

鼓童

## KODŌ eNEWS

Issue 41

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## Announcing “Mystery”

Amidst reverberations like rumbles in the earth large serpents coil, demons and lions move wildly. They surface from the gloomy dark, eerie at times, and in some respects, even nostalgic... This work fuses Kodo's real worth, the dynamism of taiko expression, with the wondrous beauty and true charm that lie within rituals expressing the worship of myriad gods and reverence for nature that have been traditions in Japan since ancient times. This performance takes you on a voyage to the extraordinary, to a mysterious realm that lies in the beyond.

“Kodo One Earth Tour: Mystery,” the second work directed by artistic director Tamasaburo Bando, following his first production “Legend,” will debut on our home ground, Sado Island, this November. The production will then embark on a month-long tour to Aichi, Osaka, Okayama, Niigata, Kanagawa and Tokyo in 2013 and continue on a nationwide tour in 2014.

We hope you will enjoy our latest production, the profound world of “Mystery.”

For details on the late 2013 premiere season schedule, please see our [website](#).



Photo: Takashi Okamoto

## What's New?

We have just launched our brand [new website](#), please have a look! We hope you'll keep in touch with us on [Facebook](#) and the [Kodo Weblog](#), too. Thank you for all your support of our spring performances both in person and through Facebook, questionnaires and emails! Stay tuned for reports from the road in the July issue of Kodo eNews.

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## Rolex Japan Presents “Amaterasu” Press Conference



Harei Aine, Tamasaburo Bando, Kodo's Tomohiro Mitome  
and Shogo Yoshii

In 2013, musical dance play “[Amaterasu](#)” will be performed at Akasaka ACT Theater in Tokyo in July, Hakataza Theater in Fukuoka City in September and Minami-za Kabuki Theater in Kyoto City in October.

On January 28, we held a press conference in Tokyo. Tamasaburo Bando, Kodo Ensemble Leader Tomohiro Mitome, musical director for “Amaterasu” Shogo Yoshii, and Harei Aine who will play one of the lead roles, Ameno-uzume, appeared and answered questions from the press.

**Q: Has there been any change in the relationship between Tamasaburo Bando and Kodo since the first “Amaterasu” performances?**

Tomohiro Mitome: We have known each other since 2000 and Tamasaburo became our ensemble's artistic director last year. He has given us advice, not only regarding our



Tomohiro Mitome, Kodo Ensemble Leader



Shogo Yoshii, music director for “Amaterasu”

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**“Amaterasu”: Press Conference**

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performances, but also our lifestyle and meals. He endeavours to make the best environment for us as performers and he tells each of us individually, even the new members, what we need to do to improve. We are so grateful to see Kodo's members grow so quickly, shooting straight up like bamboo under his watch.

Shogo Yoshii: When we performed “Amaterasu” in 2006, I felt that Tamasaburo taught and the Kodo members learned, but this time, our relationship is much closer than ever before. Our hearts are connected now, so we grasp what he is saying more frankly than before. I think that we are now able to create richer performances by talking to one another.

**Q: How was Harei Aine chosen to play the role of Ameno-uzume?**

Tamasaburo Bando: Actually, Shinji Ueda\* recommended her to me. She retired from the Takarazuka Revue last year and he said that “it will be fun to perform with her.” I was very glad to hear that. The production will grow by having a “belle of the stage” join the cast in the role of Ameno-uzume. Also, I feel very comfortable talking with Ms. Aine, who graduated from the Takarazuka Music School and has experienced nothing but life as a performer. It is very reassuring for me.

\*Shinji Ueda is a playwright, director, the special advisor of the Takarazuka Revue Board, and chairman of the Japan Theatre Arts Association.

Harei Aine: Thank you. I had just retired from the Takarazuka Revue, so I didn't know what to do next, and I was feeling nervous and tense. But Tamasaburo and everyone told me I would be alright, and they accepted me on board like I was boarding a ship, so I am going with the flow and at the same time I hope to create a new world with everyone through my participation in the performance.

**Q: Mr. Bando, what do you envisage for the direction with Ms. Aine newly taking on the role of new Ameno-uzume?**

Tamasaburo Bando: Basically, other characters such as Amaterasu, Susano-o and



Tamasaburo Bando



Harei Aine, who will perform the role of Ameno-uzume in “Amaterasu”

Tsukuyomi will appear and disappear the same as before. Ameno-uzume will appear as before, but Shogo Yoshii, the musical director, will make a new composition for Ms. Aine's scene and her character's performance will broaden. I am also thinking about creating a costume to suit Ms. Aine.

**Q: Ms. Aine, what was your impression of Kodo when you visited Kodo Village on Sado Island?**

Harei Aine: My impression was that Tamasaburo was working to convey his ideas and thoughts very attentively to each individual of Kodo. I only know the world of Takarazuka, so I am glad to get to know different colleagues in a different world. Also, the Kodo members experience two years as an apprentice before they can perform on stage, which is very similar to going to the Takarazuka Music School before joining the revue. We have this in common and I felt

closer to them after we discussed a variety of things. I really want to begin rehearsals with them as soon as possible.

