

the
KODŌ
beat

鼓童



Taiko rocks.

photo by Kazuki Imagai

One Earth Tour USA 2002

by **Daniel Rosen**

After a two-year break, I was delighted to find myself back on the road with Kodo, especially in America, and especially in the summer, a rarity for Kodo. It was as if the entire group was discovering the country for the first time. 'Now THIS is America', player *Hideyuki Saito* exclaimed to me as we sat under the stars at Red Rocks. Indeed, Denver was like a different place from the one we knew in the winter.

This summer tour gave Kodo the rare opportunity to play at outdoor 'festival' venues to crowds as large as 6,000 people. Outdoor spaces pose many challenges that indoor ones don't, but they also bring a special excitement. One major difference is the need for amplification. For that special task, our own sound man *Takuro Susaki* joined the tour, as did sound engineer *John Lott*, a Torontonion who has previously toured with the likes of *'The Kids in the Hall'*. John's expertise and unique sense of humor (must be a Canadian thing) were most welcome on tour. It never

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ceased to amaze me how he could constantly have the Kodo members in stitches backstage despite the language barrier.

All of the outdoor venues were impressive in their own way, but I have to say the *Red Rocks Amphitheater* in Colorado left the most lasting impression. Built in the middle of the Rocky Mountain Foothills near Denver, Red Rocks takes advantage of the natural acoustic phenomenon created by two enormous boulders jutting out on either side of the stage. The rocks were everywhere; at first I thought the dressing rooms had a hokey Disney-esque rock facade, until I realized that the rooms had simply been built over the enormous boulders which sprawled into the middle of the room. Created in the 1930's as a government make-work project during the Depression, Red Rocks has a rich history of performers too numerous to count. From *The Beatles* to *Bruce Springsteen*, walking backstage under all of the live concert photos made Kodo proud to be following in the footsteps of so many musical luminaries.

Four of thirteen stops on tour were indoor venues, and the tour culminated at *Benaroya Hall* in Seattle at a special concert to benefit the newly established United States NPO *Kodo Arts Sphere America* (KASA). As the KASA program director, this was a very special day for me, and I was delighted at the outcome. Local taiko groups came out to support and

open the concert with a live performance in the lobby, and the beautiful 2,500-seat theater was sold out. (*Check out the KASA website <www.kodo.or.jp/kasa> for a full report.*)

After four weeks the tour came to end. No doubt each member returned home with their own unique set of impressions and indelible memories. For me, as I got back on the plane to return to Honolulu, a collage of summer images came to mind. The eclectic crowd of Central Park, a proud peacock listening to rehearsal in the Columbus Zoo Amphitheater, and family and friends at the Mann Center in my home town of Philadelphia. By Kodo standards *USA 2002* was a short tour, but one I won't soon forget.



Seattle taikoists banging the drum with Kodo members before the KASA benefit concert. photo by Daniel Rosen

Special Events at the *Setagaya Public Theatre Performances in Tokyo*

Tue. Dec. 17th - Mon. Dec. 23rd

The following events will take place in tandem with the Kodo Concerts at the Setagaya Public Theatre

Poster Exhibition

Featuring Kodo One Earth Tour posters, this exhibit follows Kodo's history since the group's formation. Take a look at some nostalgic prints from the past, as well as rare picks from abroad. Around 30 posters in all, posted throughout the theatre.

Slide Lecture and Discussion

Join Kodo members as they show prized pictures and share stories from their lives on the road. From back-stage secrets to travel tales, who knows what

topics may come up!

Date: Dec. 21, 6:30pm open, 7:00pm start

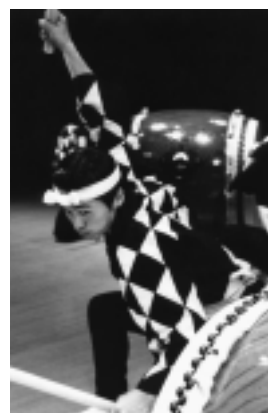
Inquiries: Kodo, Ms. Nakaya

Back-Stage Tour

What happens before the Kodo players take to the stage? Get a glimpse of some seldom seen moments from the One Earth Tour in this revealing look behind the scenes. Capacity limited to 30 people.

Date: Dec. 22, 6:15pm registration, 6:30pm start

Inquiries: Kodo, Mr. Sakuma



Kazuki Imagai hammering out 'Miyake'. photo by Masamitsu Sakaguchi

Kodo Close-up:

Tsubasa Hori, player

The 22nd in a series of profiles of individual Kodo members

Tsubasa Hori was born in Nagano on November 22, 1976. She moved with her divorced mother to the weaving district of Nishijin, Kyoto at age 4. The sound of the looms provided the soundtrack for her childhood. For 10 years mother and daughter lived alone until her mother married Tsubasa's current (and to her mind true) father when she was in middle school.

