply shop. This together with my passion for all things Japanese, means that all my time is used in one way or another with different aspects of Japanese culture.

Since childhood I had a big passion for Japanese culture and when I was 16 years old, the Danish television showed Kodo in a concert in Denmark. This was an amazing moment for me – I still remember that evening sitting on

the floor in front of the TV (I never made it to the chair) and listened to the beating of the drums.

In 2002, I started the first and so far only taiko group in Denmark, and later that year I was very luckily to be invited to visit the taiko group Gogawadaiko from Shimane Prefecture in Japan. This was my first time to Japan and I have been back 4 times since then. I simply love Japan!

Through Gogawadaiko, I was invited in 2008 to Japan to attend my first Kodo concert held in Kawamoto Town. This was a magic moment for me, and I got to know the Kodo staff and players in an informal and friendly manner. This meeting went very well, and later that year Kodo asked me to be their Danish promoter. This is really an honour for me, since I’m the first private person to host a Kodo One Earth Tour concert abroad.

This year’s tour is special for all of us. It’s the 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour for Kodo, and at the same time the 10th anniversary for taiko drumming in Denmark. The best way to celebrate this is to have Kodo playing at the best concert hall in Denmark. This concert will truly be a magic evening, and the Danish audience just loves the professionalism and frankness of the Kodo members. This is not an everyday treat for the Danish audience.”

*Peter Martin Fogh, with his eldest son Christian who also plays taiko.*

The Kodo Apprentice Centre

Kodo eNews contributor Johnny Wales talked to Atsushi Sugano, Managing Director of the Kodo Cultural Foundation, about the Apprentice Centre and to 2nd year apprentice Yuta Sumiyoshi and 1st year Yuko Nozoe about their experiences.

Atsushi Sugano

Kodo's one year apprenticeship programme began in 1985, moving to various sites until 1996, when it settled into an old wooden school in the hamlet of Kakinoura on Sado's southern coast. In 1997 the Kodo Cultural Foundation was founded and the apprenticeship programme expanded to two years. Anyone eighteen years or older can apply. The first year is a general course and is even open to those who have no intention of joining Kodo. The second year is reserved for those who want to join Kodo as either a performer or staff member. If you get through the two years you can join Kodo as a probationary member for a year, after which you are invited to either join the group as a full time member or not. Apprentices study taiko, dance, flute, singing, noh singing, kyogen, tea ceremony and about local Sado culture. They can also learn other instruments



Atsushi Sugano



Kodo Apprentices get up before dawn daily to exercise, clean, and prepare for each day of their training

like shamisen, koto and kokyū. They learn basic culinary skills such as the filleting of fish, cook for themselves and grow their own rice and vegetables.

The great advantage of a two year programme is the continuity it provides, because the second year apprentices pass on the traditions to their juniors and so on down the line. We aim to not only teach taiko but encourage the apprentice's development as a whole person. I have heard from many mothers about their children coming home from for the New Year's break and how their formally surly and withdrawn sons and daughters seem so much more polite, communicative and grown up.

Yuta Sumiyoshi is a second year apprentice who was born in 1991 in Kagawa, Shikoku. He began taiko in the second year of elementary school when he joined a local lion dance troupe. The next year he went to see Kodo and a number of times after that. In the second and third year of high school he made the trek to Sado to see EC. In school he played guitar and sang, even signing with an indie agency and cutting a CD. After

high school he knew he wanted an exciting life rather than a calm and predictable one and so decided to train to be a professional taikoist at Kodo's Apprentice Centre.

Upon arriving he was surprised at the lack of facilities, like body building equipment and the lack of heating. But now he feels that the very simpleness of the facilities encourage students to reach into their inner resources and engender a kind of spiritual development. Before coming he imagined it would be a two years of pain and deprivation. Having been here a year and a half – though the curriculum is broad and exhausting – he sees how it is all leading to his goal to become a professional taikoist, and it has been a lot more fun than he expected.

