

Announcing Kodo's New Structure: *An Invited Artistic Director & Newly Nominated Group Director*

*A Message from Kodo Managing
Director/Kitamaesen Co., Ltd.
President Takao Aoki*

The [Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour](#) is now setting off on its second leg in Japan. With the support of enthusiastic audiences across the nation, the tour continues to build momentum as we approach the year-end finale to take place on Sado Island on December 24th.

Fueled by 30 years of experience, Kodo does not plan to rest on its laurels, but instead to continue to break new ground as we look 50 and even 100 years into the future. As we move into a new era for the group, I have decided to entrust the future of our stage expression to a new organizational structure that will come into effect in April 2012.



*Takao Aoki, Kodo's Managing Director/
Kitamaesen Co., Ltd. President*



A Newly Appointed Artistic Director: Tamasaburo Bando

As a key turning point on this new road forward, Kodo has invited Kabuki luminary [Tamasaburo Bando](#) to become its artistic director. With this appointment, he will henceforth be intimately involved with all Kodo's stage productions.

Kodo has never before appointed an artistic director from outside the company, so this is a first-time endeavor. Under Bando's direction, we expect our organization and its individuals will be challenged to achieve a higher level of performing arts than ever before.

Kodo's mission has always been to pioneer unprecedented creative paths, and under this new leadership, I am certain that Kodo will go on to break

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Sharing Our Energy on Tour In the Harvest Season

After a wonderful summer season, fall has finally reached Sado Island, filled with harvest festivals as the rice and persimmon peak. Our 30th

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Anniversary One Earth Tour and School Workshop Performance Tour are on the road filled with new energy after a summer of collaboration and inspiration. Kodo Village is quiet except for the lone taiko practice of Masaru Tsuji, who remained on Sado to teach the apprentices. We can hear the drums from the Sado Island Taiko Centre daily as school and tour groups come to experience taiko hands-on during excursions, accompanied by a lot of laughter no doubt. Our office is musical with ringing telephones, as ticket orders come in for our upcoming concerts in Japan, in particular for the December finale of the 2011 30th Anniversary tour. We are active planning future tours and looking forward to new paths, as you'll see in our new structure announcement.

With Earth Celebration fresh in our minds and the sounds of the mystic tanbour lingering in the air, we are working on a gallery of EC 2011 photos to put online in the EC Archive soon. EC 2011 was a great success and once more we would like to thank all the people who joined us for the festivities. The next EC will be held August 17 (Fri) - 19 (Sun), 2012. It will be our 25th Earth Celebration. We hope to see more of our readers on Sado Island then. Further details about EC 2012 will be available on the EC website from mid-May 2012, and we'll also announce them right here in *Kodo eNews*.



Earth Celebration 2011 | Shiroyama Concert Artists



Kodo takes "Yatai-bayashi" back to its festival roots by performing it to lively cheers on a moving drum cart



The Ranaei Family from Iran shares the stunning tones and profound expression of the tanbour



Japanese dance ensemble KO no kai performs "Onbashira" with Kodo live for the first time

New Kodo Structure*continued from page 1*

new ground. Learning the mysteries of the performing arts from the artistic director firsthand, Kodo members will surely continue to make meaningful additions to the canon of taiko performing art culture.

[Please click here to read a message from newly appointed Artistic Director Tamasaburo Bando](#)



Tamasaburo Bando, Kodo's new artistic director

A New Group Director for the Taiko Performing Arts Ensemble Kodo: Tomohiro Mitome

As we move ahead, the stage performers will be given more freedom than ever before to take initiative in the creation of their own performances. Along with this freedom comes the responsibility to further explore their creativity and challenge themselves. Towards this end, the taiko performing arts ensemble Kodo will be restructured to include an independent organization of the players, with veteran performer Tomohiro Mitome nominated as its group director.

Mitome has been featured as a central performer on the Kodo stage, acting as Kodo's main O-daiko performer, and has been one of the driving forces behind Kodo performances for many years. From this point on, as Kodo's group director, he will be responsible for the development of Kodo performers, guiding the direction of future generations and strengthening the basis of Kodo's creative activities.



Tomohiro Mitome, Kodo's new group director

I am confident that he will strive to improve the minds and bodies of everyone in the company.

Up to this point, I have served as the Managing Director for our organization. In this role, my responsibilities included overseeing performances, but from now on I will devote myself to my duties as president of Kitamaesen Co., Ltd, which manages Kodo. Of course I will remain in a supportive role of the group's stage activities, but the group's creative direction will be left to the performers themselves and the newly appointed artistic director, Tamasaburo Bando.

[Please click here to read a message from Kodo's New Group Director, Tomohiro Mitome](#)

Strengthening the Various Organizations of the Kodo Group Starting in April 2012

In order to make Kitamaesen Co. Ltd. and the [Kodo Cultural Foundation](#) (currently in the process of becoming confirmed as a non-profit public interest independent organizations, the roles and responsibilities of each organization will be clearly defined from April 2012.