As a child Tsubasa was a tomboy (even now some might argue), at one stage she even insisted on being called by the very masculine name *Shinmosuke*. She studied piano from the age of 3 till she graduated from high school. At elementary school she learned tennis, ice skating, karate (for 6 years, earning her black belt) and classic ballet. From grade 5 she took taiko lessons locally.

In middle school she dropped everything but piano to concentrate on playing percussion in the school brass band. Though she had no plans to become a professional musician, her parents and teachers thought Tsubasa would benefit from trying to get into the challenging *Horikawa High School of Music*. It turned out to be the sort of place where students were discouraged from listening to Rock n' Roll as it would damage their ears. In her red hair and miniskirt Tsubasa felt like a fish out of water, though she appreciates the theoretical and historical grounding in music she got there. Outside of school she played drums in a rock band called 'Childie', a funk band 'Love K*llers' (her idea) and finally the precursor to the neo-acoustic band *Brilliant Green* which went on (without her) to earn #1 records on the Japanese charts.

After high school she wanted to go to England to study drumming, but during an exploratory trip with her mother for a week she felt overwhelmed by her inability with the English language and abandoned the idea.

Enter Kodo, whom she had seen perform a few times in her childhood. She decided that if she was really to become a proper drummer she should study the drumming of Japan first, and once having got a handle on that, move back to drums. She was invited to Sado for an interview in January. It was her first trip ever so far north. Arriving with pink hair and a pincushion's worth of

piercings, the skinny city rocker Tsubasa was fascinated by the time-slip she felt on Sado, but was far less comfortable with the tense and spartan atmosphere at the interview. Returning to Kyoto she felt happy that at least she had given it a stab, but certainly didn't expect the acceptance card that came a week later.



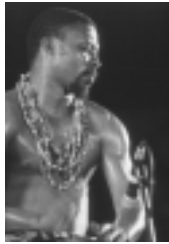
Deciding to give it a try, even if only for a week or two, she arrived in April with the other 11 apprentices, all dressed in sweats and running shoes. She however was still pink haired and wearing a sky blue faux fur coat .

Among her studies that year was the *Tea Ceremony*, where it was explained that she mustn't tread on the seams between the tatami mats, as in the olden days one might be attacked from beneath by a sword there. She had a hard time with that. If she couldn't see a *reason* Tsubasa was inclined to resist, and let everyone know about it. She puts this down to a very democratic rearing where she was encouraged to express herself freely.

Tsubasa made it clear from the beginning that she had joined to play taiko, not dance, and has now settled into being really the first female in Kodo who specializes in playing taiko with the men. The late Japanese American friend of Kodo *Duane Ebata* told her that her playing gives heart to female taikoists everywhere.

When she joined Kodo she was less enamoured with Japanese taiko music than with the feeling she *should* learn it. It was only belatedly last year when training with a local folk-taiko group on the north of Sado in Aikawa, that she really first fell in love with the traditional taiko rhythms and the *sound* of the taiko. Now she is also learning *koto*, composing music and she wants to start up a traditional Japanese *Chindon* band on the side.

On stage, bathed in the applause of a standing ovation she often feels undeserving, as the acclamation is not for her but for Kodo, and all who have gone before her. In her unique way Tsubasa (which means 'wing') is working toward the day when she can feel certain she has earned her share.



Our dear friend and brilliant Ghanaian drummer and dancer *Aja Addy* died on July 28th in Tokyo at age 53. The heat of Aja's *talking*

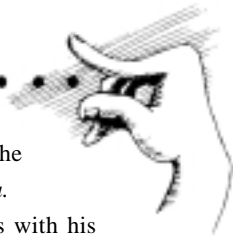
drum will be long-remembered and the warmth of the man sorely missed. The picture was taken at EC '91 by another late dear friend of Kodo, *Maskazu Sakomizu*.

Ex-Kodo member *Bob Ward* returned to Sado for the first time in 11 years with his beautiful family, wife *Alex*, daughter *Alena* and son *Julian*. They have taken a year off for an around-the-world adventure.

Player *Masaru Tsuji* and his wife *Sayo's* first baby *Shun* joined the Kodo family on Sept.19th.

