

T'is the season: It's December Concert Time!

For nearly three decades, Kodo has set the standard for ensemble taiko throughout the world, touring eight months of the year both at home and abroad to bring the sound of the Japanese drum to all corners of the globe. In their travels they meet countless other artists, encounters that lead to many full-scale collaborations as well as several smaller-group special projects, and every year Kodo returns home to finish the journey through its annual [December Concerts](#) in Japan.

From Los Angeles to London and Athens to Istanbul, in 2009 Kodo received standing ovations on countless stages around the world, returning to Japan with renewed aspirations and energy. This year the 13-show run starts on December 2 on Kodo's home of Sado Island, stopping in Niigata, Okayama, Hiroshima, Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo before the tour comes to a close in Yokohama on December 22.



Kodo annual December concerts start a 13-show run in Japan, December 2 on Sado.

One Earth Tour 2010 Kicks Off in Europe

Reflecting the influences of recent solo, ensemble and collaborative work, Kodo's highly acclaimed [One Earth Tour](#) returns to Europe this January with an exuberant new performance. In 2009 in particular, a diverse array of special projects has brought about

a significant change in the group's attitude on stage. The depth and range of Kodo's special-project work is little known outside Japan, but the last twelve months have included [Gnosis](#) - a collaboration with U.K.-based dancer/choreographer Akram Khan, *Ubusuna*, a showcase of Kodo's skills and technique by its most veteran members and directed

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One Earth Tour

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by Kodo managing director Takao Aoki, and a series of performances with Dutch mega band “Bløf” that culminated at Kodo’s annual music festival, “Earth Celebration” (EC). Most recently, Dadan, directed by Tamasaburo Bando has drawn out new energy and forms of expression on the drums.

It is with a kind of renewed energy and sense of discovery that Kodo’s heart and soul, the One Earth Tour, returns to Europe this January. Inspired by their recent creative explorations, the cast of seven men and five women will deliver a potent selection of Kodo’s vast repertoire distilled to its core essentials. The result is an intense and elegant amalgam of exotic elements and primal forces; in other words, pure Kodo.



Reflections on Dadan: Performer comments on this new performance

“In this year’s Dadan performance, I was somehow able to go a step further than doing my absolute best. Instead I felt like I was using all my strength and was somehow able to purely enjoy the show simultaneously. I felt more free, and like I performed more naturally than ever in this show.”



Yosuke Oda



One Earth Tour, Europe 2010, distills Kodo’s vast repertoire to its core essentials.

Wearing a different costume, makeup, appearing on stage with a beard, it was an obviously different show at first glance. There were new elements, new challenges, but in the end what really stood out to me was that even if the appearance was different, I didn’t change as a drummer to suit that at all. What I felt rather was ‘We are Kodo’, through and through.”

~ Dadan member, Yosuke Oda

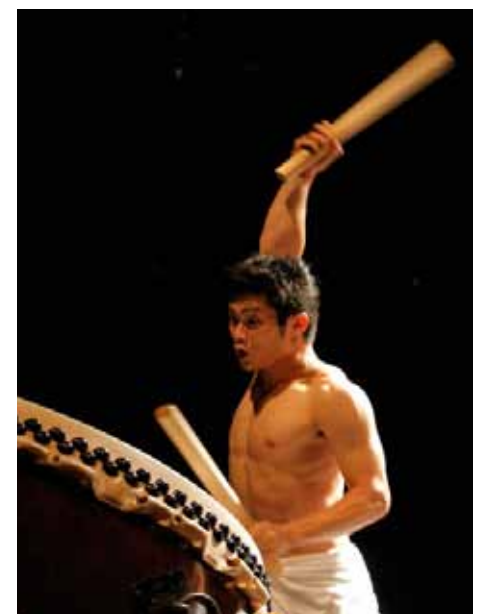


Dadan on stage

“On the Kodo stage, before I even knew what ‘the Kodo way’ was I was already locked into its mould. After finishing the Dadan performances, I feel like the restraints, the confinement, the “it has to be this way” limits I had put on myself have vanished.

For me, Dadan was full of new challenges in drumming with expression, focusing on producing subtly different sounds as directed by an actor, not a drummer. Through these rehearsals I feel I was finally able to grasp hold of these powers of expression, and make them my own. Coming back to the One Earth Tour and donning the Kodo costume, I don’t feel like I have “returned” to Kodo. It feels like taking another step forward: it all feels fresh and new.”

