

Happy New Year From Sado Island, Japan!

We hope 2012 is off to a happy and healthy start for all of our readers. Kodo started the year with a big “spring clean” and mochi-making, followed by a week of meetings, apprentice auditions, and a short recital by the junior members. We had a huge snowfall on Sado throughout January, and needed hot water in our cooler box to warm the performers hands up in the morning before drumming. Our [Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour 2012](#) is currently in Europe where they enjoyed a rousing start in Scandinavia with performances in Sweden and Denmark at the end of [January](#). The cast includes 7 out of 8 performers for the [Kodo Dadan Concerts](#) to be held in Paris in mid-February. We hope you'll enjoy the New Year with Kodo through these two special programs if you're able to attend one of the performances in Europe.

Three of our veteran performers are now in the USA for the [Hanayui tour](#) with Okinawan dancer Mitsue Kinjo. In Japan, Eiichi Saito is teaching [workshops in Chiba](#), and our remaining performers are on Sado rehearsing for the upcoming spring tours and teaching at the [Kodo Apprentice Centre](#). Taiko certainly is a great way to beat the winter chills. We look forward to seeing you all on our upcoming tours this year. Please find the latest schedule details on [Page 9](#) and on our [website](#).



Celebrating Our Milestone Anniversary On Tour in Europe

Our current tour in [Europe](#) is the final leg of our [Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour](#).

Here is a look at a selection of excerpts from the programme notes for the 2012 European tour, offering insight into our ensemble as well as the current tour pieces.

“Drums have always been about more than just making music in the Japanese tradition. They were central components of every temple and shrine and even marked the physical and metaphorical edge of a village: It is said that in ancient Japan, the boundaries of a village were determined by the furthest distance at which the taiko could be heard. Kodo has lived this

continued on next page

Dadan Takes the Stage in Paris

We would like to share with you a message from [Tamasaburo Bando's](#) about the upcoming [Kodo Dadan Concerts at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris](#),

continued on page 3

In This Issue

A Look at December 2011	4
Onidaiko of Sado Island	6
2012 Schedule	9
Contacts & Information	10

Celebrating 30 Years of Kodo in Europe

continued from page 1

principle for thirty years, bringing the thundering and soothing sounds of the taiko to forty-six countries around the world to include thousands of people in a greater global community. Known for its unique interweaving of a committed lifestyle, musical mastery, and vibrant traditions, the group returns to Europe in January through March 2012, with recently created pieces, a brand new recording, and the pulse of ancient festivals.”

“Kodo unites high-energy percussion, elegant music, dance, and striking physical prowess in a performance that is truly indescribable in words. Along with pieces new to Europe, the Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour will also see next-generation soloist [Kenta Nakagome](#) making his European debut on the group’s hallmark giant drum, the 900-pound o-daiko - a challenging, show-stopping instrument that demands both strength and subtlety.”



“O-daiko” with our newest soloist, Kenta Nakagome

“Never-before-seen works on this tour include the original *Sakaki*, a drum and dance piece which will open the program. Composed by Kodo member [Masaru Tsuji](#), it takes its name from a sacred evergreen tree used in Shinto purification rituals. Many of the performing arts that Kodo has studied in various regions of Japan are comprised of dance and drumming fused together as an integrated art form. When crafting the dance elements of *Sakaki*, choreographer and dancer [Kenzo Abe](#) was strongly inspired by Japanese regional *kagura* (sacred music and dancing performed at shrines). The spiraling and wavelike motions of the dancer ride the uplifting rhythms of the taiko, stirring the air in the theater into a whirlwind of sight and sound and filling the entire hall with an intense energy.”

“Innovation is deeply rooted for Kodo, and the group channels both a unique grasp of Japanese traditional arts and an ability to harness influences from music around the world to create new fusions and forms. Newer compositions featured on Kodo’s latest album *Akatsuki*, including *Sora* and *Stride*, show how taiko can find common ground in unexpected musical territories, drawing on Irish beats they heard on a European tour or the samba reggae that caught their ear in Northeastern Brazil. The CD and limited edition bonus DVD chronicling the group and the landscapes that inspire it act as companions to Kodo’s dynamic live performances.”

