

鼓童

KODŌ

# Introducing Kodo

## Taiko Performing Arts Ensemble



**Exploring the limitless possibilities of the traditional Japanese drum, the taiko, Kodo is forging new directions for a vibrant living art-form. In Japanese the word "Kodo" conveys two meanings: Firstly, "heartbeat," the primal source of all rhythm. The sound of the great taiko is said to resemble a mother's heartbeat as felt in the womb, and it is no myth that babies are often lulled asleep by its thunderous vibrations. Secondly, read in a different way, the word can mean "children of the drum," a reflection of Kodo's desire to play the drums simply, with the heart of a child. Since the group's debut at the Berlin Festival in 1981, Kodo has given over 3700 performances on all five continents, spending about a third of the year overseas, a third touring in Japan and a third rehearsing and preparing new material on Sado Island.**



# KODŌ

### Kodo History

#### 1970s

In 1971, a handful of young men and women gathered on Sado Island to establish *Sado no Kuni Ondekoza*, a group that provided Japanese youth a way to learn traditional Japanese performing arts and craft. In order to support the group financially, the original Ondekoza members began to study and perform taiko, eventually taking the sound of the drum around the globe on world tours. Members lived communally in an abandoned elementary school and spent much of their time practicing the taiko and training to run marathons. After debuting internationally in 1975, Ondekoza emerged as a professional performance group that became highly acclaimed among European and North American audiences.

#### 1980s

As time went by, many of the members began to feel that the philosophy and goals of Ondekoza leader Tagayasu Den no longer reflected those of the group. Eventually Mr. Den left Sado, taking the name Ondekoza with him. The members who remained on Sado reorganized and founded Kodo in 1981. Although performances became the primary focus of Kodo's activities, the initial dream to establish a centre to study Japanese traditional performing arts and crafts has never been forgotten. The first leader of Kodo, Toshio Kawauchi, envisioned "Kodo Village," a creative space where Kodo members could explore new possibilities and interact with artists from around the world. In 1984, the One Earth Tour became the ongoing banner for Kodo's mission of bringing the sound of the taiko to the ears of the world, and in 1988 the dream of Kodo Village became a reality.

#### 1990s

As the number of concerts increased, both domestic and international performances received the highest acclaim. More members with a background in music joined the group, and events such as "Earth Celebration" enabled more exchange with other cultures and musical genres. As taiko culture spreads internationally, Kodo emerged as an authority in the field and solidified its identity as a musical performance group. In 1997, the Kodo Cultural Foundation was established to facilitate more educational and outreach programs.

#### Kodo in the New Millennium

Looking for new ways to explore the profound subtleties of taiko, Kodo begins to explore richer levels of stage expression. The Kodo Cultural Foundation supports both local and international activities through social-education and outreach projects designed to give back to local communities. In 2011, Kodo celebrated its milestone 30th anniversary with a special commemorative tour throughout Japan, North America and Europe. In 2012, Kodo invited Kabuki luminary Tamasaburo Bando to become its artistic director.

# Tamasaburo Bando

## Artistic Director



I've been working as Artistic Director of Kodo since 2012, so 2014 marks my third year. For the first production when I was appointed Artistic Director, I created a work called "Legend," for Kodo's "One Earth Tour." In December of 2013 I created a touring work called "Mystery." For this year, I'll be premiering touring works one after another.

We reorganized the contents and practice time for the summer "Earth Celebration," "School Workshop Performance" tour and "Special Performances on Sado Island." During these two years, we've been able to put in order various things at Kodo, and I think we've arrived at the point where, from a larger point of view, we now have a good grasp on how to create works from Kodo as a whole for our audiences.

I'm very happy that audiences took such pleasure in "Mystery" which premiered in December of 2013. This year as well, I'm planning a new production for December.

With each production, it's a real challenge to create theater that audiences will enjoy. From here on, with the wholehearted efforts of the Kodo players and the Kitamaesen staff, I look forward to producing performances that live up to your expectations, and I hope to go on creating pleasurable new productions. Thank you for your long and continuing support.

