

## The Next 30 Years

Our One Earth Tour has returned from Europe, bringing a close to 14 months of tours celebrating our 30th anniversary. We send a very big thank you to everyone who attended our performances in Europe for the overwhelming warmth of your applause during one of the coldest winters in years. Our veteran soloists Yoshikazu Fujimoto, Chieko Kojima, and Yoko Fujimoto have come back from the [Hanayui 2012 USA Tour](#) and performances in Canada and Japan in various solo and collaboration projects. So now everyone is home on Sado Island, invigorated and ready to tackle new projects in the spring.

We step out into our 31st year with a [brand new company structure](#), new artistic director [Tamasaburo Bando](#), new leader for our performing ensemble [Tomohiro Mitome](#), and a brand new programme in the making for the upcoming One Earth Tour 2012: Legend. Many changes are afoot, and we are positive that change is good, so long as we take care to maintain the fundamentals of Kodo and continue the traditions that are dear to us. We look forward to sharing new sides of Kodo this year, and in subsequent years, ahead.



Tomohiro Mitome plays "O-daiko"

## Coming Up: New Artistic Director Tamasaburo Bando's First Production "Legend"

Tamasaburo Bando, who garners accolades in the Kabuki world as well as across all genres of the performing arts, has just become Kodo's artistic director. For a group to receive instruction on this level is a truly ground-breaking event in the history of taiko performing arts, and a pioneering phenomenon for taiko as a genre, both in Japan and worldwide. To get some insights to his thoughts on becoming our artistic director, we interviewed Tamasaburo about the new performances, his goals as the new artistic director, his teaching direction, and Kodo's preparations as stage performers, etc.

— What creative elements are you emphasizing for this production?

*I want the fundamentals of Japanese classical performing arts to serve as the underlying base of the performance. In concrete terms, during the pieces, or rather during the performance, I will*

*continued on next page*

### In This Issue

<a href="#">New Ensemble Leader</a>	3
<a href="#">Hanayui USA 2012 Tour</a>	4
<a href="#">2012 Schedule</a>	8
<a href="#">Contacts &amp; Information</a>	9

**Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend**

continued from page 1

stress endurance and withholding before release. The feel will be both smooth and undulating.

— What will the stage expression be like?

I will not make it too “modern.” The costumes will be simple, and the performers will be dressed in a way that makes the most of their physiques. However the movement of the costumes will be flowing, magnificent, and new. I want to produce a feel and atmosphere never seen before.

— What will be the overall atmosphere to this production?

While stressing the profound, it will also have moments of light-hearted splendor. It will show glimpses of the fundamentals of traditional stage creation, and look “enjoyably beautiful.” Movement, dance, song- all of these elements will be shown as a mixture of primary performing arts that are fused together and refined.

— How do you want to distinguish Kodo from other taiko groups?

I want to take the time for thorough stage creation, to make the productions as simple as possible and free from anything unnecessary.

— How will this performance be different from Kodo’s performances to date?

Until now Kodo concerts had singular items lined up and presented as separate pieces. But for this performance, I want to make an evening-long experience with one large current, even if the show remains a succession of separate pieces. While keeping the basis in folk performing arts from all over Japan, I want to look at Kodo’s work objectively, to see that its stage expression cultivates independence and originality. At the same time, I want to create a concert series each year that looks different as an installation. In other words, I think that every year I want to make Kodo’s performance look as fresh as possible.

— Tell us your goals for the future.



Local traditional dance and song “Sado Okesa”



Provocative “Legend” poster conceived by Tamasaburo Bando

Kodo’s performance is based around performing arts they have learned from around Japan, but I want them to seek further artistry in their taiko playing, and to train more and more, aiming for world-class levels into the future.

— Do you have any thoughts on the education and development of Kodo’s performers?

I want to elevate the level of musicianship, and I want both the musical performance and the performers to stand out on stage, to be shown with tremendous attention paid to the visual elements. As a group, I want them to perform in sync, and to be as one artistically, and yet when it comes to their performing skills, for each person to be able to display sufficient individuality in his or her performance. I want to highlight their humanity so that their spirit, atmosphere, and individuality can be felt. I want to value their lifestyle and the sensibilities they create to elicit growth. And I want to teach them the etiquette to compete in the world with humility.