“The expressions you will hear on *Akatsuki*, as well as on stage, represent a culmination of 30 years of Kodo music and reflect an ever-expanding repertoire based on traditional



“*Sakaki*” premiers in Europe on this tour. It made its debut in North America in 2011, but has yet to be performed in Japan. (Dance by Kenzo Abe, music by Masaru Tsuji)

performing arts from all over Japan, as well as the music and cultures that Kodo has come into contact with on its travels. These various styles and experiences are inherited by the next generation, and become a part of the Kodo narrative.”

“Of course the classic Kodo pieces also remain a vital part of the group’s expression in tandem with this evolution. Kodo hallmark pieces such as *O-daiko*, *Yatai-bayashi*, and *Miyake* remain constant masterpieces, but they too are reinterpreted by next-generation players. Variations on each piece can reflect the hall in which they are played or can even change with the seasons; they mature over time and reveal unexpected subtleties and power. New players add a freshness that is sustained by Kodo traditions which continue to evolve as the group enjoys new encounters and collaborations throughout its travels.”

“Kodo’s percussive fireworks and unique lifestyle reflect the ancient, complex traditions of the Japanese drum and the group harnesses its power to create something beyond mere music. To see Kodo is to witness the evolution of hundreds of years of Japanese performing arts reinterpreted and honed by a group of consummate artists who have made this their life’s work for the past three decades.”



Dadan Takes the Stage in Paris

continued from page 1

France, on February 15-18. Tickets are still available, and we sincerely hope many of you join Kodo and artistic director Tamasaburo Bando for these ground-breaking performances.

“It has been a long time since I last visited Paris in 1986. Paris really is a marvelous city. As the artistic director the Kodo *Dadan* Concerts in 2012, I will visit the Théâtre du Châtelet for the first time. I will not be taking to the stage myself for this performance, but I am pleased to know that my ideas will be conveyed to the audience in Paris through this production.

Today, taiko echoes with the energy of ancient times and conveys the most fundamental elements of the human spirit. The title of this performance, *Dadan*, is written with two characters in Japanese which literally mean “men who drum.” Now celebrating its 30th Anniversary, for many years Kodo has utilized performance techniques found in performing folk arts handed down from generation to generation across Japan to create new musical expressions. In *Dadan*, I want the audience to enjoy a new movement in Kodo’s artistry. In particular, *Dadan* features a smaller, all-male ensemble. Michelangelo spoke of how the naked human form reveals the greatest truths about humanity; I would be delighted if through *Dadan*, the people of today’s Paris could see the true essence of Japanese men.

I am a Kabuki actor who plays *onnagata* (female-lead) roles, so for my work I observe women with great attention to detail. I analyze and interpret what I see and make this femininity my own expression. Paradoxically, I think that in doing this I come to know well what it means to be a man. I always hope to create art that celebrates masculine and feminine energies and reminds the audience of the pure joy of being alive.

To date, I have spent a lot of time thinking about how I should live my life. However, while directing *Dadan*, immersed in the natural surroundings of Sado and with the taiko always by my side, I learned that if can reach a state where I have let go of my self-consciousness, the process of creation

comes more naturally to me. I hope everyone who comes to the grand hall of Théâtre du Châtelet will enjoy the Japanese taiko as performed by Kodo’s men, and in doing so also get a glimpse of the many wonderful experiences that inspired the performance.”



A Look at December 2011 in Tokyo, Japan and Manchester, UK

Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour 2011 Japan Finale

Thank you very much to everyone who attended our nationwide performances in Japan last year. The December tour marked the domestic finale of our celebrations. We had a glorious ten days of mostly blue skies and warm days in Tokyo for our back-to-back performances at [Aoyama Theatre](#), and returned for the last concert of the year on Sado Island over rough seas to be welcomed home by a howling snowstorm. It certainly didn't put a damper on the atmosphere at Amusement Sado, where all of Kodo's performers and staff gathered to put on the final performance for a house full of our local friends and supporters. We are brimming with appreciation to everyone who supported both Kodo in our special year of touring, and Japan in the wake of disaster.