**Q: Ms. Aine, what is your image of Ameno-uzume and how do you want to perform this role?**

Harei Aine: To date, I have always pursued dance and expression in male roles, so honestly, I am in the middle of rehabilitation now, learning how to dance and sing in a female role. (laughs). This time, I will portray a god and because I can perform as a man or a woman, I would like to express a soul beyond any gender as Ameno-uzume. I think that whether the cave (where Amaterasu is concealed) opens or not depends on how I express myself, so I am thinking about what I need to do to get that cave to open properly. (Note: Opening the cave is a famous scene for Ameno-uzume in the legend of Amaterasu.)

## Makoto Shimazaki a.k.a Shimazaki Sensei

**Kodo eNew's Johnny Wales visited Shimazaki Sensei at his 'hut' near Kodo Village.**

Chairman of the Kodo Cultural Foundation Makoto Shimazaki was born and bred in the heart of Tokyo 'in ancient times' (his words). Interior designer, architect, founder of the Tokyu Hands DIY store chain, friend and mentor of Kodo and its antecedent group Sado no Kuni Ondekoza since their inception, Shimazaki Sensei studied design at the Tokyo University of the Arts. He was interested in 'that which is closest to humans' and so studied chairs and furniture design. He then went on a two-year and eight-month scholarship as the first Japanese student to attend the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. After returning to Japan he did design and planning at a department store, after which he established his own design studio, doing furniture and lighting design and even architecture. He designed



Makoto Shimazaki. From his veranda the view looks south across the Sea of Japan to the mainland 50 kilometres away.

four of the train stations on the Seibu Shinjuku line in Tokyo.

While in Scandinavia he studied a number of craft villages set up with artists-in-residence and thought that there should be something like them

in Japan. In about 1968 or 9, he heard about a fellow who wanted to establish a Sea of Japan University on Sado Island to study traditional culture and crafts. That was Tagayasu Den, founder of Ondekoza. A summer school was held on Sado Island in 1970, which led to the founding of the group. It was thought they should start by getting everyone into shape with taiko, the instrument which then evolved into the groups *raison d'être*. The craft village was put on the back burner.

Why Sado? Well, this island is a fascinating place. Islands in general are fascinating. There is something wonderful in the idea of 'over there, across the sea'. Islanders have a unique state of mind. There is also a great deal of traditional culture from all around Japan preserved here. And Sado has both mountains and the sea together in one compact space, a pretty rare combination. After the war two places in Japan agitated for independence from Japan. One was Shikoku and one was Sado, both islands with abundant food supply.



Spring comes to the Shimazaki's 'hut' near Kodo Village that he designed using materials from an old Sado storehouse.

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**Makoto Shimazaki***continued from page 4*

So Ondekoza was established with the idea to introduce Japanese culture to the world like a band of wandering minstrels. They would earn their keep and eventually go on to create the Sea of Japan University. Taking the sacred drums from temples and shrines and moving them to centre stage was a radical notion, and the world responded to their fresh sound rooted in tradition.

Now 30 years on, Kodo has to be cautious of what is called the '30-year sickness'. When the group started out it was made up of pioneers. Now you have young people joining who were drawn to the bright lights they see Kodo bathed in. This is only natural. They don't understand what the trailblazers went through. This is a feeling Kodo needs to refresh and so we are working with [Tamasaburo Bando](#) as our [Artistic Director](#).

For Kodo to survive, it must do things that are recognized to have social value and at the same time create a system that is financially secure. I am always stressing that without financial independence there is no spiritual freedom. It must develop, not just in scale, but in quality, too. They must continually renovate themselves to increase society's respect for them, not just on the stage, but socially as well.

There are certain inconveniences in living on Sado, but they are far outweighed by the advantages. It is cheaper to live for a start. And it is important to remain relatively free of unnecessary distractions. The [Apprentice Programme](#) is two years long, during which time the young people can't use their cell phones. They can concentrate on the task at hand. If they were to live in the city and commute to training while holding down a part-time job they wouldn't learn nearly so

much in so short a time. I feel the need for the village to encourage and blend with the local culture and encourage its development. Also because of the ever-dwindling rural population and availability of empty houses, I feel less the need to build new homes and buildings for the village and rather the need to make good use of those traditional places.

Up till now [Earth Celebration](#) has been centered on the town of Ogi but I would like to see it become a [Sado Arts Festival](#). Kodo now has the know-how to organize major events and attract talent from abroad. I think we should be working hand-in-hand with Sado Islanders to rejuvenate the whole island.

I believe that for the 21st century we need to develop a hybrid culture,

less compartmentalized than it has been since the industrial revolution. Technical engineers need business and design experience. You can no longer survive merely as a technician. Designers need business and technical ability. And businessmen need technical knowledge and design ability. The Apprentice Centre is principally there to develop taiko specialists, but not everyone who participates will go on to become a professional drummer. I see it as our duty to help forge young people who – when they enter society – have the ability to flourish. So the apprentices also learn gardening and cooking for instance. They spend two years learning the fundamentals of how to survive as a human. And if we can enrich and foster their spirit, not only will they benefit as individuals, but this growth will also be visible on the stage.