This will make the corporate entities that support Kodo stronger (Kitamaesen Co., Ltd., Kodo Cultural Foundation, Otodaiku Co.,Ltd.) with the intention of constructing an ideal management base.

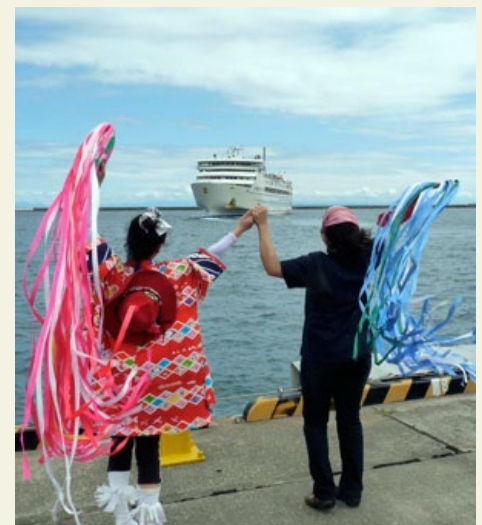
As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we hope you'll look forward to a new era of creative expression for Kodo, and I humbly ask you for your continued support.

~ Takao Aoki

Earth Celebration 2011

A report by Johnny Wales

And so another Earth Celebration has come and gone. As I sit here some 2 weeks later looking back, I am reminded how we spend so much time at EC looking forward to the big event, then it is all over in what seems like a blur of burning sights, sounds, smells and memories whose warmth must tide us over the coming months of Sado's colder seasons. Though I spend my time wandering about as many events at EC I can manage, many or most of the Kodo staff and performers are so busy actually putting on the event, they often only catch glimpses of what an EC visitor sees.



Newfound friends Chieko from Kodo and Shirin from the Ranaei Family bid farewell to the ferry

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EC Report*continued from page 3*

First of all we were pretty blessed by Mother Nature on the weather front, as no events were cancelled due to rain. The skies threatened to turn nasty a few times and there was a light trickle of raindrops for a few moments at two of the evening concerts, but not enough to dampen the performance or the crowd's spirits. It was generally cooler than last year when the heat was pretty overwhelming, which meant fewer lobster-red guests walking about.

For most visitors to Earth Celebration the main events are the evening concerts on Shiroyama, up which we make our yearly climb and which locals like to refer to as their annual 'health check'. Once there, everyone kicks back in the huge expanse of lawn surrounded by trees and blue sky and sip on a frosty one to the chirping of cicadas. This year's featured guests were The Ranaei Family, 4 Kurdish musicians from Iran who play traditional Persian music. This was the 'real thing', music from the roots that has yet to be greatly changed by the influences of the Global Culture. It was a rare opportunity to sit here on Sado and yet travel to a different world and time. And transport us they

did, particularly when on their own, though some thought they were a bit overwhelmed when matched with Kodo in the huge stage and venue of Shiroyama park. More on that later.

The second night similarly featured Kodo and the Ranaei family, but they were joined this time by the 10 men of the Tokyo dance group KO no kai who, like Kodo, base their work on Japanese tradition but are carving out new directions in their work. They have featured in their repertoire a piece called Onbashira in which they dance to a recording of the music of Kodo. At this performance they were able for the first time to present this piece with the luxury of Kodo accompanying them live on stage, and the audience duly showed their appreciation.

On the final night and grand finale performance Kodo took centre stage ending with a succession of rousing encores, which saw the entire park erupt into dancing in the soft green



Chieko Kojima is jazzed to share the stage with her daughter Natsuko on drums

grass with the taiko echoing across Ogi Bay. Difficult to put into words, but you will have to take my word for it, that it is the excitement of this event that is the reason so many people make the trip out to our island year after year, to see and feel Kodo's taiko on their own ground, on their island home.

The concerts though, are only part of the Celebration. Throughout the 3 days of the event there is the grassy Harbour Market where there are booths of people from around Japan and the globe selling crafts, clothes, goodies and wonderful food. The air is filled with live performances throughout the day. For those of us who live on Sado it is a chance to mingle, browse, shop and feast on things we only see once a year, and for everyone, here is the place where you can meet and make friends or simply kick back and unwind.

For those who want to participate in EC in a more active way there are plenty of workshops to participate in, from the perennially popular O-daiko workshop to learning how to make a bamboo flute or basket, and the list goes on. If you want to participate



Group portrait at the end of the dock after a Kodo-style farewell

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EC Report

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next year you are advised to check EC's website and apply in advance.

Throughout the day there is also a range of Fringe Events of performers both local and from away at venues spread around the town. Getting to these also gives you a chance to explore the winding and wonderful streets and alleys of the old port town of Ogi where you can still feel a Japan which is so fast disappearing before our eyes.