Sony Music Foundation – Concert for Kids : Kodo for Ages 0 & Up

On December 14th, we joined forces with the Sony Music Foundation to hold two special performances aimed at children ages 18 & under. In the morning, our cast gave an interactive 60-minute concert to a sellout audience for ages 0-6, encouraging the preschoolers and their parents to play, clap and cheer along to the beat. MC Masami Miyazaki (pictured in pink) introduced the performers, pieces and various instruments throughout, giving her all to keep the kids engaged and smiling with her cheerful personality. The small kids (who didn't cry) were certainly enjoying themselves in a range of ways: dancing, jumping, sleeping, and clapping or drumming on their knees. It was a really fun, albeit challenging experience for our performers and we certainly want to hold this event again.

After school, we held a 90-minute performance for ages 6-18, which was a shortened version of our One Earth Tour program. We were pleased to welcome so many elementary school children to this session with their parents, and hope all the kids enjoyed their theater and taiko experience as much as we enjoyed performing for such an enthusiastic, excited audience.

continued on next page



Kenta Nakagome's cry followed by his explosive O-daiko playing started a collaboration of Kodo, tap dancers, flamenco dancers, Stomp!, Indian percussion, military percussion, and a free-running team who stormed the stage one after another. Stomp! creator and founder Luke Cresswell was the artistic director of this act at the 2011 Royal Variety Performance.

A look at December 2011
continued from page 4

The Royal Variety Performance 2011

Kenzo Abe, Kenta Nakagome, and Tsuyoshi Maeda traveled to Manchester, England, to appear in the opening of this prestigious event on December 5, 2011, which boasts almost a century of history and a worldwide television audience of over 150 million people. The trio from Kodo were part of a drum ensemble featuring seven types of rhythmic performance directed by Stomp. All three of our performers were greatly inspired and invigorated by this collaboration on the world stage. After the performance, Kenta had the honor of meeting Her Royal Highness Anne, the Princess Royal, who gave him words of encouragement for Japan.

We'd like to share with you the words we received from Stomp creators Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas about this collaboration.

"Kodo has always been an inspiration to us, and we feel privileged to have been able to work with them on two occasions: the first time was for our movie, [Pulse: a Stomp Odyssey](#), and the second for an opening sequence to the Royal Variety Performance. Unlike the movie, we wanted to integrate the Kodo performance not only with Stomp, but with flamenco, tap, drum corps and Indian drumming. The result far exceeded our expectations, since the Kodo performers were, as ever, stunning in the execution of their own work, but equally adept at knitting together the entire performance

by integrating their rhythm with ours. I think that everyone involved had such mutual respect for each other, and all came away having had a wonderful collaborative experience. Opportunities to work with Kodo have been career highs for both of us, and for STOMP!"



Kenta meets Princess Anne. "I was nervous, but I could feel her empathy for Japan when she spoke to me." (Luke Cresswell from Stomp is pictured center.)

Onidaiko (Demon Drum Dance) of Sado Island, a personal view.

by Johnny Wales

Sado Island has a host of festivals year round. Perhaps the most famous of these involve the [Onidaiko](#) (Demon Drum) groups (sometimes referred to locally as Ondeko) which normally involves two oni (demons) dancing in front of a drum. The demons do more dancing than actual drumming, which is instead done by local men (traditionally) taking turns pounding out the rhythm on the rear of the taiko, each trying to outdo the others. On festival day the group heads out early in the morning and visits nearly every house in the community (except where there has been a death in the family that year) and finishes near dark at the local shrine to dance an extended version before the local deities. There are approximately 120 of these groups on Sado these days, each fiercely proud



Nabe and Molly at home on Sado

of their own unique variation. Kodo eNews interviewed married couple Molly Hakes and Nobuhiro Watanabe who are both active with the Kaizuka Onidaiko group.

[Nobuhiro Watanabe](#) (Nabe) was born on Sado Island in 1964. After studying English at university in Tokyo he went to San Francisco for four and a half years and then spent five more doing Zen and Yoga at a temple in L.A.. At the age of 33 he returned to Sado to begin working on the family farm. Three years later he joined the local Kaizuka Onidaiko group. Their annual festival is April 6th so the group begins getting together at the village hall about a month before for daily practice. On the day of the festival about 20 members assemble at 4:30 in the morning, have a cup of sake and set out. Young men who are near

the age of majority (20) take turns being the oni, performing the white demon their first year and the red on their second. People take turns egging the oni on as one of two shishi (lions) or holding lanterns. One year when Molly was pregnant, Nabe was advised not to do the demon dance for fear that their child might be born as an oni. The group performs in front of the entrances of about 100 houses. Nabe measured the entire day's perambulations and it came to 20,000 steps. After a five or six minute performance at each house, food and drink appear. At some homes this can be a veritable feast, at others it might just be cans of beer. They have to pace themselves so as to last the whole day, but to eat nothing at all would be impolite.

