

the KODŌ beat

鼓童



Eiichi Saito's taiko workshop

KASA/MIX TOUR 2003

In September, 2003 Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA) and RhythMix Cultural Works teamed up to bring a group of 23 North Americans on a "KASA-MIX" cultural tour of Japan. RhythMix member and tour leader Janet Koike reports.

Photos by Buntaro Tanaka

September 1 - Narita Airport, Tokyo

Staff members, Chie Otsuka, Mark Rooney and I anxiously await the arrival of our tour group members who have travelled from Toronto, Chicago, Connecticut, Utah, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco - all over North America. To reach this point, months of preparation have been required by everyone involved. We call Daniel Rosen (KASA) and

Atsushi Sugano (Kodo Cultural Foundation) to confirm that each traveller has arrived safely. From different places for different reasons all are brought together by taiko to embark on a journey.

September 2 - Tokyo

In Asakusa, we visit the *Miyamoto Taiko Museum*, and do lots of shopping. Later, at Miyamoto Studios, Kiyonari Toshi-sensei gives us a workshop in the fundamentals of 'Oedo Sukeroku' style.

September 3 - Travel to Sado

We cross the countryside by bullet train and the water aboard the Sado ferry. A hilltop view of Ogi Port and the healing powers of *Ogi no Yu* (hot springs) rejuvenate travel weary spirits so that we can enjoy an elegant stay and feast at the *Hana no Ki* inn.

September 4-9 - Apprentice Centre

A bus takes us to Kodo Village for a tour of the rehearsal hall and staff workplace. Then to the Apprentice Centre, where we are greeted with an enchanting 'Welcome Performance' by Kodo's workshop staff and apprentices.

The next 5 days are filled with taiko, song, dance, jogging and chores. We are infused with a commitment to art, community and heart. Eiichi Saito's workshops teach us how to play with the boundless energy of 'one spirit'. Chieko Kojima shows

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us the joy of dance through the grace of intentional movements. Yoko Fujimoto leads us to explore the depth of heart that can be reached with the human voice. The intent of their teaching is met with our enthusiasm to learn and we acquire a deeper respect for these artists and the information they impart.

Who could ask for more? But there is so much



more. We are able to visit a local village that is preparing for a *matsuri* (festival) by practicing *Ondeko* (Demon taiko and dance) to dispel evil and bring good fortune. We are given talks by Michiko Chida and Chie Otsuka that open doors of understanding to the history, origins and context of taiko and Japanese folk culture.

And then there are the *kenshusei* (apprentices) who cooked for us and shared their way of life. My personal joy was teaching them Cuban song and rhythms that we arrange into a piece to perform at the Kodo farewell party, an event filled with high spirits, food, drink and drums for all, playing, dancing, and singing together into the night.

September 9 - Final day with Kodo

We are instructed by Ueno-san, a local master of '*Yamada Hanya Bushi*'. By combining dance, music and song our understanding of taiko becomes more complete. Next we are whisked off to watch a Kodo rehearsal. In a splendid daze we return to Hana no Ki for a lesson in pottery making from its owner Watanabe-sensei, and another meal fit for a king shared with Kodo Staff members.

September 10 - Travel back to Tokyo

It is heart breaking to say good bye to our Kodo escorts at the ferry terminal. We travel back to Tokyo

rich with experience.

September 11 - Tokyo

The final part of our journey takes us on a full moon 9/11 night to pray for world peace at *Kamegaoka Hachimangu Shrine* in Ichigaya, and to witness an offering of *Gagaku* music played by Suenobu Togi-sensei and his students.

September 12

Strangers, now friends, it is time to part ways. Eiichi talks about taiko bringing people together. Coming together as individuals makes our KASA/MIX tour group unique. Playing taiko, dance and singing together we embrace the strength of community that extends beyond the limits of this short journey. As each person takes that experience home to share with their own North American taiko group, the journey will continue to grow.

In the words of fellow participant, Stan Shikuma of *Seattle Kokon Taiko*;

'The tour was wonderful in so many ways, yet I find it hard to convey that to other people in my group. At first I thought it was the way I presented it, but now I think perhaps they are asking the wrong questions, or perhaps it's just something that must be experienced firsthand. Most people want to know what songs? which teachers? what dances? They are impressed by the names. I can describe the time and date, the names, but will they really understand the utter luxury of soaking in an outdoor onsen under a full moon with Mars rising, in a floating world surrounded by friends after a hot, humid, sweaty day of workshops and bus rides?



