

the KODŌ beat

鼓童

Reflections on EC '07

Here is a look at our 20th anniversary edition of Earth Celebration through the eyes of some of the participants.

Yosuke Yamashita, jazz pianist

I took part in the 1st, 10th and 20th Earth Celebrations. Something I feel each time I come is that EC never changes, not from the beginning. Since Kodo's founding they have held the conviction that through the rhythm of the taiko they can reach out to



Yosuke Yamashita playing the piano like a drum.

photo by Buntaro Tanaka

the world. Their vision is global. That central spirit was evident at the moment the *Drummers of Burundi* and *Elvin Jones* met here at the very first EC. You can feel it to this day.

People from all over the world gather here on Sado and walk up the slope of Shiroyama where they find Kodo. Surrounded by trees, the taiko arouse our primitive emotions. We brush against the spirit of Earth Celebration and the artists too - who come from all over the world - feel proud to be taking part.



The original Miyake drummers show how it's done.

photo by Buntaro Tanaka

As always, I enjoyed everything about the experience. Every artist Kodo invites is so talented that it is a pleasure to work in collaboration. The tap dancer *Tamango* and I didn't even rehearse for our piece and felt comfortable enough with each other to go right on stage for 5 minutes of complete improvisation. I had great fun both improvising *Bolero*



The rush is on for the 20th Anniversary rush seats.

photo by Maiko Miyakawa

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Winchester Nii Tete from Ghana, nephew of the late, great & long-time Kodo friend Aja Addy.

with Kodo and playing with the singer Mio Matsuda.

Kodo's beauty and pureness inspire people. I love these drummers. I come to see them and feel their Japanese rhythm. When I play piano inspired by their vibration, my heart opens up and I feel I can play forever.

20 years have passed, so now I recognize only a few of Kodo's older members. But Kodo hasn't changed their way since the beginning. I hope both EC and Kodo will continue to stay that way into the future.



East Meet East. Zakir Hussain & Kodo's Yoko Fujimoto blend India & Japan. photo by Maiko Miyakawa

Zakir Hussain, tabla master

My visit to Sado for Earth Celebration '07 was everything that I imagined it would be, and more. This is one of the finest festivals of rhythm, dance and music on this earth. The audience is very loving and supportive of all performing artists, they are respectful and aware of the traditions that are being displayed on stage. Working with my friends at Kodo under Kaoru Watanabe was a magical and enlightening experience. I not only had fun but also learned a lot. I will never forget the magical world of Kodo in Sado. Thanks for this opportunity.

Tamango, tap dancer



Tamango takes flight. photo by Buntaro Tanaka

It is great to see how the mood of Earth Celebration changes for me from one year to another. I see how intimate it can be and the many other possibilities it opens up.

As little as I know the island, I see the pure beauty of life and I understand the meaning of Kodo. This year brought a lot of spirit to Shiroyama. It was such an honour to be back with the rhythm family. *Arigato gozaimasu.*

Kazuaki Tomita, taikoist

The sun shines down from the blue sky and burns the earth. Still the gentle wind keeps it refreshing. No



Kazuaki 'Tomiyon' playing Tsugarujamisen at the Fringe photo by Maiko Miyakawa

matter how hot it is, I can't hate this heat. I feel it in my blood...I'm in the festive fever. It's been 18 summers since I left Sado, but as soon as I set my foot down, I felt as if I have been here the whole time.

'Now, let's go and see the land

(now Kodo Village) we are going to buy.' *Hancho* (the late Toshio Kawauchi, former director) took us into a brushy mountain side. We didn't really know what was going on.

'We are going to have a festival here. Please be careful when you say the name of the festival. Biting your tongue...or not, makes a huge difference.' ('Earth Celebration' is apt to come out as 'Ass Celebration' on the Japanese tongue). (EC director) *Atsushi* explained to us in the dining room. It seems like it was yesterday. In a way everything seems to have changed. In a way...many are the same.

I'm no longer a Kodo member and I don't live in Sado. But there was Sado's nature gently wrapped around me, welcoming me in her warm embrace. It struck me again that it was *here* that I was born and raised as a drummer.

Ryutaro Kaneko, former Kodo player

I have performed at EC since the very first one. At 20 years old it has reached the age of majority. There is something I have always wanted to do, if even once. And now it seems the possibility has become real. Yes! To lose myself completely in the atmosphere of the celebration as festival-goer, rather than performer. I can imagine the clucking tongues of disapproval of Kodo members who knock themselves out every year in preparation (*chuckling*). I really wonder what EC looks like from the outside. Culture shock is in store I would guess.



Good luck Ryutaro!

photo by Maiko Miyakawa

Cooling off the natural way, part I.