Molly Hakes was born in Iowa in 1974 and came to Japan 12 years ago as part of the [JET \(Japan Exchange & Teaching\) Programme](#) that brings foreign English teachers to Japan. One



Kaizuka's white demon mask

continued on next page

A look at December 2011*continued from page 4*

day, soon after arriving on Sado Island, Nabe drove by in his little farmer's pick-up truck and honked, waved and said hello. The next night at a concert they bumped into each other again and when she asked Nabe if they had met before he replied, 'No, I just saw a pretty girl walking and I thought I would say hello'. They were married a year and a half later.

After Molly attended a week-long Kodo taiko workshop, Nabe's father invited her to join the Kaizuka Onidaiko group. She was not only the first foreigner to join but the first woman too. With her rich musical, gymnastic and dance background she soon picked up the rhythm, which seemed

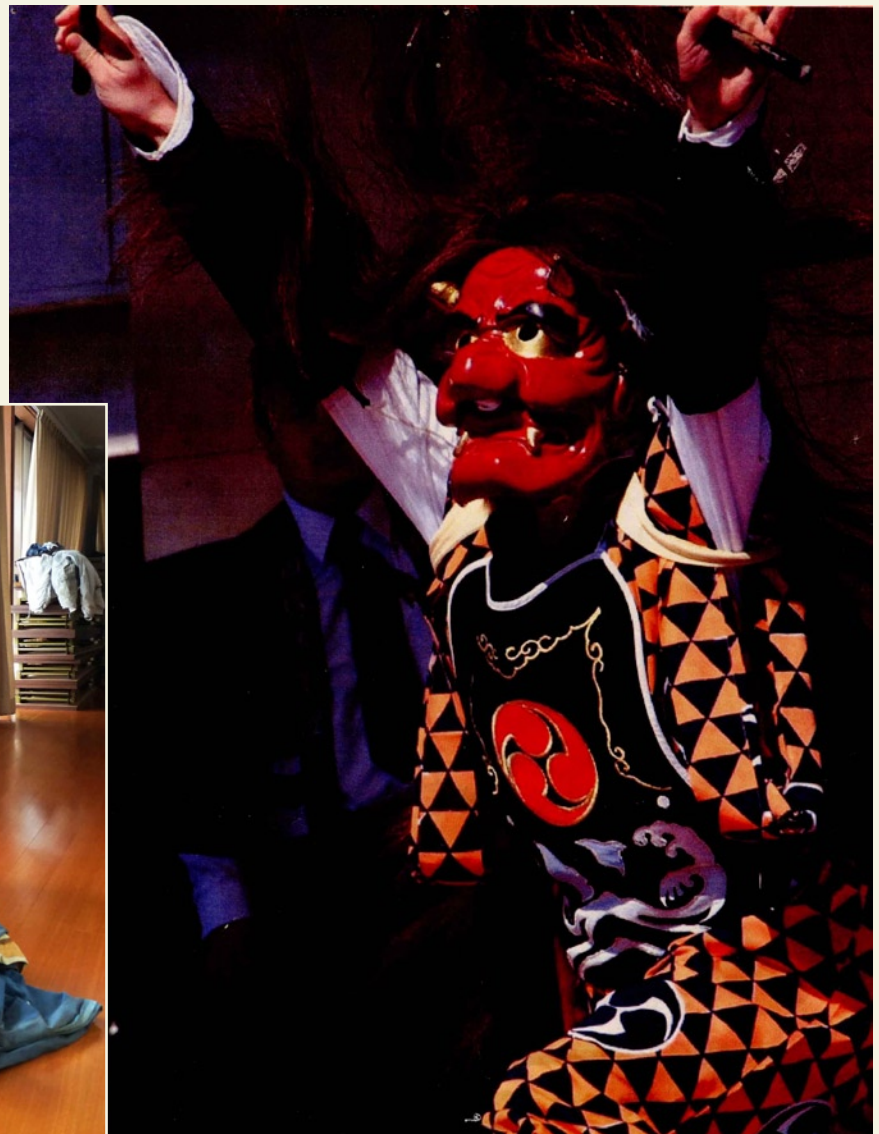
to impress the other members. She loved every aspect, the practising, the drinking, the practising some more. Nabe was one of the demons and she found the physically demanding dance of the oni very sexy. She felt as if she had landed in a dream, the very dream she had had about Japan before arriving. It was decided that Molly would be allowed to drum during the day of the festival, but not at the actual shrine. By the end of the day everyone was so drunk and swept up in the moment she thinks she may even have played there. She remembers hearing Nabe's brother yelling at her in English 'More Stronger!' She really felt accepted by the group. At a spring festival – where a number of troupes appeared together – she felt so inebriated by the magical atmosphere of onidaiko that