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### Tamasaburo Bando

Tamasaburo Bando is a leading Kabuki actor, and the most popular and celebrated *onnagata* (actor specializing in female roles) currently on stage. He has demonstrated his profound aesthetic across numerous platforms, receiving the highest acclaim for his many artistic endeavors. His artistic direction of productions such as "Romeo & Juliet" and "Kaijin Besso" garnered numerous accolades, while as a movie director he shined in films such as "Gekashitsu," "Yume no Onna," and "Tenshu Monogatari," which caused a splash in the arts world. In April 2012, Bando assumed the position of Kodo's artistic director. In September 2012, he was recognized as an Important Intangible Cultural Property Holder ("Living National Treasure") and in 2013 he was decorated with the highest honor of France's *Order of Arts and Letters, Commander*.

### Tamasaburo Bando & Kodo

In November 2003, the first Kodo performance directed by Tamasaburo Bando, "Kodo One Earth Tour Special," was held. The production was created over the course of two years with Bando making five visits to Sado Island for rehearsals.

In 2006, the first on-stage collaboration between Tamasaburo Bando and Kodo was realized in "Amaterasu," a musical dance play based on a Japanese myth of the same name.. It featured Bando as the sun goddess Amaterasu and Kodo as the gods of the story who express themselves through music and dance. This performance was a catalyst for Kodo to break new ground in taiko expression. In August 2007, encore performances were held at Kabukiza Theater in Tokyo.

2009 marked the debut performances of Kodo "Dadan," a production that boldly portrays the essence of drumming. In February 2012, four days of sold-out "Dadan" performances took place at Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, France. In May 2012, Bando's first production as Kodo's artistic director, "Kodo One Earth Tour: Legend," premiered. In 2013, a restyled "Amaterasu" production was performed in Tokyo, Fukuoka, and Kyoto. In November 2013, Bando's second production, "Kodo One Earth Tour: Mystery," premiered.

(January 2014)

# One Earth Tour

## Kodo Performance Activities



The world is a kaleidoscope of people and cultures. In this age of exploding populations and lightening-fast communication, it is more important than ever that diverse cultures learn to understand and accept each other so that all may share our increasingly shrinking planet in harmony. Since ancient times the taiko has been a symbol of community, serving as a link among people, as well as a link between people and the heavens. Through the One Earth Tour, Kodo has given over 3,700 performances in 46 countries around the globe, making the group Japan's most internationally acclaimed performing art ensemble. Kodo will continue to bring the sound of the Japanese drum around the globe, and with the taiko's unique ability to transcend the barriers of language and custom, remind us all of our membership in that larger community -- the world.

### The Building Blocks of Kodo Performances

There are three principal elements that make up a Kodo performance.

The first is based upon traditional folk arts, learned from local practitioners throughout Japan. Our intention is not simply to replicate these historical arts; Instead, by reinterpreting and rearranging them for the stage, we strive to capture their universal spirit and energy as they filter through our bodies.

Art forms rooted in the earth are developed through intimate relationships both between people and their art as well as between art and nature. Therein lie invaluable treasures rich with insights for people living in a bewildering age.

The second element of our performances is made up of compositions by Kodo's friends and mentors. These include composers Maki Ishii and Shinichiro Ikebe, Kabuki musicians Roetsu Toshia and Kiyohiko Semba, and jazz pianist Yosuke Yamashita.

The third element consists of original works composed by Kodo members themselves who have leveraged their exposure to the rhythms and sounds of the many people and places they have visited as grist for their own creations.

Building a Kodo performance program begins with blending these three elements together amidst the sights and sounds of Sado Island. It is then forged into shape on the anvil of dedicated practice and rehearsal.