A *Taiko Exchange Workshop* (for experienced taikoists with a facility in Japanese) will be held at Kodo Village from March 19-23. Deadline for Applications: February 20, 2003. For details see the Otodaiku website: <http://www.otodaiku.co.jp/>

in brief.....



upcoming performances

One Earth Tour Japan and USA

October

11	Hokkaido	Hakodate Shimin Kaikan	0138-59-1181
13	Aomori	Towada Shimin Bunka Centre	0176-23-6510
15	Akita	Yuzawa Bunka Kaikan	0183-72-2121
18	Miyagi	Kesenuma Shimin Kaikan	022-771-1432
20	Iwate	Esashi-shi Taiiku Bunka Kaikan	0197-35-2111
27	Yamagata	Yonezawa Shimin Bunka Kaikan	0238-26-2666
29	Niigata	Shibata Shimin Bunka Kaikan	0254-26-1945
30	Niigata	Joetsu Bunka Kaikan	0255-25-8200

November

14	Okinawa	Kimutaka Hall	098-978-2219
15	Okinawa	Urasoe Shimin Kaikan	098-860-2055
16	Okinawa	Okinawa Shimin Kaikan	098-973-6768
20	Okinawa	Matida Shimin Gekijo	09807-5-5068
23	Okinawa	Ishigaki Shimin Kaikan	09808-2-3477

December

6	Ibaraki	Ogawa-machi Bunka Centre	0291-35-2098
7	Ibaraki	Yuki Shimin Bunka Centre	0284-72-8268
8	Saitama	Kumagaya Bunka Sozokan	048-532-9090
10	Tokyo	Edogawa-ku Sogo Bunka Centre	03-3652-1111
11	Saitama	Misato-shi Bunka Kaikan	048-958-9900
13	Chiba	Narashino Bunka Hall	047-479-1212
14	Kanagawa	Hadano-shi Bunka Kaikan	0463-81-1211
17-23	Tokyo	Setagaya Public Theatre	0259-86-3630

25-27 Kodo Higawari Shogekijo

Mini joint-performance series... see **(opposite)* for details

February

1	Davis, CA	Mondavi Center, UC Davis Campus
5-9	Los Angeles, CA	Royce Hall
12	Escondido, CA	California Center for the Arts
13	Palm Desert, CA	McCallum Theater
15	Tucson, AZ	U of Arizona - Centennial Hall
16	Tempe, AZ	ASU - Gammage Auditorium
19-22	Dallas, TX	McFarlin Auditorium
25	San Antonio, TX	Laurie Auditorium, Trinity University
27	Orange, TX	Lutcher Theater for the Performing Arts

28 and March 1 Houston, TX Jones Hall

March

5	New York, NY	Carnegie Hall
6	Princeton, NJ	McCarter Theater
7	New Brunswick, NJ	New Brunswick CC / State Theater

8	Newark, NJ	Prudential Hall
10	Philadelphia, PA	Verizon Hall
11	Boston, MA	Symphony Hall
12	Amherst, MA	University of Massachusetts Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
14	Purchase, NY	Purchase College Performing Arts Center
15	West Point, NY	Eisenhower Hall
20-22	Toronto, ONT	Massey Hall
24-26	Ann Arbor, MI	Michigan Theater
28	Milwaukee, WI	PABST Theater
29	Madison, WI	Wisconsin Union Theater

*Kodo Higawari Shogekijo

Dec. 25 - 27, 2002 at Theatre Tram, Setagaya, Tokyo

Inquiries: Kodo 0259-86-3630

25th: Kodo Goshachu and Hitoshi Komuro

Players: *Hitoshi Komuro* (singer and song writer), *Kodo Goshachu* (*Hideyuki Saito, Tomohiro Mitome, Takeshi Arai, Tsubasa Hori, Kaoru Watanabe*)

26th: Yuki - Utuwaskarap

Players: *Chieko Kojima* (dance), *Ryo Watanabe* (percussion), *OKI (tonkori)*; an Ainu string instrument)

Costume: *Shingo Tokihiro*

27th: SAN

Players: *Rytaro Kaneko* (taiko), *Toru Iwashita* (dance), *Mitsugu Sugiyoshi* (sumi art)

Notice to Kodo Beat Readers

Kodo Beat is a newsletter focusing on the activities of Kodo and is sent quarterly to members of *Friends of Kodo*. *Friends of Kodo* is dedicated to bringing Kodo closer to our audience and fellow taiko enthusiasts. Membership is available to all. As well as receiving *Kodo Beat*, members also get special advance ticket reservations for selected concerts in Japan, the chance to buy original goods available only to them, and selected discounts on a range of Kodo goodies. For further information about these offers contact us or check our website.

For those readers who only want the newsletter, an on-line version is available on the Internet.

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