it all seemed completely natural for her and Nabe to marry. Demons had brought them together.

In 2001, after her second year with the group, a special festival was being held in the autumn, but being harvest time everyone was too busy to dance the demanding oni part, so she volunteered. She told the leader that she would work hard to learn the part... but he said no. Two days later though, he came to their house and said he had reconsidered. Molly practised hard for 3 weeks and – though she claims she wasn't perfect – when she removed her mask people were startled to see her face emerge. She will never forget when Nabe's brother – a man not given to flattery – said to her afterwards 'Good job Molly'.

Below: Nabe with the two shishi lions (made by Johnny Wales) at the Kaizuka practice hall

Right: Molly in her historic performance as a red demon in 2001. (The photo taken by her student, who didn't realize it was his teacher at the time.)



Enjoy the Festivals and Flowers in Niigata This Spring!



Sado Island is famous for demon drumming festivals, which are held in spring to pray for a good crop, and in autumn to rejoice the harvest. Many villages hold their spring festival annually on April 15, while some villages choose different dates. The sound of drums fills the air, and with so many styles, you can easily spend a day looking at various styles. A list of events each month on Sado is available on the [Sado Tourism Association website](http://www.sado-tourism.com/). Due to its northern location, cherry blossom viewing on Sado is held in mid-late April, and a range of unique mountain flowers bloom in May and June, attracting flower lovers, photographers and nature lovers from afar. We hope you'll take the time to come and enjoy the seasonal festivities and **blooms** of our home, 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/english/guidebook09/index.html?page=1>

in brief...



Performer [Takeshi Arai](#) will step down from the Kodo stage at the end of March and become a member of our stage staff from April. We thank you for your continued support of his stage career over the years and hope you'll join us in supporting him in his new behind-the-scenes role.

On January 18th, we held a graduation ceremony for the apprentices who completed the two-year [Kodo Apprentice Centre](#) course. We'll introduce the new junior members of Kodo in our March issue.



[Hanayui and Yoshikazu Fujimoto](#) are heading to the USA this month for a concert tour. We hope you'll see them somewhere on their travels.

In March 2011, Kodo and [Blue Man Group in Tokyo](#) had a special collaboration for a television program on Japan's WOWOW network, which has been made into a DVD! You can purchase it at Kodo and Blue Man performances in Japan, and through other outlets including Kodo Online Store from Feb. 29, 2012. Please see our [website](#) for details in early February.



Kodo Performance Schedule 2012

KODO 30TH ANNIVERSARY - ONE EARTH TOUR 2012

February - March: [Europe](#)

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



KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2012: LEGEND

May - June: [Japan](#)

Tokyo, Saitama, Nagano, Osaka, Wakayama, Aichi, Mie, Kyoto, Hyogo,
Kagawa, Kochi, Ehime, Okayama, Gifu

September - October: Japan (Details TBA Spring 2012)

Niigata, Iwate, Yamagata, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Shizuoka, Tottori,
Yamaguchi, Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Nagano

KODO DADAN CONCERTS 2012

February 15 - 18: [Théâtre du Châtelet](#) (Paris, France)

July: [Japan](#)

Tokyo, Kanagawa, Aichi, Kumamoto, Kyoto

EARTH CELEBRATION 2012

August 17 (Fri) - 19 (Sun): Sado Island, Japan (Details TBA May 2012)

KODO & TAIKOZ IN CONCERT - AUSTRALIA TOUR

September: Canberra, Melbourne, Newcastle, Sydney. (Further dates
TBA)

SOLO & SMALL GROUP PROJECTS, SPECIAL EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, NEWS & INFORMATION

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



At Kodo's 30th Anniversary Reception in Tokyo (Aoyama Theatre) on December 17, 2011, with a handmade congratulatory banner made by Friends of Kodo member Ms. Tomoko Mori.