— What do you think is the meaning of “drumming”?

It is simultaneously the drummer’s prayer, and a comfort to the audience’s soul.

— What do you think Kodo’s “quality of character” should be?

Giving everything for the audience, and yet not changing to suit them, is important. And letting them catch glimpses of the profound during what is being enacted. To that end, rehearsal is a given, and I also think that the flow of everyday life will also be important. To maintain their quality of character, it is important that the performers (or “people of the stage”) seek refinement in the things they experience, just as it is said, “there must be elegance even in the unrefined.”

## Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend

will tour in Japan in May, June, September, and October 2012.  
For schedules, please see [page 8](#).

Check out the promotion video by visiting [Kodo on YouTube](#).

## Introducing Kodo's New Ensemble Leader, Tomohiro Mitome

by Johnny Wales

*By April 2012 Kodo will have completed a major restructuring. Kodo eNews talked with performer Tomohiro Mitome who has a key new role in the group.*

Up till now there have been two parts to the stage group working together, the *performance ensemble* of Kodo and the *management side* known as Kitamaesen. As of this April they will be split in two, one being the artistic group known as *Kodo, Taiko Performing Arts Ensemble* under the leadership of performer Tomohiro Mitome. backed up by Deputy Ensemble Leader, Yuichiro Funabashi. The management side will be known officially as *Kitamaesen Company Limited* and will continue to be headed by Kodo's long-time president, Takao Aoki.



Newly-minted Kodo Ensemble Leader Tomohiro Mitome

It has been felt for some time that the Kodo ensemble should have a leader who is actually a performer, rather than someone in management. The idea was to separate the two sides of the group under 2 leaders, each with expertise in their particular field. They will then deal jointly with overlapping areas of interest. The artistic direction of the performance ensemble will be overseen by Kodo's long-time friend and collaborator Tamasaburo Bando, the brilliant and renowned giant of Kabuki and Japanese dance.

Tokyo-born Tomohiro Mitome is in his 22nd year as a Kodo performer. He is one of the 3 odaiko players and has long done the heavy lifting of the Miyake solo and the chudaiko part in Yatai-bayashi so – in spite of his being the smallest Kodo male drummer – he plays Kodo's biggest and most powerful drums.

After the idea emerged that Kodo should have a *performer* as the leader of the performing side of the company, someone needed to be picked. At last year's general meeting a nomination process was held for the position. After much discussion a few names were put forward and a secret ballot was held among the 24 or so players. Tomohiro was perfectly happy to carry on as he always had, drumming and teaching – and less than confident in his ability to assume the new responsibilities – so it was to his great surprise when he got a little over half the votes. The vote-count was kept quiet at the time, and during the next tour the stage production director interviewed each player privately and asked for their opinions. A clear

consensus emerged and Tomohiro was chosen for his new role. After 22 years in Kodo he felt honoured to be nominated by his fellow players and he saw his acceptance of the position as a way of repaying what he felt he owed the group.

Since his appointment he has become keenly aware of the increased responsibility he now bears. He could hardly forget, with some of the boys already jocularly referring to him as *Daihyo* (Leader). One area of his increased responsibilities will be in his role as Kodo's 'front man'. He will be doing the lion's share of interviews and publicity appearances. As he has spent most of the last 10 years in Japan and on Sado as one of the principal teachers at the Apprentice Centre he now speaks very little English, so this is an area he feels needs work.

Even more time and energy consuming than his PR work will be his position as the main conduit through which the world must pass to contact Kodo. From now on any decision that has to do with Kodo must go through him. Before this appointment he would receive at most 5 e-mails a day. Already that has increased to over 30, each and every one of which must be read and considered. Many will require a consultation with the Stage Production Director or some other member of the company before being answered. Tomohiro sees his greatest challenge as shifting from a life when all he had to think about was family and taiko, to one where he spends the majority of time sitting in front of a computer and on the phone. He is genuinely concerned about the toll this will take on his drumming.

He is hardly alone in facing his new challenges though, especially with Tamasaburo Bando nearby to oversee the artistic direction of the company.