Odeon of Herodes Atticus,  
Acropolis, Athens (1995)

Nobel Peace Prize Concert,  
Oslo (2001)



Carnegie Hall, New York (1998)

# One Earth Tour: Legend

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## From the Artistic Director

I present to you "Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend," my first work as the new artistic director for Kodo. In this production, I wanted to create a performance that pays homage to the profound expressions of Kodo to date, adds splendor and levity, and harmonizes all elements into a single flow that undulates throughout the programme. I have also composed new pieces in the hopes that they will be passed on to future generations. In these days of tremendous challenge and difficulty, my aim is simply to create a performance that will transport the audience into an inspiring alternate reality, even if just for a brief spell. For this performance, in addition to Kodo's standard *hanten* (traditional Japanese coat), I have also introduced some original costumes with additional fun and flair. I hope that both seasoned fans and first-time audience members will enjoy the entirety of this programme.

I will continue to do all within my power to excel as the Kodo artistic director, and I hope that this programme will act as a catalyst for helping Kodo to reach a new audience.

*Tamasaburo Bando*



## Programme

- Kaden**
- Monochrome**
- Ibuki**
- Onidaiko**
- Tsukimachi**
- O-daiko**
- Yatai-bayashi**

## Featured New Pieces

### *Kaden*

Composed by Tamasaburo Bando, 2012

Tamasaburo Bando has been working with Kodo since 2001 and "*Kaden*" reflects his desire to make something "timeless to be handed on to future generations." The title finds its roots in the musical term "cadenza," and conjures the image of a soloist freely creating both an audio and visual expression on stage. It is also a reference to "*Fushikaden*" (The Flowering Spirit), the 15th century classic text by Zeami, the founder of Noh theater.

### *Onidaiko*

Traditional, arranged by Kodo Based on traditional performing art Iwakubi Onidaiko (Sado, Niigata)

*Onidaiko* (demon drumming) is a tradition upheld in numerous villages around Sado, and this piece is based on one of the many variations found on the island. *Onidaiko* was traditionally performed as an integral part of festivals, performed as an offering in hopes of abundant crops and good health. Through the course of their tireless dancing, the young demon dancers transcend their human form and become almost deities. It is this boundless energy and essence of the divine that we try to express on stage.

### *Tsukimachi*

Composed by Tamasaburo Bando & Shogo Yoshioka  
Based on traditional performing art Hachijo Daiko (Hachijo Island, Tokyo)

*Tsukimachi* literally means "waiting for the moon." Since the days of the lunar calendar, people have looked to the night sky in anticipation of the moon, and what better way to pass the time waiting than playing taiko? Surrender your dancing soul to the taiko, and the beat will echo out like the roaring sea or the wind on a moonlit night.

# One Earth Tour: Mystery

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## Programme

- Jamai
- Yomichi
- Wall
- Ajara
- Ake no Myojo
- Harewataru
- Namahage
- Mute
- Kusa-wake
- Kei Kei
- Chit Chat
- Shishimai
- Yuyami
- Color
- Miyake
- Yatai-bayashi

## From the Artistic Director

Following "Legend," which we started in 2012, we're offering to our audiences the second work in the series, "Mystery." In the earlier "Legend," we linked in a continuous stream music by composers of different eras: Maki Ishii, Kodo's Motofumi Yamaguchi, and some of our present new members. The work was created with the idea that the music would flow together as modern and traditional themes merged. With "Mystery" this time, we're aiming at an enjoyable musical and visual experience of traditional performing arts from around Japan. When we say "regional performing arts," of course we can't actually bring those on stage. It's Kodo's "arrangement" of these that we're hoping our audience will enjoy.

Everyone is drawn to mystery in their own way. For me, what has moved me on Sado Island is

the great world of nature and the beauty of night darkness. Darkness is beautiful and also scary. You look at the road by the light of moon or the gleam of the stars. You look at blades of grass glistening in the night. The horizon of the sea glows dimly. You see what looks like lanterns far away. If they were near you, they'd just be ordinary lanterns, but when you see tens or hundreds of them lined up in the distance, you feel the mystery that's in humanity itself. In this production, there's a "Great Serpent," "Namahage Demons," "Lion Dance," and so forth, but these are just a means of leading our thoughts to mystery, and I hope the viewers will find enjoyment in discovering their own place of mystery. Thank you for your understanding and appreciation.