Kodo 30th Anniversary One Earth Tour 2012

~ EUROPE ~
February - March

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

- February 1: Essen, Germany
- February 2: Dortmund, Germany
- February 4: Munich, Germany
- February 5: Munich, Germany
- February 7: Stuttgart, Germany
- February 8: Mannheim, Germany
- February 11: Dublin, Ireland
- February 12: Dublin, Ireland
- February 22: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 23: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 24: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 25: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 26: Luzern, Switzerland
- February 29: Vienna, Austria
- March 2: Montreux, Switzerland
- March 3: Montreux, Switzerland
- March 6: Milan, Italy
- March 7: Milan, Italy
- March 9: Metz, France
- March 10: Roubaix, France
- March 13: Amsterdam, Netherlands
- March 14: Apeldoorn, Netherlands
- March 16: Antwerp, Belgium
- March 17: Antwerp, Belgium
- March 19: Rotterdam, Netherlands
- March 20: Eindhoven, Netherlands
- March 22: Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- March 23: Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- March 24: Oostende, Belgium
- March 26: Brussels, Belgium



Subscribe to Kodo eNews
Not subscribed to eNews yet?
[eNews Subscription Center](#)

Share With Friends

Know someone who
might enjoy Kodo eNews?
To share with a friend,
please click "Forward Email"
in the Kodo eNews email footer.

Feedback

Topics you'd like to see?
Stuff you can't find?
Problems with the PDF?
We want to know!
[Kodo eNews Feedback](#)

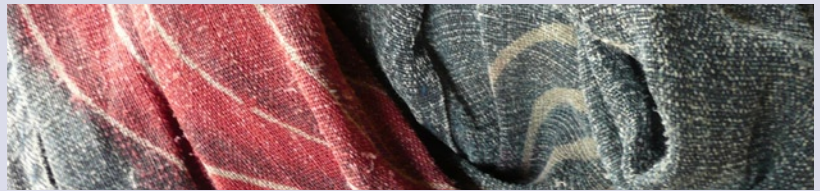


In the wake of disaster, Kodo started the Heartbeat Project, a multifaceted undertaking designed to support relief efforts and the people of the regions affected by the Tohoku Pacific Earthquake.

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



The "hide" of the lion for Yokkamachi's "shishimai" (lion dance) in Mano, Sado Island

Resources

[Kodo Homepage](#)

[Kodo on Facebook](#)

[Kodo Tour and Performance Schedules](#)

[Kodo on YouTube](#)

[Kodo CD Listening Booth](#)

[Kodo Bravia Promotion Video](#)

[Friends of Kodo](#)

[Kodo Online Store \(English\)](#)

Contacts

Performances, Workshops, Bookings, and All General Inquiries
Email: heartbeat@kodo.or.jp

Kodo CDs, Merchandise, Instruments
Email: store.eng@kodo.or.jp

Friends of Kodo
Email: friends.eng@kodo.or.jp

Postal Address and Contact Numbers

Kodo, Kodo Village,
148-1 Ogi Kanetashinden, Sado, Niigata 952-0611, Japan
Tel. +81-(0)259-86-3630
Fax. +81-(0)259-86-3631
Email: heartbeat@kodo.or.jp



[Get Adobe Reader](#)

For full interactive performance,
Kodo eNews is best viewed with Adobe Reader.

Photography in this issue: Junji Hata, Ken McKay (The Royal Variety Performance 2011), Shizuka Minami, Maiko Miyagawa, Takashi Okamoto, Masazumi Takeya, TEPPEI (Courtesy of WOWOW), Chieko Wales, Johnny Wales, Susumu Yoshida, and Kodo's Taro Nishita, Junko Susaki. EC artwork: Hideaki Masago. Heartbeat Project logo design: Haruna Kino. In Brief illustration: [Johnny Wales](#)

Editorial, design and production: Melanie Taylor and Chieko Wales
Main design: Tam Stewart
Kodo eNews 2012. Kitamaesen Co., Ltd. All rights reserved.