*continued on next page*



**Kodo Ensemble Leader Tomohiro Mitome***continued from page 3*

When Tamasaburo first began collaborating with Kodo, Tomohiro and his contemporaries were just setting out on life as professional taikoists. They are now rising to positions of leadership within the company and have all experienced first-hand how much this amazing artist has to offer and teach. Tomohiro sees huge opportunities for growth in Kodo and has likened these new arrangements to a breath of fresh Spring air blowing through the group. Just in time for the cherry blossoms. Good luck Tomohiro.

*Tomohiro plays Kodo's biggest  
and most powerful drums*



## Hanayui USA 2012 Tour: Collaboration Reports

In February and March, Hanayui (Chieko Kojima, Mitsue Kinjo (Okinawan Dance), Yoko Fujimoto) and Yoshikazu Fujimoto [toured in the USA](#) and enjoyed warm, moving collaborations with regional taiko groups including San Jose Taiko (California), Mu Daiko (Minnesota), and Great Lakes Taiko Center (Michigan). Here are reports from the USA from two of those taiko groups.



*continued on next page*



*Himawari (Sunflower): A Collaboration between Hanayui & San Jose Taiko with Kodo's Yoshikazu Fujimoto*



**Hanayui USA 2012 Tour**  
continued from page 4

## Himawari (Sunflower): A Collaboration between Hanayui & San Jose Taiko with guest artist Yoshikazu Fujimoto

**Report by San Jose Taiko's Executive  
Director Wisa Uemura and Artistic  
Director Franco Imperial**

"On February 11, 2012 Hanayui and [San Jose Taiko \(SJT\)](#) performed together for a sold-out house at the San Jose Repertory Theatre. This was the first time sharing the stage since our original Himawari collaboration in 2002 that toured the islands of Hawaii.

SJT met the members of Hanayui more than 30 years ago in the formative years of both groups. In 2000, Hanayui and SJT came together to create a collaborative program, which included traditional folk music from Japan, contemporary taiko drumming from America, and new compositions that combined all of these elements.



With San Jose Taiko

The name HIMAWARI was selected for the collaboration to represent SJT's sun-filled energy, the feminine power of Hanayui, and the vibrant artistry of the partnership.

This concert showcased the unique talents of Hanayui and guest artist Yoshikazu Fujimoto beside the dynamic energy of the SJT performing company. Collaborative highlights from this performance included a lively new arrangement of Wachi Daiko by

Yoshikazu Fujimoto, Mitsue Kinjo's moving dance to SJT's Kin Moku, Chieko's mesmerizing rearrangement and added choreography to SJT's piece Iruka, and the incomparable vocals of Yoko Fujimoto to SJT's work-inspired Ei Ja Nai Ka?.

The rekindling of Himawari allowed SJT's new generation to deepen friendships with Hanayui and Kodo. For SJT members it was an experience that will resonate through the ages."

*Special thanks to Kodo & Atsushi Sugano, Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA) & Donna Ebata, Mu Daiko.*



With Mu Daiko

## Hanayui of Kodo and Mu Daiko: Feb 16 - Mar 9, 2012

**Report by Iris Shiraishi, Mu Daiko  
Artistic Director & Taiko Programs  
Director**

"[Mu Daiko](#) was honored to be able to share the stage with Hanayui and Yoshikazu Fujimoto of Kodo during

continued on next page

**Hanayui USA 2012 Tour***continued from page 5*

its 15th Anniversary Concerts and Tour. Joined by North American taiko luminaries Tiffany Tamaribuchi and Megan Chao Smith, all shared wonderful experiences and adventures!

The opening performances at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in St. Paul set the tone with Mu Daiko's energetic first act followed Hanayui and Yoshikazu-san's beautiful second act and with all joining in "Minori Uta." Audiences were enthusiastic and so excited and we enjoyed two sold-out performances!

After enjoying a couple of rest days, we took to the road for the first tour performances at The Center for Arts in Fergus Falls and the Sheldon Theater in Red Wing. Fourth-grade students from Burnside Elementary had participated in a taiko residency last October, and many of them attended the Red Wing concert. Some of them were jumping up and down with excitement after the show!