His goal is to improve his behaviour, his stance, posture, attitude, even the way he walks and holds himself. He loves the *fue* (bamboo flute) and singing and composing melodies and wants to do more of that. He also enjoys the *sanshin* (Okinawan stringed instrument). As a second year

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Kodo Apprentice Centre*continued from page 3*

apprentice one advantage of having juniors around is that it makes him work that much harder because he doesn't want to look bad in front of them. He has also discovered that when he teaches he can often work out the

*Yuta Sumiyoshi*

truth of the thing for the first time himself. Apart from taiko his favourite activity at the centre is being in charge of the rice paddies. Touching the earth. It takes him back to his childhood helping his granddad in the fields.



In their rice farming studies, apprentices grow seedlings, plant, grow, harvest, dry, and husk the rice. It's a labor of love, and the taste is well worth the effort.

Grace Yuko Nozoe was born in 1978 in Toronto Canada. Her father is a Nisei (the son of Japanese immigrants), born in British Columbia and her mother is from Hiroshima. Yuko grew up speaking Japanese at home and started playing piano at four, violin at seven and trombone at twelve. She took a Bachelor of Music degree at Queens University in Kingston Ontario, upon graduating started teaching piano, then spent a year getting her certificate as a teacher of English as a second language. This perennial student then delved into her other passion, earth sciences, and took a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science at the University of Toronto. Somewhere along the way she also managed to fit in playing with a taiko group for 10 years. When she saw Kodo at Toronto's venerable Massey Hall it was earth shattering. She resolved to join Kodo, and at the age of 32 was accepted as an apprentice.

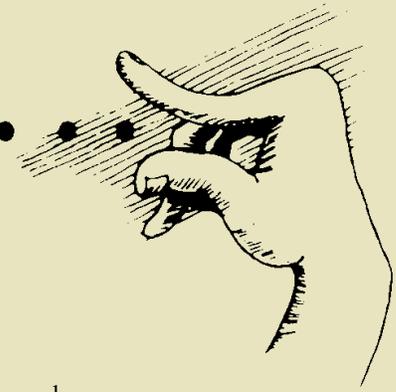
After 6 months it has been everything she expected, and a good deal more. It has been a huge challenge having to start everything from scratch. Though she considers herself a reasonably good musician, she claims not to be an

*Yuko Nozoe*

outstanding taikoist, though she loves playing them. Beyond the taiko though, she finds the cultural differences a little daunting. Raised in a Nikkei household she figured she had a pretty good handle on Japanese culture, but discovered she doesn't. It's different and she is surprised to be surprised. Musically she never had any difficulties in expressing herself in the Western tradition, but everything she does seems to stop a few inches away and doesn't reach anybody. This is her great challenge. Also, because of her age, she can't use her body in the same way as her younger peers. She feels she can compensate though, as she knows what kind of limitations her body has and so can adapt herself to the demands. She feels this is one of her strengths. She loves playing the kokyū, and has also discovered she really enjoys singing, a revelation, as she has never been fond of her own voice. She keeps hearing that her singing's not Japanese though, so there is more work to do there too. Yuko came to Sado thinking that she was 'kinda Japanese and kinda Canadian, but I'm not, I'm Nikkei.' (meaning "of Japanese heritage")

Of the non-taiko activities — just like her fellow apprentice Yuta — she likes rice farming. Putting her hands into the ground and getting really dirty. It feels *really* good.

in brief...



Kodo eNews is carrying on this corner from [the Kodo Beat](#). We will keep you up-to-date with short notices each month, but please excuse the not-so-brief notices below while we catch up.

Sado Island Taiko Centre staff Yukie Oba left the centre at the end of August to explore life away from Sado where she was born, raised, and became a Kodo apprentice. We wish her all the best on her new path offshore.

On October 4th, Kodo members Yoshie (nee Sunahata) and Kenzo Abe had their first child, a daughter they have named Shizuka. Yoshie stepped down from the Kodo stage last December and (though still on maternity leave) remains in our group as a member of the Kodo staff.

Kodo Cultural Foundation was authorized by Niigata Prefecture as Public Interest Corporation by the newly established Japanese law and registered on November 1st.

Yoshikazu Fujimoto, Chieko Kojima, Yoko Fujimoto and Motofumi Yamaguchi will form the heart of [special Kodo concerts on Sado Island](#) in the spring, summer and autumn of 2012.