*Shimazaki Sensei beats the drum at the Kodo Village festival*

*Chairman of the Kodo Cultural Foundation Makoto Shimazaki makes a speech at the opening of Earth Celebration every August.*



*Shimazaki Sensei deep in discussion with Kodo staff members at the Kodo Apprentice Centre*



## Earth Celebration 2013: Explore the Nature of Sado Island



Discover the attractions of Sado when you come to [Earth Celebration](#) this August! These outdoor exploration courses are designed to help you discover Sado Island, where people and the natural world strive to co-exist in harmony. [Apply now](#) while spaces are still available!

### A. Kotoura Sea Kayak Experience

Aug. 23 (Fri) - 25 (Sun) 10:00-12:00 / 13:30-15:30 (6 times)  
Kotoura is famous for its beautiful coastline, clear waters and diving spots. Take a paddle in a sea kayak to enjoy playing in the sea breeze. This program is recommended for lovers of the great outdoors.



### C. Ogi Peninsula Geo-Tourism

Aug. 24 (Sat) 10:00 - 12:00, 13:30 - 15:30 (2 times)  
Ogi Peninsula is famous for its beauty and the varied topography of its shoreline. With the help of a Geopark guide, come explore crustal deformations and learn about a way of life that is closely connected to the topography.



### B. Osado Natural Giant Cedar Forest Walk

Aug. 23 (Fri) , 25 (Sun) 9:10 - 12:40 (2 times)  
Enjoy a cool, refreshing walk in the forest on the Osado Mountain Range and see the Ishina natural cedar trees, which have been warped by strong winds and snow in the harsh winter season. A local Sado eco tour guide will lead the way.



### D. Crested Ibis Conservation Centre and Satoyama Hike

Aug. 23 (Fri) , 25 (Sun) 14:15 - 17:10 (2 times)  
You can come within a inch of Sado's elusive Crested Ibis! Visit the newly opened Crested Ibis conservation facility, then we'll guide you through the bird's natural habitat, Satoyama.

All Courses: Travel included in fee. Participants must be aged 10 or over. Primary school students (ages 10-12) must be accompanied by a participating parent or guardian. For further details and application forms, please visit the [EC website](#).

\*The guidance for all four courses will be in Japanese only. Applications can not be made by telephone.

## Kodo Performance Schedule 2013 - 2014

**KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2013: LEGEND**  
**FINAL PERFORMANCES IN JAPAN**  
 June: [Japan](#) Gunma, Saitama, Tokyo

**SCHOOL WORKSHOP-PERFORMANCE TOUR IN JAPAN**  
 June: Niigata, Shimane, Ehime, Fukuoka

**ROLEX JAPAN PRESENTS “AMATERASU”**  
 Tamasaburo Bando & Kodo collaboration  
 July 4-28: Tokyo  
 September 5 -29: Fukuoka  
 October 5 -27: Kyoto

### EARTH CELEBRATION 2013

Annual performing arts festival hosted by Sado Island and Kodo. This year features a reunion performance with Tsugaru Shamisen player Hiromitsu Agatsuma and an enhanced outdoor version of Kodo “Dadan.”  
 August 23 (Fri) - 25 (Sun): Sado Island, Japan

### NEW KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2013: MYSTERY

November - December: Japan  
 Sado Island, Aichi, Osaka, Okayama, Niigata, Kanagawa, Tokyo (TBC)

### 2014

**NEW KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2014: LEGEND**  
 January - March: Europe (Details to be announced soon.)

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

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

## Rolex Japan Presents “Amaterasu”

~ JAPAN ~

July, September, October 2013

For further details, please visit our [website](#).

July 4 (Thu) - 28 (Sun)  
 Akasaka ACT Theater,  
 Minato Ward, Tokyo  
 Ticket reservations have now closed. Door sales will be subject to availability.

September 5 (Thu) - 29 (Sun)  
 Hakataza Theater, Fukuoka City  
[Tickets On Sale July 20.](#)

October 5 (Sat) - 27 (Sun)  
 Minami-za Kabuki Theater, Kyoto City  
[Tickets On Sale July 15.](#)



## Earth Celebration 2013

[Tickets](#) for Earth Celebration 2013 are on sale now! Save by buying 2 or 3-day passes for the [Shiroyama Concerts](#).

Applications for [workshops](#), [live events](#) and [seminars](#) are also open now.

For details, please visit the [Earth Celebration website](#).

*Kenta Nakagome and Masayuki Sakamoto in Kodo “Dadan.”*

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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

Latest Album:  
Kodo Akatsuki



*The numerous rice paddies on Sado Island have all been planted and farmers tend to them with hopes of a good harvest in autumn.*

## Resources

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[Kodo Website](#)

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[Kodo Tour and Performance Schedules](#)

[Kodo on YouTube](#)

[Kodo CD Listening Booth](#)

[Kodo Bravia Promotion Video](#)

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[Kodo Online Store \(English\)](#)

## Contacts

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Performances, Workshops, Bookings, and All General Inquiries  
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Kodo CDs, Merchandise, Instruments  
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