

## Starting the New Year with a Big Bang: Kodo Hits Europe

Reflecting the influences of recent solo, ensemble and collaborative work, Kodo's highly acclaimed *One Earth Tour* returns to Europe this month with an exuberant new performance. For the past twenty-nine years, the *One Earth Tour* has been the heart and soul of Kodo's year, an ongoing voyage that has taken the group around the world several times over in a continual quest for new expression and exchange of ideas. Through these travels, Kodo meets myriad artists, both in Japan and abroad, who contribute to the group's multicultural palette and spur a perpetual evolution.

Highlights of the program will include *Chonlima*, a piece not seen



*Chocho-Nannan: featuring a dance that expresses the powerful emotion of hope*



*Koikoi-Fusha: drumming spiced with Kodo playfulness*

in recent years in Europe, which evokes the thunder of a great horse galloping across an open field at full speed. Likewise *Miyake*, and its tight formation of drummers crouched low to their instruments and striking horizontally, pushes the minds and bodies of the performers to their limits with its demands of strength and rhythmic precision. Quintessential Kodo compositions such as *O-daiko* and *Yatai-Bayashi* are rendered with such force that they can literally be felt.

Nearly three decades since its founding, Kodo is still seeking new directions and inspiration, both on the world stage and in the fabric of daily life. Now, with the return of its ongoing *One Earth Tour - Europe 2010*, Kodo draws fresh vitality from recent special projects and delivers it with unrivaled clarity and strength.

Touring February - March. [Click here for schedules and tickets.](#)

Performers: Tomohiro Mitome, Kazuki Imagai, Ayako Onizawa, Yuichiro Funabashi, Masami Miyazaki, Yosuke Oda, Masayuki Sakamoto, Natsuki Saito, Kenta Nakagome, Tokio, Takahashi, Hiroko Shimauchi, Mariko Omi.

Artistic Director: Mitsuru Ishizuka.

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Here's a sneak preview selection from the programme notes

### **Chocho-Nannan**

*Chocho* means butterfly in Japanese, and this creature with its translucent wings is thought to hold a sacred power. The dance featured in *Chocho-Nannan* expresses the powerful emotion of hope, captured by movements that are both bold and fluid, just like those of a butterfly.

### **Koikoi-Fusha**

Inspired by unique techniques and expressions from traditional Chinese music and spiced with Kodo playfulness, we hope you'll enjoy this light-hearted interlude in which drumsticks spin like pinwheels.

### **Jang-Gwara**

Small metal cymbals are found in a region that runs from the Near East, through the Middle East to Asia, coming to Japan in the early days of Buddhism as religious instruments. Today, they are known as *jangara*, *chappa*, and *tebira*, and are used everywhere for accompaniment at festivals. In this piece, players use various techniques to show the range of rhythms and sounds that can be produced by this ancient instrument.



*Jang-Gwara: lend your ears to the range of rhythms and sounds that can be produced by these ancient cymbals*



*Yae-no Furyu: using feminine elegance to play intricate taiko rhythms woven with animated dance*



*The unseen side of Monochrome: backs to the audience at the final climax*







## ~ Kodo Performances 2010 An Overview of the Year Ahead ~

### ONE EARTH TOUR 2010

This year the Kodo One Earth Tour will go to Europe twice, once in winter and once in the fall. The winter tour will mark the first time for Kodo to visit Russian Federation. In May-June, and September, the OET returns home to Japan.

Feb-Mar: Europe - Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Russian Federation

May-Jun: Japan - Kansai (Hyogo, Shiga, Wakayama), Chubu (Gifu, Shizuoka), Kanto (Chiba, Tokyo, Saitama, Tochigi), Tohoku (Fukushima, Iwate), Hokkaido, etc.

Sep: Japan - Kanto (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Gunma, Chiba, etc)

Oct-Nov: Europe - Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, etc.

### SCHOOL WORKSHOP-PERFORMANCE TOUR

This year Kodo takes to the road in Japan once again specifically to share the joy of taiko at public schools. We look forward to a profound exchange with students from elementary school, high school and beyond.

May: Nagano City

Oct-Nov: Planned for Kansai & Kanto areas

### EARTH CELEBRATION 2010

This year we are delighted to announce our main-stage Shiroshima Concert guests will be the Corsican polyphonic singing ensemble A Filetta. Kodo's Yuichiro Funabashi will take the reigns for the first time as artistic director of Earth Celebration 2010.

August 20 (Fri) – 22 (Sun) Ogi, Sado Island

Shiroshima Concerts and more events are in the works!

### SPECIAL PERFORMANCES IN JAPAN

After rave reviews in 2009, Kodo Ubusuna and Dadan will be touring Japan once more in 2010.

Mar: Kodo Ubusuna - Ehime, Osaka, Ishikawa, Niigata, Tokyo

Jul: Kodo Dadan - Niigata, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama, Shizuoka, Aichi

### SPECIAL PERFORMANCES ABROAD

Modern composer Maki Ishii's musical suite Kaguyahime, which debuted in 1984, will be performed by Kodo with the Paris Opera Ballet as a new production at the Opéra Bastille. This will mark the first time for a taiko



*A light-hearted interlude: Yosuke Oda in Koikoi-Fusha*



*Natsuki Saito singing, dancing and drumming in Yae-no Furyu*

group to ever take the stage at the Opéra National de Paris. In September, Kodo will travel to EC2010 guest A Filetta's island home in Corsica to take part in their music festival. This special event promises to enhance the exchange between both groups and their respective islands this summer.

