

Kodo Dadan Concert: Foreign Debut in Paris

Since Kodo's debut, the powerful presence of its taiko drums and prowess of its performers have taken the Western musical world by storm, meeting with the highest acclaim for decades as the ensemble holds performances around the globe annually. No other Japanese artists have enjoyed such an avid following from global audiences as Kodo, which currently celebrates its 30th anniversary.

As part of the group's quest to continually hone its artistic expression, Kodo sought the guidance of Kabuki luminary Tamasaburo Bando. Tamasaburo Bando is a great actor, known as an unparalleled "onnagata" (male actor who plays leading female roles) in the 400-year-old world of Kabuki theater. As a dancer he is

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From Hokkaido to Okinawa on the Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour in Japan

Our special One Earth Tour has spent the past month in Western Japan, visiting every prefecture in the area. We are currently finishing our tour of Kyushu and we are heading to Okinawa soon for the first time in 5 years, before returning to Sado Island. In December,

we are going to tour to the larger cities of Nagoya and Osaka before we land at Tokyo's [Aoyama Theatre](#) for an 11-concert climax. The graphics for this landmark tour feature the name Kodo painted by internationally renowned artist Taro Okamoto in 1983, and Mitsuru Ishizuka's new piece, *Honoka*, written to commemorate legendary artist's centennial birthday

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Kodo "Dadan" will debut abroad in Paris in February 2012

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actively sought after for collaborations by the world's leading artists across all genres. He has also shown tremendous intuition and aesthetic sensibilities as an artistic director and film director.



Since 2001, Tamasaburo Bando has visited Kodo's home base on Sado Island in Niigata Prefecture on many occasions, and after spending significant time to get to know the group, he first directed Kodo in the "Kodo One Earth Tour Special" project in 2003. Drawing on the individual strengths from each performer and the diverse expressions of the ensemble, this performance was realized through challenge and experimentation. During the creative process, Bando's influence on Kodo was immense. He seemed to elicit a veritable burgeoning of talents in the younger performers, one after another.

In 2006, when the ensemble celebrated its 25th anniversary, Bando and Kodo collaborated on stage for the first time in *Amaterasu*. Amaterasu is a goddess who appears in a quintessential classical Japanese myth, and this daring collaboration featured Bando portraying the goddess herself while Kodo provided musical accompaniment on drums, flutes, vocals, and koto harps. Kodo members also portrayed the other gods who appear in the myth,

marking the first time these players performed music while in character. Coupled with beautiful stage art and costumes, the production was a celebration of color and sound. The first season was held over a span of two months in Tokyo and Kyoto where it received rave reviews in Japan, and in 2007, encore performances were held at Japan's premier Kabuki theater, *Kabuki-za*.

After the *Kodo One Earth Tour Special* and *Amaterasu*, Kodo applied this new wealth of experience to *Dadan*, a next-level production also directed under the keen eye of Bando.

With stark contrast in appearance from the flamboyant staging, costumes and mythical world of *Amaterasu*, *Dadan* instead shows the "naked" stage by exposing the equipment and steel framing to the audience, using three-dimensional lighting with acute angles, a video screen linking live and pre-recorded footage, and minimal adornment through costumes and makeup. *Dadan* features newly devised taiko drumming styles and music, incorporating the soft tones of the Grantang (a bamboo instrument of the Jegog from Bali, Indonesia) to create a broad musical expression that is woven together into a seamless, exuberant concert. At the very heart of this fresh and contemporary style of direction lies the ultimate objective of remaining decisively simple.

Bando always says, "The *O-daiko* performance is the biggest attraction of a Kodo performance, and what truly moves the audience." *O-daiko* (meaning "big drum") is where the audience becomes completely captivated watching a disciplined body drumming intently when facing the drum, and one could say it is the piece tests the limits of a player's heart, technique, and physique. In Kodo's history to date, only a few drummers have been invited to perform this piece. Bando selected seven elite members and put

them to the test of performing this sacred ritual. Demanding they drum relentlessly, he pushed the drummers to harsh extremes during the rehearsals for *Dadan*. This innovative direction style is noteworthy, but the real stars of the performance are the honed bodies of the performers themselves.