*Tamasaburo Bando*



# Amaterasu

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In celebration of the ensemble's 25th anniversary, Kodo presented "Amaterasu" for the first time in Tokyo in 2006. This production is a collaborative performance that both features and is directed by world-renowned Kabuki luminary Tamasaburo Bando. The Amaterasu production marked the first time Bando and Kodo shared the same stage after several years of collaborative work. Bando wished to incorporate a well-known Japanese myth into a collaborative piece with Kodo, and thus Amaterasu was created.

Since its inaugural performance, this musical dance-play has received high critical acclaim, and in 2007 Bando and Kodo were invited to give special performances at the renowned Kabuki-za Theater in Tokyo. In 2013, Amaterasu was reinvented with a brand new cast, returning to the stage for the first

time in six years. This restyled production features incomparable dance by Bando who plays the lead as the sun goddess Amaterasu. Special guest Harei Aine (former Takarazuka Revue performer) portrays Ameno-uzume, while Kodo performers play taiko, koto harps and flutes as well as sing, depicting the gods who appear in this famous Japanese myth. In this most recent season, all sixty-seven performances in three major Japanese cities (Tokyo, Kyoto and Fukuoka) welcomed sold-out audiences.



# DADAN

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"Dadan," meaning "drumming men," was designed by Tamasaburo Bando as a simultaneously raw and refined performance that features solely young male Kodo performers in a bold exploration of percussion instruments. When compared to a standard Kodo performance, Dadan is unique with its absence of singing, dancing, flutes and female performers. This production uses taiko drums of all shapes and sizes accompanied by other instruments such as gongs and the Grangtang (a bamboo instrument of Jegog from Bali, Indonesia). For select performances, Dadan also features a video screen that links live and pre-recorded footage to the performance, adding new dimensions and an enhanced experience for the audience. Today, this piece continues to evolve creatively on stage, gaining dynamism and power with each performance. It features the performers

playing the O-daiko (big drum), each facing the giant drum head on in turn, which allows the audience to become completely immersed in sound as they watch each disciplined player drumming with all his might. One could say that this piece simultaneously tests the limits of a player's physique, technique, heart and mind.

Dadan saw its world premiere in Tokyo in September 2009, and the success of this initial run led to its foreign debut at Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, France with four sold-out performances in 2012. Following its success abroad, Dadan toured Japan in 2012 and was showcased twice at the annual international festival "Earth Celebration" on Sado Island.



# Foreign Press Comments

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"It should be a monotonous instrument, but because of the extraordinary variety of playing styles they achieve an unbelievable range of changes in tonal quality that thrill the audience. This is made possible because of Kodo's deep research and creativity."

— Beijing Evening News / CHINA

"Indeed, if there is such a thing as perfection in music, Kodo comes as near to it as any group in the world."

— Boston Globe / USA

"Traditional rituals recast as theater, and contemporary thoughts about ancient instruments both figure in Kodo's performance, which includes ancient and modern compositions. Yet with tense, angular postures, with stylized, frozen gestures and, in one playful piece, with animal-like scampering and slithering, Kodo reminds its audience that, above all, its music is a matter of flesh and blood, wood and stretched skin. Kodo can raise the roof, but the group can also show extraordinary finesse."

— The New York Times / USA

"The members of Kodo, who live, train, and work together on as a collective on Japan's Sado Island, have performed and toured in an effort to remind audiences of their membership in that much larger community: the world. That reminder was clear and mesmerizing."

— Los Angeles Times / USA

"Superlatives don't really exist to convey the primal power and bravura beauty of Kodo."

— Chicago Tribune / USA

"Excitingly varied, marvelously theatrical, fascinating from start to finish, with moments of vivid physical excitement, this programme by a small group of dancers and drummers, remaking performance arts into a modern theatrical experience, was a model of what can be done with folk art."