Regular Fringe guest *Kabu Kabu* and his home made *shishi* with Kodo wives and staff *Tsugumi, Kiyoko & Sachiko*



Cooling off the natural way, part II. Ogi's classic ice parlour.

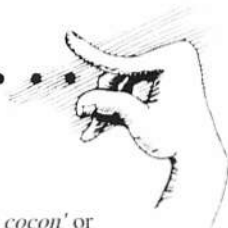


Eiichi Saito & Co. bang out a farewell to departing guests. The rhythm keeps up till the ship's pretty much out of sight. Always a poignant end to the celebration.

P.P.C., a new Kodo sub group has emerged. Dynamic and muscle-bound *Yuichiro Funabashi*, *Mitsuru Ishizuka* & *Yosuke Oda* will explore the humour within traditional & folk performing arts.

P.P.C. are the first initials in the onomatopoeic sounds of their respective instruments 'poku, poko, chin'. With the aim of expressing what is uniquely feminine *Tsubasa Hori*, *Ayako Onizawa*, *Masami Miyazaki* & *Yoshie Sunahata* have formed another offshoot of Kodo called *cocon* (from the french 'le cocon' or 'cocoon' in english). Watch our web site for details of upcoming performances this autumn.

in brief.....



upcoming performances

One Earth Tour Japan

October

- 13 Hokkaido Monbetsu Shimin Kaikan 0158-23-6081
 16 Hokkaido Asahikawa Shimin Bunka Kaikan 011-241-5161
 30 Sendai-shi, Miyagi
 Miyagi Kenmin Kaikan 022-225-8641

November

- 1 Fukushima Koriyama Shimin Bunka Centre 024-934-2288
 3 Gunma Kasakakeno Bunka Hall 0277-77-1212
 4 Tochigi Nasunogahara Harmony Hall 0277-53-3133
 6 Miyagi Kesennuma Shimin Kaikan Sold out
 7 Iwate Esashi Taiiku Bunka Kaikan Sasara Hall
 0197-31-1607
 8 Akita Akita Kenmin Kaikan 022-217-3955

One Earth Caravan - "Houraikitan"

Kodo and Kyogen collaboration

Oct. 28 Gifu

Hashima-shi Bunka Centre
 Box Office: 058-393-2231

Oct. 29 Shizuoka

Numazu Shimin Bunka Centre
 Box Office: 055-931-8999

Oct. 31 Tokyo

Bunkyo Civic Hall
 Box Office: 03-5803-1111

Nov. 4 Sado

Kanai Noh Theatre
 Box Office: 0259-86-3630

Please check our website for more information.



December Concert Series

Dec. 1 Sado Amusement Sado 0259-86-2330

4,5 Niigata Niigata Kenmin Kaikan 025-281-8000

9 Fukuoka Kitakyushu Geijutsu Gekijo 093-562-2655

11 Hiroshima Hiroshima Yubin Chokin Hall 082-249-1218

13 Okayama
 Okayama Shimin
 Kaikan
 086-224-6066

15,16 Osaka
 Osaka Kosei
 Nenkin Kaikan
 06-6362-8122

19 Nagoya
 Aichi Kosei
 Nenkin Kaikan
 052-263-7171

21-24 Tokyo
 Bunkyo Civic Hall
 0259-86-2330



One Earth Tour Europe

January

- 29 Royal Festival Hall London, England
 31 The Anvil Basingstoke, England

February

- 2,3 National Concert Hall Dublin, Ireland
 5 Bridgewater Hall Manchester, England
 7 Symphony Hall Birmingham, England
 9,10 The Sage Gateshead, England
 11 Philharmonic Hall Liverpool, England
 16,17 Kursaal Oostende, Belgium
 19 Ethias Theater Hasselt, Belgium
 21,22 Elisabethzaal Antwerp, Belgium
 23,24 Philharmonie Luxemburg
 27 Congress Zentrum Hamburg
 Hamburg, Germany
 28 Tonhalle Düsseldorf Duesseldorf, Germany

March

- 1,2 Philharmonie Munich Munich Germany
 4,5 Kultur & Kongresszentrum Liederhalle
 Stuttgart Germany
 7 AWD Hall Hannover Hannover, Germany
 8 Die Glocke – Das Bremer Konzerthaus
 Bremen Germany
 10 Philharmonie Berlin, Germany
 12 Burghof Lörrach Loerrach, Germany
 14-16 Heineken Music Hall Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Kodo with Blof
 20,21 Montreux Auditorium Stravinski
 Montreux, Switzerland
 23-27 Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Luzern
 Lucerne, Switzerland

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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