

鼓童

KODŌ

eNEWS

Issue 2

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## Coming Up: Kodo One Earth Tour 2010 Europe and Encore *Ubusuna* Performances in Japan

Our New Year will start with the One Earth Tour in Europe and a special encore performance tour of Kodo *Ubusuna* in Japan. In February and March the One Earth Tour will visit the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Russia. Please visit our [website](#) for venue and ticket details.

Last year, [Kodo \*Ubusuna\*](#) concerts held in Osaka, Tsuruga, and Kyoto got rave reviews. This year we are pleased to announce additional performances of this special show for March 2010 in Shikoku and Honshuu, Japan.



## Kodo to appear in Opéra National de Paris Performances of *Kaguyahime*

Modern composer Maki Ishii's musical suite [Kaguyahime](#), which debuted in 1984, will be performed by the Paris Opera Ballet as a new production at the Opéra Bastille in June and July, 2010. Directed by Jirí Kylian, one



*Rave reviews have inspired a special Ubusuna encore performance tour in Japan.*

of modern ballet's most celebrated choreographers, seven members of Kodo will join the Paris Opera Ballet, western percussionists, and a *gagaku* (old Japanese court music) ensemble for this production. This will mark the first time ever for a taiko group to take the stage at the Opéra National de Paris.

*continued on next page*

### In This Issue

[Kodo, December-style](#) 2

[Yoshie Sunahata in \*Gnosis\*](#) 3

[Information & Resources](#) 4

**Kaguyahime***continued from page 1*

The musical suite *Kaguyahime* was originally created as a comprehensive stage production including a Japanese percussion ensemble, a Western percussion ensemble, ballet, pantomime, and spoken word, making it an especially unique performance piece among Maki Ishii's numerous works.

The suite was first performed in 1984 at the Berlin Opera House, with music performed by Kodo and the Opera Percussionists. In 1985 the version incorporating ballet made its debut featuring the Tokyo Star Dancers Ballet, Kodo and the Percussion Ensemble Okada of Japan.

In 1988 Maki Ishii and Jiri Kylian joined forces to bring *Kaguyahime* to the next level, creating a whimsical combination of Eastern and Western art that was showered with critical acclaim. This show first took place at the Holland Dance Festival featuring Kodo's own Katsuji Kondo, and the world has waited eagerly for the return of this incredible international collaboration.

For *Kaguyahime* dates and ticket information, please click [here](#).



## December, Kodo-style

In December, the Kodo December Concerts toured across Japan from East to West, bringing holiday cheer to sold-out shows and making the season all the more festive for performers and audience alike. This year-end series is an annual tradition that everyone in the group looks forward to with great anticipation. It's a great chance to greet our friends and fans after a year on the road and



*Yataibayashi centre-man, Tomohiro, pounding the drum.*

an amazing way to finish the year on a high note.

On Sado, the Sado Island Taiko Centre (Tatakokan) held mini Kodo ensemble concerts on two weekends in December called *Chindon Kodon*. Friendly and fun, these special shows even give the audience a chance to play taiko and dance together with the Kodo members in an intimate setting only possible on Sado.

Get a glimpse of December in Japan Kodo-style with these photos by Kodo staff and comments from the audience.



"It was so much fun! I just wanted to keep on listening."



"It was so impressive to experience the power of taiko up close."



"It is always a pleasure to watch *Chindon Kodon*. I love this warm, friendly side of Kodo."



"Amazing! How can they drum like that with a smile on their faces? My kids really enjoyed the show, too."





“I have known Kodo for 30 years now, and I am always moved by how the group remains true to itself despite the members changing.”

## Yoshie Sunahata in Akram Khan’s New Piece *Gnosis* ~ World Tour

In October 2009, Yoshie Sunahata set off alone to England where she appeared in Akram Khan’s international sensation *Gnosis*. After three successful inaugural shows in the UK in 2009, we are pleased to announce that *Gnosis* will be touring internationally in February and April through July 2010. [See schedule.](#)

nervous, a bit anxious, and full of expectations.

On the initial day of rehearsals, I came face to face with the musicians for the first time and we heard Akram talk about the structure of the show. It was far more concrete than what he had described when he was on Sado earlier this year, and the story had been greatly developed. He described the traditional *Kathak Dance*, which I was to accompany with Japanese taiko drums. In the second act, he spoke of a scene from the Indian myth *Mahabharata* in which there would be dance, music and puppets telling the tale. I was to be a puppeteer.



**Yoshie Sunahata on *Gnosis***  
 “This month-long trip was my first time alone abroad. I set off for London

The *Mahabharata* speaks of a deep sense of morality and what that

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“To sum it up, it was truly wonderful.”



Photo: Richard Haughton



“I am moved, grateful and amazed every time.”



Photo: Richard Haughton

**Gnosis**

*continued from page 3*

teaches us, even as humans make the same mistakes time and again. I felt this particular piece would be one where the audience could feel the transience of human existence.

The rehearsals for the first half of the show were very different than what I am used to with Kodo. The sound of the taiko is loud, so if I played my drums as I usually do, the other musicians couldn't hear their own sound. I had to stare at their hands and hold back on my own sound when we rehearsed. For the second act, I had a tough time trying to get the puppet to express emotion as if it were alive. Every day we would create and change, create and change the content, over and over again.

Even live on stage, there was a lot of trial and error in an attempt to improve things. For each of Akram's orders, we musicians would adjust and interact accordingly. I was constantly encouraged by my fellow musicians' sharp sense of intuition, their characters, and the music they played.

And I was moved by Akram's extraordinary physical expression. At the end of the performance, there was a scene where he danced while I sang, and it was like each move he made triggered the next note that came out of my mouth. For me it was a truly thrilling performance and experience as a whole. The sense of unity I felt at the end of it all felt like home. The journey continues next year. I will keep giving it my all."



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a place for friends



*Mt. Kimpoku, Sado Island*

## Resources

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Performances, workshops, and all general inquiries

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