— The Sunday Telegraph / UK

"Balancing a deadly aggression with utter tranquility, their sound stretches from the lightest of rainfall to cataclysmic thunderclaps, from pleasant laughter to discordant fear and from silence to - just once here - a wall of sound, as high, frightening and impregnable as a mountain. Musicians, theatre directors and all interested in the sheer power of sound to feed emotions should take note."

— The Guardian / UK

Dynamic, electrifying vision ....Nothing will prepare you for the 1,000 lb. drum assault, the precise timing or the wall of sound. An essential experience."

— Time Out / UK

"According to the programme notes for the Kodo drummer's overwhelming performance at Sadler's Wells Theatre, the massive 1000 lb. o-daiko drum has such a strong affinity with a mother's heartbeat as heard by a baby in her womb that small children fall asleep to its thunderous sound. I can vouch for that. A little girl in the audience, who had been kicking up an unholy fuss during the more tranquil numbers, slept soundly throughout the shattering o-daiko improvisation. ....the volume of Kodo's drumming, even at its most powerful, is never numbing or nauseating. There is a strain of peace that flows through the almost terrifying din, and the perfect control of these artists removes any sense of tension."

— The London Daily News / UK

"Sensational stuff, it leaves the audience exhausted but Kodo's consummate artistry refreshed."

— Irish Independent / IRELAND

"The spectator is crushed by their power and then suddenly, silence. Complete silence as if life had stopped in an instant, no applause, not even a breath. I have never seen a show where the audience was so close to suffocating. Don't miss this, the sound of their drums will be engraved forever on your memory."

— Le Quotidien de Paris / FRANCE

"Les batteurs, ne faisant qu'un avec les pulsations de leur instrument, déroulent par leurs frappes des plus saisissantes. Les sonorités peuvent évoquer la douce chute des flocons de neige ou déchirer l'air d'un coup de tonnerre."

— Le Monde / FRANCE

"Het is daar dat Kodo de wereld treft. met zijn neo-traditionele visie dat we allen een zjin, bedoelt de groep ook dat lichaam en geest elkaar nodig hebben. Een Kodo-concert ervaar je evenzeer als je het beschouwt..."

— De Standaard / BELGIUM

"Der Festsaal der Basler Mutermesse vibrierte bis in den letzten Winkel. Was europäische Musikgruppen nur mit Hilfe von Tausenden von Kilowatt- Verst a kung schaffen, gelang der japanischen Gruppe auf ihren Trommeln mit Konzentration und barer Muskelkraft."

— Basellandschaftliche Zeitung / SWITZERLAND

"DER FEINE DONNER VON KODO? Das geschickt inszenierte sorgte so für ein standiges Auf und Ab der Gefühle, und die Augen bekamen erst noch etwas zu sehen. Die japanische Trommelkunst hat offensichtlich nichts mit westlicher Perkussionskultur zu tun, was sie weit über exotische Musikalität hinaus, außerst attraktiv macht. Dennoch wird mit ihr."

— Badener Tagblatt / SWITZERLAND

"Musik, getrommelt, geblasen, geschlagen und getanzt, die ohne Umweg über den Kopf direkt in den Bauch. ins Zwerchfell, in die Blutbahnen, die Glieder und - in die Seelen dringt."

— Tages-Anzeiger / SWITZERLAND

"The drum as a martial art, as a circus act, as an athletic discipline, even as a phallic symbol. These are just some of the impressions offered by the formidable Japanese drumming ensemble Kodo..."

— Il Sole 24 ORE / ITALY

"The Kodo Thrill -The streets of Athens vibrated to the beat of the Kodo drums last night..."