Earth Celebration 2003



From the top, left to right: Kodo and the Coulibaly Family of Burkina Faso's joint performance. In the centre playing chappa (cymbals) is Hideyuki Saito, artistic director of this year's Shiroyama Concerts. / Yoshikazu Fujimoto tries juggling drum sticks. / The sounds of West Africa's djembe pierce the Sado night. / Introducing Kodo's new number, Kuyurage / Kodo Fringe performance at Ogi port / Kodo flute at the tranquil Amida-in temple. Photos by Maiko Miyakawa, SHIGGY, Susumu Yoshida, Yoko Yoshida, Buntaro Tanaka



The popular TV show, *Takeshi no Daredemo Picasso* (*Takeshi's 'Anyone Can Be Picasso'*) will have a special on Kabuki great *Bando Tamasaburo* and features guest appearances by members of Kodo.

Oct. 17, 22:00-22:54 on TV Tokyo and other stations. Programme website:



<http://www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/pikaso/>

Catch a glimpse of seldom-seen moments from the *One Earth Tour Special* by joining the *Kodo Back Stage Tour*. November 23, Fee: ¥500. Contact the Setagaya Public Theatre (tel. 03-5432-1515) from Nov. 16th. The tour will be conducted in Japanese only.

Tsubasa, Kaoru and *Yoshikazu* 'get down' at *Johnny Wales'* watercolours and *Daniel Rosen's* ceramics exhibition opening party at EC '03. Photo by Daniel Rosen.

in brief...



upcoming performances

One Earth Tour Japan

October

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|----|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 13 | Shizuoka | Yaizu-shi Bunka Center | 054-627-3111 |
| 14 | Shizuoka | Fuji-shi Bunka Kaikan Rose Theatre | 0545-60-2500 |
| 17 | Yamanashi | Yamanashi Kenmin Bunka Hall | 055-235-3975 |
| 19 | Miyagi | Miyagi Kenmin Kaikan | 022-225-8641 |

Kodo One Earth Tour Special

Artistic Director: *Tamasaburo Bando*

Tickets are on sale now.

November

- 14-30 Tokyo Setagaya Public Theatre
No performance on 20th and 25th
Inquiries: Kodo 0259-86-3630

December

- 6, 7 Nagoya Aichi Kosei Nenkin Kaikan
Inquiries: Chunichi Gekijo 052-263-7171
- 12-14 Osaka Theater Drama City
Inquiries: Page One 06-6362-8122
- 18-20 Niigata Ryutopia
Inquiries: NT21 Ticket Center 025-229-2229
20th is sold out.
- 23, 24 Sado
Amusement Sado
Inquiries:
Kodo 0259-86-3630



photo by Kishin Shinoyama

One Earth Tour Europe

February

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|--------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Bridgewater Hall | Manchester, UK |
| 2 | Birmingham Symphony Hall | Birmingham, UK |
| 5-8 | Royal Festival Hall | London, UK |
| 10 | The Anvil | Basingstoke, UK |
| 13, 14 | Teatro Coliseo | Lisbon, Portugal |
| 17-19 | Concertgebouw | Brugge, Belgium |
| 21, 22 | Gasteig Philharmonie | Munich, Germany |
| 24, 25 | Teatro San Carlo di Napoli | Naples, Italy |
| 26 | Auditorium Santa Cecilia | Rome, Italy |
| 29 | Teatro Comunale G.B. PERGOLESI | Jesi, Italy |

March

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|------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Teatro Dal Verme | Milan, Italy |
| 5, 6 | Auditorium Stravinski | Montreux, Switzerland |
| 8-12 | Kultur Kongresszentrum | Lucerne, Switzerland |

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|----|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 14 | Burgof | Loerrach, Germany |
| 15 | Hegel Saal der Liederhalle | Stuttgart, Germany |
| 17 | Kultur Kongresszentrum | Rosenheim, Germany |
| 18 | Audimax der Universitat | Regensburg, Germany |
| 21 | Festhalle Landau | Landau, Germany |
| 22 | Alte Oper | Frankfurt, Germany |
| 24 | Philharmonie | Cologne, Germany |
| 25 | Dortmund Konzerthaus | Dortmund, Germany |

Launching 'Kodo Books'

In an effort to share some of what we have learned in our travels and experiences, the *Kodo Cultural Foundation* has founded 'Kodo Books'.

The first Kodo Books project is a detailed account of *Taraibune* (Tub Boat) building, a nearly extinct craft indigenous to Sado. The author *Douglas Brooks* is a boatbuilder who apprenticed in 1996 with Koichi Fujii, the last professional taraibune builder.

The Tub Boats of Sado Island;
'A Japanese Craftsman's Methods'
by Douglas Brooks
Text in Japanese and English
84 photos and illustrations
ISBN 4 - 902377 - 00 - 4
Price: ¥2,500 (Friends of Kodo members: ¥2,250) +tax
Inquiries: Kodo Cultural Foundation
Email: JDQ00376@nifty.ne.jp



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 web site.

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

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