Jun-Jul Kodo in Kaguyahime Opéra Bastille, Paris, France  
Sep Kodo at Rencontres de Chants Polyphoniques de Calvi Festival, Corsica, France

### KODO DECEMBER CONCERTS

A compilation of the best of 2010, this show will set the tone for Kodo as the group transitions into its 30th anniversary year.

Dec: Sado, Niigata, Nagoya, Osaka, Sendai, Tokyo

### AIKAWA KOZAN MATSURI

Kodo will appear at Sado's annually anticipated local summer festival Kozan Matsuri with this year's performance directed by Chieko Kojima. With all the flare of a local island event and a fantastic fireworks finale, this festival promises to be fun for everyone.

July 25 (Sun) Aikawa, Sado Island

### SOLO/SMALL-GROUP PROJECTS

This year Shogo Yoshii will be appearing as a musician in new contemporary dance production Babel by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Damien Jalet and Antony Gormley. He will tour with the production throughout Europe from April to December. From February to July, Yoshie Sunahata will be touring with Akram Khan's Gnosis, an acclaimed show that made its debut last year. They will travel to Europe, the Middle East, Taiwan, and Australia.

### WORKSHOPS

As always, a diverse range of educational experiences revolving around the taiko and Sado Island culture will be on offer at the Sado Island Taiko Centre. In addition, 2010 will also see two sleepover workshops take place at the Kodo Apprentice Centre: Kodo Juku - Eiichi Saito's Taiko Workshop, and the KASA/MIX tour which brings a group of North American Taiko enthusiasts to Sado to live and train in the Kodo style for several days. Kodo's "Onsite Workshop" program will also be sending instructors to various areas throughout Japan for on-demand, hands-on workshops that focus on the joy of taiko and its related performing arts.

Sep 8 (Wed) – 12 (Sun) KASA/MIX

Oct 7 (Thu) – 11 (Mon) Kodo Juku - Eiichi Saito's Taiko Workshop



*O-daiko, played by Tomohiro Mitome*



*Tomohiro draws on every ounce of his strength*



*Kazuki Imagai thanks the audience after the end of a show*





## Kodo Village at the Turn of the Year

### Dondoyaki

Every year on January 15th, Kodo Village holds its own *Dondoyaki*, a traditional Japanese fire ceremony to farewell the New Year gods back to the heavens. New Year decorations and good luck charms from the past year are burned in the fire, a tepee-like structure made of bamboo, thatching hay, and straw.

At Kodo, players burn the drumsticks they can no longer use in this fire. It is said that the deity of the New Year goes back home with the smoke of Dondoyaki, so we like to send the heart and soul forged in the drumsticks along with it. Mochi from the week before is also toasted over the fire and eaten to bring good health in the year ahead.



*Burning decorations and all the drumsticks that break over the course of the year*

### Apprentice Centre Graduates

After their final recital, and before the selection of graduates is announced, Kodo apprentices have their course completion ceremony. This year, seven second-year apprentices graduated from the [Kodo Apprentice Centre](#). Graduates selected to become junior members move to Kodo Village and begin their next stage February first. On the same day, first year apprentices who advance start their second year of the programme at the Apprentice Centre. Auditions for new apprentices are also held on Sado in January. New first-year apprentices arrive in April to start their two-year apprenticeship. These first two months of the year are a season of change at Kodo, with both farewells and new beginnings.



*Kodo Apprentice Centre Graduating Class of 2010*



*Gathering broken drumsticks for the fire*

### Visit to Shukunegi Village

Every year, all the Kodo performers and staff pay a visit to [Shokoji Temple](#) in [Shukunegi](#). Our group has been connected to this village and temple even before the founding of *Ondekoza*, when it was suggested that the group settle on Sado. People who helped found the group and are no longer with us are remembered at Shokoji Temple, and every New Year we say our greetings and show them who the current members are in person.

Afterwards, we have a group portrait taken, a team shot which records us at that point in time, beginning the New Year as one. This year there was no snow when we visited Shokoji, which made for warmer smiles.



*The Kodo Team for 2010, ready for a great year of activities!*

**Kodo New Year***continued from page 5***Mochi Making**

In Japan, *mochi* (pounded rice cakes) are usually made before New Year's Day and eaten during the beginning of January. However, with the December Concerts and a year of touring to recover from, at Kodo we make mochi on the first day of work when we all gather to start the new year. Everyone takes turns pounding the rice, and we eat zoni soup for lunch (meat and vegetable soup containing mochi).

On the same day, we also have a huge spring-cleaning at Kodo Village, getting everything spick and span before the rehearsals and office work begin again.



*First day of work for the Kodo year:  
Yoshikazu and Yoko Fujimoto making  
mochi*

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 a place for friends


*Sunset Sky at Meotoiwa Rock, Sado Island*

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