— Athens News / GREECE

# Kodo's Home of Sado Island

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Since 1971, Sado Island has been our home and the platform from which we reach out to the world. With nature's warm embrace evident in each of her four seasons, Sado is an extraordinary place where traditional ways of life and the island's indigenous performing arts still thrive today. This island is the fountain of our inspiration and the guiding force behind our creative lifestyle. Our goal is to find a harmonious balance between people and the natural world. Each time we venture off the island we encounter new people, customs, and traditional performing arts that are ingrained in the lifestyles of each locale. Both similarities and differences prompt us to pause and reflect upon the importance of the varied and rich cultures that color our world. These life lessons permeate our very skin and become an invisible source of our expression. It is through this process of "Living, Learning, and Creating" that we cultivate a unique aesthetic and sensitivity, reaching out toward a new world culture rooted in the rich possibilities of a peaceful coexistence between humanity and nature.



Onidaiko  
(Demon Drumming)

## Sado Performing Arts



Noh Theater



Sado Okesa Folk Song & Dance



Bunya Puppets

# Kodo Village

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Despite years of international touring and the constant infusion of global influences, Kodo is fiercely dedicated to its home of Sado Island. In 1988, we built our own Village not far from our original schoolhouse base by the sea, which over the years has grown to include living, practice, recording and office spaces, farm land, and carefully tended forests. The lives of 60 Kodo members from throughout Japan are centered in this village. The group also maintains the school buildings and surrounding grounds in another part of Sado Island, which house the Kodo Apprentice Centre.



Wood from the Kodo Village forest is stockpiled for winter firewood



New Year's bonfire event



Inside the Rehearsal Hall



Aerial View of Kodo Village, Ogi Peninsula, Sado Island

- 1 Offices, communal living areas
- 2 Rehearsal Hall
- 3 Izumi-tei (Traditional Japanese Farm House)



The Kodo Group (Jan. 2014)

# International Music Festival Earth Celebration

<http://www.kodo.or.jp/ec/>



Every year since 1988, the rich natural splendor of Sado has set the stage for Earth Celebration (EC), Kodo's international arts festival that seeks an alternative global culture through musical and cultural collaborations with artists from around the world. Produced by Kodo in cooperation with the people of Sado Island, EC is the nation's longest running music festival, described by the New York Times as "Japan's leading music event." In 2009, in recognition of the organization's "notable contribution to the promotion of Japanese traditional culture and to the revitalization of the local community," the Earth Celebration Committee was awarded the Tiffany Foundation Award for the Preservation of Japanese Traditional Arts and Culture in Contemporary Society.

a, b : Shiroyama Concerts, featuring Kodo & guest artists

c: One of the many EC workshops, taught by Kodo members and guest instructors

d: Sea Kayaking Tour

e: Sado Performing Arts Special Fringe Event

**Featured Artists at Earth Celebration Between the Years of 1988 through 2013 Include the Following:**

Elvin Jones (USA), Yosuke Yamashita (Japan), Drummers of Burundi (Burundi), Hamza El'Din (Sudan), Love, Joy & Peace Ensemble (USA), Pung Cholam (India), Suar Agung (Indonesia/Bali), Aja Addy & Adjeley Mensah (Ghana), Milton Cardona & Eya Aranla (USA), Doudou N'Diaye Rose Percussion Orchestra (Senegal), Renegades Steel Drum Orchestra (Trinidad & Tobago), Kangsadan (Thailand), Costa Caribe (Venezuela), Seoul Kamuraku Performing Arts Company (Korea), Bulgarian Voices "Angelite" (Bulgaria), Babatunde Olatunji (Nigeria), Donal Lunny Group (Ireland), Kazumi Watanabe (Japan), Red Willow Dancers (USA), Huun-Huur-Tu (Russia/Tuva), Kim Duk Soo's Samul Nori (Korea), Jacky Micaelli (France/Corsica), Zakir Hussain (India), Giovani Hidalgo (Puerto Rico), Airto Moreira & Flora Purim (Brazil), Badenya les Freres Coulibaly (Burkina Faso), Fanfare Ciocarlia (Romania), Carlos Nunez (Spain), Tamango's Urban Tap (USA), Olodum (Brazil), BLØF (Netherlands), A Filetta (France/Corsica), Ranaei Family (Iran), KO no kai (Japan), Anna Sato (Japan), Hiromitsu Agatsuma (Japan), Takuro Iga (Japan), Harei Aine (Japan)