In short, the ninety-minutes of *Dadan* represent the culmination of everything that has been cultivated between Kodo and Tamasaburo Bando to date in a condensed form. It is a production that simply undulates with an astounding energy.

February 2012 will mark *Dadan*'s first venture onto foreign soil. The artistic director and cast, this time eight members strong, are working together to polish the performance to perfection. Kodo's antecedent group *Sado no Kuni Ondekoza* made its own European debut in Paris in 1975 at the theater at Espace Pierre Cardin. At that time, their never-before-seen playing style and intensity caused a sensation in Paris, and after so many years, it is significant that Kodo and Bando will bring their cutting-edge performance *Dadan* to the city of Paris as well.

Kodo has invited Tamasaburo Bando to take on the role of the ensemble's artistic director from April 2012. This is no doubt a pioneering event in the history of the Japanese and global-art worlds. We look forward to welcoming audience members to see Kodo break new ground with Bando through *Dadan at the Théâtre du Châtelet*.

Kodo Dadan Concerts
Théâtre du Châtelet,
Paris, France
February 15 - 18, 2012
Tickets Now on sale

*For further details,
 please visit the [Kodo website](#).*

30th Anniversary One Earth Tour in Japan continued from page 1

is the opening number we are performing nationwide on the [Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour in Japan](#). The energy poured into *Honoka* (meaning “flames”) will reach its greatest heights at the year-end consecutive performances to be held at Tokyo’s Aoyama Theatre, which are an official Taro Okamoto Centennial Event. His inspirational artwork is on display in Shibuya Station and outside the theater, and we hope to capture some of the great artist’s passion in our performance.

To read about further highlights of this tour, please visit our [website](#).

After our long-run in Tokyo, we’ll return home to Niigata Prefecture for concerts in Nagaoka, Niigata City, and Sado Island, where we will celebrate the last domestic dates of our anniversary tour. Then in the New Year, we’ll be off to [Europe](#) for the final leg of the 30th Anniversary tour. We’ll share more on that in our December Issue.

Right now, we’re in the middle of a fantastic journey throughout our homeland, and we’d like to share a message from just one of the many special places we’ve visited this fall, [Uchiko Town](#) in Ehime Prefecture.

Kodo Uchiko-za Concerts

By Shinichiro Hayashi, Kodo Uchiko-za Committee

Uchiko Town and Kodo have a profound relationship. My uncle Domei Hayashi went from Uchiko in Ehime to [Shukunegi](#) on Sado Island to become the chief priest of a temple there. While he lived on the island, he was also deeply involved in the founding of *Sado no Kuni Ondekoza* and Kodo, which is how our connection was made.

While my uncle was alive he wanted “to bring Kodo home to [Uchiko-za](#) (the town’s historic Kabuki & Bunraku theater)” and my father wanted to make the wish of my late uncle come true. So he told Kodo about that wish and Kodo replied “Well, let’s go and have

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Uchiko-za, all dressed up for the Kodo Performance

30th Anniversary One Earth Tour in Japan

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a look.” In 1995, when the ensemble was on tour in Ehime Prefecture, Kodo members came to see Uchiko-za.

Since then, from 1996, we’ve held a total of ten concerts there to date including One Earth Tour performances and Motofumi Yamaguchi’s *Ikkon Fugetsu* concerts. During the same years, the members of our committee have been to [Earth Celebration](#) (the 10th Anniversary in 1997), the [Kodo Ubusuna](#) performance in Ayabe in Kyoto, and we’ve even gotten to know the Kodo in Shibata Committee* in Niigata Prefecture. We enjoy our close relationship with Kodo.