The next issue of Kodo eNews will be out in February 2012. We wish you all a wonderful holiday season and look forward to reconnecting with you all in the Year of the Dragon! Updates in the meantime will be posted on [Facebook](#) and the [Kodo weblog](#).

Enjoy Niigata This Winter!



Sado Island and Niigata Prefecture have a truly classic winter, with the best snowfall in Japan and some of Japan's first-class ski and hot spring resorts. We hope you'll take the time to come and enjoy the seasonal delights of our home on Sado Island and in Niigata Prefecture.

The Niigata Prefecture Tourism Guide offers detailed information on how to enjoy your visit to Niigata in all of the four seasons. Visit <http://www.enjoyniigata.com/english/> for access, accommodations, detailed event listings, and more!

You can download a Niigata Guide Book for free by visiting their website or clicking this link http://enjoyniigata.com/pamphlet/en_guide.pdf





Kodo Performance Schedule 2011-2012

KODO 30TH ANNIVERSARY - ONE EARTH TOUR



December: [Japan](#)

- December 1: Nagoya, Aichi
- December 3-4: Osaka City
- December 8-18: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
- December 20: Nagaoka, Niigata **SOLD OUT**
- December 21: Niigata City
- December 24: Sado Island, Niigata

January-March 2012: [Europe](#)

Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg

For up-to-date schedules and box office details, please visit our [website](#).

KODO DADAN CONCERTS 2012

February 15 - 18, 2012 [Théâtre du Châtelet](#) (Paris, France)

KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2012 - LEGEND

(Artistic Director: Tamasaburo Bando)

May - June: Japan Details to be announced

SOLO & SMALL GROUP PROJECTS, SPECIAL EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, NEWS & INFORMATION

Please visit the [top page of our website](#) and scroll down for details.



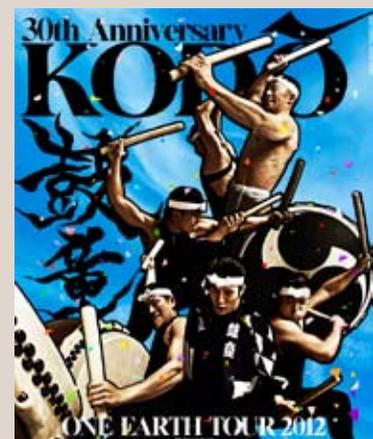
"Stride"

Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour 2012

~ EUROPE ~
January - March

Schedule is subject to change. For up-to-date schedules and box office details, please visit our [website](#).

- January 27: Uppsala, Sweden
- January 29: Copenhagen, Denmark
- February 1: Essen, Germany
- February 2: Dortmund, Germany
- February 4: Munich, Germany
- February 5: Munich, Germany
- February 7: Stuttgart, Germany
- February 8: Mannheim, Germany
- February 11: Dublin, Ireland
- February 12: Dublin, Ireland
- February 22: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 23: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 24: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 25: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 26: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 29: Vienna, Austria
- March 2: Montreux, Switzerland
- March 3: Montreux, Switzerland
- March 6: Milan, Italy
- March 7: Milan, Italy
- March 9: Metz, France
- March 10: Roubaix, France
- March 13: Amsterdam, Netherlands
- March 14: Apeldoorn, Netherlands
- March 16: Antwerp, Belgium
- March 17: Antwerp, Belgium
- March 19: Rotterdam, Netherlands
- March 20: Eindhoven, Netherlands
- March 22: Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- March 23: Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- March 24: Oostende, Belgium
- March 26: Brussels, Belgium



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In the wake of disaster, Kodo started the Heartbeat Project, a multifaceted undertaking designed to support relief efforts and the people of the regions affected by the Tohoku Pacific Earthquake.

We are making new recordings and participating in charity concerts, fund-raising events, etc. Thank you for your continued support. For updates, please visit our [website](#).

KODŌ

New Album:
Kodo Akatsuki



Some of Sado's residents are getting ready to hibernate

Resources

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[Kodo on YouTube](#)
[Kodo CD Listening Booth](#)
[Kodo Bravia Promotion Video](#)
[Friends of Kodo](#)
[Kodo Online Store \(English\)](#)

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