# Education and Community Outreach

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## Workshops

Kodo workshops are not about teaching new pieces of music or polishing technique. The goal is rather to provide a situation where each participant can experience the joy of expressing their individuality through music. In addition to the multi-day Kodo Juku held at the Kodo Apprentice Centre, School Workshop Performances are given throughout Japan. Recently, with the opening of the Sado Island Taiko Centre, Kodo has been able to take its local community outreach work to the next level, sharing the tradition of taiko through hands-on workshops and various cultural-exchange events.



## School Workshop Performances

Since 1999, in addition to their regular appearances, Kodo has held a number of School Workshop Performances taking place mainly at junior high schools. Kodo hopes this experience serves to introduce young Japanese people to their own traditional culture and perhaps even contribute in some small way to their own self-discovery.

## Kodo Juku

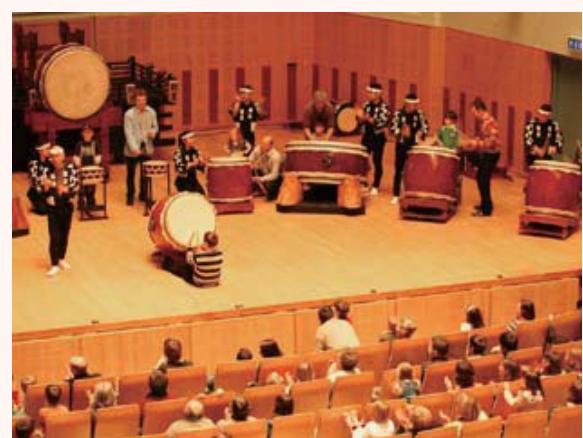
With the backdrop of Sado Island's natural splendor, the Kodo Juku offer participants the rare opportunity for an intimate multi-day live-in workshop experience with Kodo members. Participants are invited to gather on Sado Island for a short retreat where the goals are simply to live, learn, and create.

## KASA/MIX

Organized by Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA) and held biannually, the KASA/MIX tour brings participants to Sado Island to live at Kodo's Apprentice Centre and study taiko, dance, and song together with Kodo members. Conducted in English mainly for taiko enthusiasts from abroad, the KASA/MIX tour gives participants a taste of Japan and the Kodo way of life.

## Lecture/Demonstrations

Kodo offers special educational shows where the music and instruments are explained in between songs. There is even a section where audience members can have a go at playing the drums on stage. Lecture/Demonstrations are offered as options in tandem with One Earth Tour bookings.



# Kodo Cultural Foundation

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Thanks to the support of many friends, the Kodo Cultural Foundation was established in 1997 in order to increase Kodo's capacity for outreach projects on our home of Sado Island. Its primary mission is to carry out non-profit activities focused on social education and the notion of giving back to the local community. The Kodo Cultural Foundation is committed to the cultural and environmental preservation of Sado Island and oversees many ambitious projects. From the conservation of local habitats to the revitalization of rare craft traditions and Noh theaters throughout Sado Island, the highly collaborative Kodo Cultural Foundation supports many vital initiatives. If Kodo's performances were likened to a garden, then the foundation would be the roots of the plants growing there. Its activities include holding workshops, planning the annual Earth Celebration, creating a research library, managing the Kodo Apprentice Centre and the Sado Island Taiko Centre, and carrying out research in the performing arts.



"O-daiko" performance at the Kodo Apprentice Centre commemorating the birth of the Kodo Cultural Foundation in 1997



## Friends of Kodo

Friends of Kodo is a support group maintained by the Kodo Cultural Foundation established to bring Kodo closer to its audience and fellow taiko enthusiasts. Membership is available to all. As well as receiving the latest information by postal mail, members also get special advance ticket reservations for selected concerts in Japan, the chance to buy original goods available only to members, and selected discounts on a range of Kodo merchandise. They are also given priority placement in certain Kodo workshops. Through this group, we enjoy getting to know the people who support our activities by name.