It is deeply moving for us to have held a performance to commemorate Kodo’s 30th Anniversary at Uchiko-za. Next year Tamasaburo Bando, who has also held dance performances at Uchiko-za, will become Kodo’s artistic director and we look forward to the future together with them. I sincerely hope that the relationship Uchiko and Kodo have established will continue for many years to come.

*The Kodo in Shibata Committee hosts Kodo performances in Shibata City, Niigata Prefecture. For more about them, please see the tour report in [Issue 21 - August 2011](#) of Kodo eNews.



Inside Uchiko-za, Ehime Prefecture. The Kabuki theatre was built in 1916, and restored in 1985.



The Kodo Uchiko-za Committee has the tour members stay at their homes with them as part of the exchange. Chieko and Masami enjoyed staying with Doreen from Germany, deputy leader of the committee and Uchiko Town’s Coordinator of International Relations.



The Kodo Uchiko-za Committee and Kodo One Earth Tour members. (Shinichiro Hayashi is pictured front row center, wearing a white shirt)

Hanayui USA Tour 2012



Hanayui is (from left) Yoko Fujimoto, Mitsue Kinjo, and Chieko Kojima

Hanayui is a song and dance group made up of Kodo members Chieko Kojima and Yoko Fujimoto joined by Okinawan dance expert Mitsue Kinjo. Finding themselves together on Sado, they decided to pool their talents and form a performing-arts group. In addition to performances at community centers, they also conduct workshops guaranteed to enliven both body and soul. The Japanese word “*hana*” means “flower” and symbolizes the youthful energy that Hanayui puts into their performances. The word “*yui*” means “to tie,” and recalls the relationships formed in ancient villages in Japan when families came together to share in both hardships and harvests. Hanayui hopes to unite people through good times with song, dance and music.

In February-March next year, *Hanayui* will head to the USA for a tour joined by [Yoshikazu Fujimoto](#). All four performers have enjoyed many performances in the USA to date, and this time they are looking forward to reunions and new encounters alike. During the tour, [Mu Daiko](#) of Minnesota has invited Hanayui to appear as a special guest at their group’s 15th Anniversary Concerts. We hope you’ll join them all for the celebrations! Further concerts in Michigan and California are also being planned. All details will be announced on the [Kodo website](#) as they come to hand.

Hanayui & Yoshikazu Fujimoto Guest Appearance in Mu Daiko 15th Anniversary Concert Tour 2012

Appearing: Mu Daiko

Guest Appearance: Hanayui, Yoshikazu Fujimoto (Kodo), Tiffany Tamaribuchi, & Megan Chao Smith

February

- 16-19 McKnight Theatre, Saint Paul, MN
- 23 A Center for the Arts, Fergus Falls, MN
- 25 Sheldon Performing Arts Theatre, Redwing, MN

March

- 1 Grand Marais Playhouse, Grand Marais, MN
- 3 The Myles Reif Center, Grand Rapids, MN

For detailed information,
please visit the [Kodo website](#).



Members of Mu Daiko of Mu Performing Arts: Emma Valentine, Jennifer Weir, Jeffrey Ellsworth, Gregg Amundson, Iris Shiraishi, Susan Tanabe, and Craig Schultz



Kodo Performance Schedule 2011-2012

KODO 30TH ANNIVERSARY - ONE EARTH TOUR

November: [Japan](#)

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

November: Tochigi, Niigata, Fukushima

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 ~
November-December

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

- 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 **SOLD OUT**
- December 21: Niigata City
- December 24: Sado Island, Niigata

*Reserved Concert

** Concerts for Kids

For ages 0 & up **SOLD OUT**

For ages 6-18 Tickets Still Available



"Yatai-bayashi"



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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](#).

KODŌ

New Album:
Kodo Akatsuki



Making warazori (straw sandals), one of the many traditional handicrafts still alive on Sado Island

Resources

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