Dadan member, Masayuki Sakamoto



Masayuki Sakamoto

Announcing Motofumi Yamaguchi's Debut Solo Album: *Ikkan Fugetsu*

Motofumi Yamaguchi's long-awaited debut solo album will be released for sale by Otodaiku on December 1st. Recorded at Kodo Village using makobue flutes made from local Sado madake bamboo, this "home-grown" album has a deep, rich sound. With guest artists Akira Nino on piano, Takafumi Imaizumi on guitar, and vocals by Kodo's own Yoko Fujimoto, this is a collection of original songs and beautiful arrangements of folk favorites from around the world. Available from the Kodo Online Store and at Kodo December Concert Venues.

Interview with Motofumi Yamaguchi

Interviewer: Yoshiko Ando (Kodo)

Yoshiko Ando (YA): I heard you used makobue flutes on this album. What is a makobue flute?

Motofumi Yamaguchi (MY): It is a type of flute made from madake bamboo by flute maker Ranjo-san, and I have been using them for the last two years or so. In contrast to the delicate, soft tones of the shinobue, the makobue has a richer depth and fuller tone. I designed this album to make the most of the unique makobue sound.

YA: You must have had a long list to choose from; how did you select the pieces that ended up on the album?

*MY: I chose to put new arrangements of pieces which I have performed for many years on stage, like Yamauta and Oyohdai. Then pieces like *Kaigara-bushi* and *Danny Boy*; they are songs that feel fresh and new every single time I play them. I wanted to make an album with these compositions and add some new pieces too. And as a bonus track, I added a nostalgic pre-WW2 melody. (Yamaguchi laughs).*

YA: Working with guest artists on the album, were there any challenges or new discoveries along the way?

MY: It was my first time working with pianist Akira Nino and Takafumi Imaizumi on guitar, and it was so much fun. Their ideas just came one after the other and they would use chords I would never dream of asking for, and we made a lot of musical discoveries together. One surprisingly difficult piece was one I have played for so many years, Yamauta. I tried playing it on a ippon-choshi (#1 or F flute) unaccompanied, and it sounded almost like a shakuhachi, producing a rather interesting result. Getting it this piece right took the most out of me physically during the recording.

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Motofumi Yamaguchi

Track List

Yellow Village Gate / Irish Folk Song
 Miryang Arirang / Korean Folk Song
 Shizuka / Composed by Motofumi Yamaguchi
 Oyuudai/ Inner Mongolian Folk Song
 Kaigara-bushi / Tottori Folk Song (Japan)
 Danny Boy / Irish Folk Song
 Yamauta / Tsugaru Folk Song (Japan)
 Itoshiiki Mono-e / Composed by Motofumi Yamaguchi
 Soshu Yakyoku / Lyrics by Yaso Saijo, composed by Ryuichi Hattori

Motofumi Yamaguchi*continued from page 3*

YA: *What will people encounter when they listen to this CD? What sort of mood does it create?*

MY: Everyone receives music differently, so it's hard to say. There is no one answer. Just like a painting has no pre-determined atmosphere or timing, I hope people will just listen to this CD openly and judge for themselves. I look forward to hearing where the music takes them.

YA: *Lastly, what is the message that you want to send out with this CD Ikkan Fugetsu ?*

MY: Live music is a result of the performers and audience creating a unique space and time filled with sound, and they influence one another to create a unique performance. In contrast, a CD will always play the same every time you put it on. However, the interesting thing is that what does change is the listener. You can listen to the same CD in the same place everyday, but the song you heard yesterday won't always sound the same to you the next day. Recordings are great because they offer a hand to help you discover changes in yourself. Through this album, I really want to share these songs with as many people as possible, songs which continue to move my heart, these great pieces that I have been performing over the years.

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Performances, workshops, and all general inquiries

Email: heartbeat@kodo.or.jp

Kodo CDs, Merchandise, Instruments

Email: store@kodo.or.jp

Friends of Kodo

Email: friends@kodo.or.jp**Postal Address**

Kodo, Kodo Village, Sado Island, Niigata 952-0611 Japan

Phone +81-(0)259-86-3630

Fax +81-(0)259-86-3631

Email heartbeat@kodo.or.jp**Get Adobe Reader**

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