If all that isn't enough there are also Special Fringe Events & EC Theatre with featured performers, and it was here (at the main Fringe venue: Ogi Gym) that I experienced the three most unforgettable moments of the EC this year. One of those was hearing the Ranaei Family in a much more intimate environment than the main stage. Here they really could be experienced to the best advantage--up close and personal--and their music still plays in my ears.

Another was seeing Natsuko Sugano, the daughter of Kodo members Chieko Kojima and Atsushi Sugano appear as a jazz drummer while her mother danced. Two generations of Kodo together on stage at last!

It was here too that when former



Lively Sado Performing Arts in the streets of Ogi

Kodo member and shinobue player Yasukazu Kano introduced guitarist and Fukushima native Takafumi Imaizumi to say a few words about his thoughts on the natural and nuclear disaster in his home town. Takafumi paused, and for what must have been 20 seconds couldn't speak. We realized he was fighting a losing battle to hold back the tears. Many in the audience joined too. We were all reminded that for all that there is to celebrate, there is much to reflect upon too. The music that followed from his guitar after

that resonated with a special poignancy for all who were there. And don't forget the camping too, at sites including one of my favorite places in the world, Sobama beach, where I am sure many warm and indelible memories were made.

I should also mention that our Earth Celebration was truly global in its reach this year, in a way it has never been before, as long-time Kodo associate Daniel Rosen brought his crew to

Live Stream the concerts and events around the world. He got tweets throughout the show, including a fellow saying he was in the streets of London dancing live to the Kodo beat.

Here's hoping we will see him – and you too – here on Sado next year.



Enjoy Niigata This Autumn!

Sado Island and Niigata Prefecture have a great fall harvest, including of some of Japan's best rice, delicious persimmons, and other delicacies. We hope you'll take the time to come and enjoy the seasonal bounty of our home on Sado Island and in Niigata Prefecture.

The Niigata Prefecture Tourism Guide offers detailed information on how to enjoy your visit to Niigata in all of the four seasons. Visit <http://www.enjoyniigata.com/english/> for access, accommodations, detailed event listings, and more!

You can download a Niigata Guide Book for free by visiting their website or clicking this link http://enjoyniigata.com/pamphlet/en_guide.pdf The site also has links for pages in Korean, Chinese, Russian and Japanese.



Kodo Performance Schedule 2011-2012

KODO 30TH ANNIVERSARY - ONE EARTH TOUR

October - November: [Japan](#)

Okayama, Kagawa, Kochi, Yamaguchi, Hiroshima, Tokushima, Shiga, Mie, Fukuoka, Oita, Shimane, Saga, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Okinawa

December: [Japan](#)

Nagoya, Osaka, Tokyo (Aoyama Theatre), Nagaoka, Niigata, Sado Island

January-March 2012: [Europe](#)

Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg

For up-to-date schedules and box office details, please visit our [website](#).

SCHOOL WORKSHOP-PERFORMANCE TOUR IN JAPAN

October-November: Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, Tochigi, Fukushima, Niigata

KODO DADAN CONCERTS 2012

February 15 – 18, 2012 [Théâtre du Châtelet](#) (Paris, France)

SOLO & SMALL GROUP PROJECTS, WORKSHOPS, NEWS & INFORMATION

Please visit the [top page of our website](#) and scroll down for details.



Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour 2011

~ JAPAN ~

October-November-December

Schedule is subject to change. For up-to-date schedules and box office details, please visit our [website](#).

- October 1: Maniwa, Okayama
- October 2: Marugame, Kagawa
- October 4: Tosashimizu, Kochi
- October 7: Kudamatsu, Yamaguchi
- October 8: Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima
- October 12: Tokushima City
- October 15: Omihachiman, Shiga
- October 16: Matsusaka, Mie
- October 19: Fukuoka City
- October 20: Oita City
- October 23: Masuda, Shimane
- October 26: Saga City
- October 28: Miyazaki City
- October 29: Kagoshima City
- November 1: Hitoyoshi, Kumamoto
- November 3: Sasebo, Nagasaki
- November 8: Urasoe, Okinawa
- December 1: Nagoya, Aichi
- December 3: Osaka City
- December 4: Osaka City
- December 8: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
- December 9: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
- December 10: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
- December 11: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
- December 13: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo *
- December 14: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo **
- December 15: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo *
- December 16: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
- December 17: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
- December 18: Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
- December 20: Nagaoka, Niigata
- December 21: Niigata City
- December 24: Sado Island, Niigata

* Reserved Concert

** Concerts for Kids



The fresh energy gathered at Earth Celebration fuels the One Earth Tour

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*In the wake of disaster,
Kodo started the Heartbeat
Project, a multifaceted
undertaking designed to
support relief efforts and the
people of the regions affected
by the Tohoku Pacific
Earthquake.*

*We are making new
recordings and participating
in charity concerts, fund-
raising events, etc. Thank
you for your continued
support. For updates, please
visit our [website](#).*

KODO

New Album:
Kodo Akatsuki



Ogi's once-a-year bustling Harbour Market by night

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