## Earth Furniture

Kodo cares deeply about the natural environment of its home, including Sado's lush forests. To create a model of how a local resource could be sustainably managed, Kodo designs and manufactures interior furnishings from native, renewable timber. Cured by the sea, built by hand, and designed by Kodo Cultural Foundation chairman and renowned designer, Makoto Shimazaki, it is sold under the name "Earth Furniture."



# Kodo Apprentice Centre



In a converted schoolhouse in Kakinoura on Sado Island, the young people who will continue and expand on Kodo's traditions are trained, not just in musical technique but also in all matters of body and spirit. Beginning in April, apprentices live communally and train for two years. From this group, probationary members are selected in January of the second year. These chosen few spend one year as junior members, and if they are successful, they then become full Kodo members. Kodo seeks people of all backgrounds who are interested in becoming apprentices, and perhaps the next generation of Kodo players and staff. Apprentices live communally in the Kodo Apprentice Centre as they learn taiko, dance, song, and other traditional arts in the rich natural and cultural surroundings of Sado.

## Apprenticeship Details

As well as learning to live communally, apprentices learn about certain basics of traditional Japanese culture and how to develop the body and mind specifically to play taiko and dance.

Curriculum content includes:

Music lessons (drumming, dancing, singing, playing flute, etc.), lectures on Sado's environment, culture, history and traditions, farming (rice culture and vegetable gardening), cooking, tea ceremony, Noh/Kyogen, film appreciation, experiencing Sado's local festivals, physical training, on-site training through assisting taiko workshops, staffing Earth Celebration and Kodo concerts on Sado... and more. Participants are challenged to develop practical skills by participating in Kodo's everyday activities.

## Apprenticeship Requirements

\*Any healthy person over 18 years of age may apply.

\*Advanced Japanese required. (All instruction is given in Japanese.)

\*Men and women of all backgrounds, experiences and nationalities are welcome.



# Sado Island Taiko Centre



In 2007, the Sado Island Taiko Centre, located right next to the Kodo Village, was completed. Designed to provide learning materials and hands-on experience in the ancient art of taiko, this facility was made possible by the Sado municipal government working in cooperation with the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. It is operated by the Kodo Cultural Foundation.

In addition to providing a venue for practicing taiko and other traditional performing arts, the facility also includes classrooms for cooking classes, an exhibition space, and meeting rooms. The two-story wooden building was made from all local materials from Sado Island, and uses "Earth Furniture" made from Sado timber.



Elementary and junior high school student groups from both on and off the island, as well as the general public, are invited for workshops and gatherings at the centre. It is hoped that this facility will grow to be a place to experience the rich performing arts culture of Sado Island, as well as a place to pass on a "culture of creation" to future generations. Kodo also uses this facility as a venue for exchange with people from Sado and all over the world. We hope that we can share some of the knowledge and experience we have gained through our activities on the island and through our travels over the past three decades.

Sado Island Taiko Centre website: <http://www.sadotaiken.jp/>

## Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA)



Established in 2002, KASA is a United States nonprofit corporation designed to encourage, enable and support programs and opportunities for North

Americans to study and understand the traditional and contemporary Japanese music of the taiko and its related performing arts. Its primary goals are to facilitate communication among community taiko groups both in Japan and North America, to perpetuate the taiko tradition and all of its related art forms, and to shed light on the inherent power of this ancient instrument to positively shape the world in which we live.

KASA website: <http://www.kodoarts.org>



Yoshikazu Fujimoto and Yoko Fujimoto teaching taiko and song on the 2009 Kasa Workshop Tour in the USA & Canada.

# Contact Kodo



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Friends of Kodo  
 Email: [friends.eng@kodo.or.jp](mailto:friends.eng@kodo.or.jp)

## Website

<http://www.kodo.or.jp/>

## Social Media

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KodoHeartbeat>  
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/KodoHeartbeatEn>  
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