Two more rest days and then. . . the biggest snowstorm of the season hit



*With Mu Daiko*

Minnesota on the day we were to leave for the Grand Marais Playhouse! Our excellent drivers got us slowly but safely to this lovely town on the western shore of Lake Superior. Audience members said, "Wow, awesome, we'll come to see you again and again!" At our last stop - the Reif Center in Grand Rapids - all were in high spirits and the performers enjoyed this show as much or more than the audience!

A smooth ride home was followed by an intense week of workshops by each of the artists. Mu Daiko members and students learned so much and were especially honored by the graciousness and generosity with which each of our esteemed guests shared their art.

Please come again soon!"



## in brief...



This month, eight newcomers begin their studies at the [Kodo Apprentice Centre](#). In 2012, we have 8 first-year and 8 second-year apprentices, made up of 14 men and 2 women aged 18-33. We look forward to seeing how they all get on with their studies this year.

Kodo received the [Matsuo Performing Arts Award](#) for "Japanese Music" (presented by the Matsuo Entertainment Development Foundation), which is given to people in the performing arts world for their contribution to the preservation and elevation of Japanese culture and performing arts. The awards ceremony was held on March 29 in Tokyo where ensemble leader [Tomohiro Mitome](#) accepted the award on behalf of Kodo and gave a performance on the o-daiko (big drum).

We plan to hold performances of Amaterasu featuring Tamasaburo Bando and Kodo from July to October 2013 in Tokyo, Sado, Fukuoka, and Kyoto. We hope you'll join us in Japan for these [performances](#).





# Kodo Arts Sphere America Presents **KASA/MIX 2012**

**September 2-13, 2012**



KASA/MIX is a once-in-a-lifetime trip not to be missed!

Stay at the [Kodo Apprentice Centre](#) located in the beautiful mountains of Sado Island, Japan. Share in the lifestyle of the apprentices while taking taiko, dance, and song workshops with Kodo's O-daiko master and performer, workshop leader [Yoshikazu Fujimoto](#).



Yoshikazu Fujimoto

The itinerary will also include a visit to taiko maker [Asano Taiko](#) in Kanazawa and free time in Tokyo.



Top left: O-daiko workshop with Yoshikazu.

Left: Morning cleaning includes wiping the wooden floors by hand.  
Below: All meals are handmade by the apprentices using seasonal, local whole foods.

## **Itinerary** (subject to change)

- Sep 2 Fly to Japan
- Sep 3 Arrive in Kanazawa
- Sep 4 Visit Asano Taiko and free afternoon Kanazawa
- Sep 5 Travel to Sado Island
- Sep 6 Travel to Kodo Village (am), then Kodo Apprentice Centre (pm), workshop
- Sep 7 Kodo Apprentice Centre -- workshops
- Sep 8 Kodo Apprentice Centre -- workshops
- Sep 9 Kodo Apprentice Centre -- morning workshop, leave Kodo Apprentice Centre
- Sep 10 One-day tour of Sado Island
- Sep 11 Travel to Tokyo
- Sep 12 Free day in Tokyo
- Sep 13 Return Home



For applications and costs, please contact Donna at [KASA](#) by email: [kodoarts@earthlink.net](mailto:kodoarts@earthlink.net)  
Applications due by May 1, 2012.



## Kodo Performance Schedule 2012

### 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, Aichi, Shiga, Osaka, Hyogo, Shimane, Tottori, Yamaguchi, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Nagano

### SCHOOL WORKSHOP-PERFORMANCE TOUR IN JAPAN

May - June: Shimane, Fukuoka, Ehime, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Kagoshima, Tokyo, Niigata

### KODO DADAN CONCERTS 2012 Presented by Rolex

July: [Japan](#)

Tokyo, Kanagawa, Aichi, Kumamoto, Kyoto

### EARTH CELEBRATION 2012

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

Shiroyama Concerts with special guest shamisen player [Hiromitsu Agatsuma](#), & a unique version of [Dadan](#) directed by Tamasaburo Bando

### 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.



"O-daiko" with Kenta Nakagome  
and Masayuki Sakamoto

## Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend

~ JAPAN ~  
May - June

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

- May 12: Ota Ward, Tokyo
- May 16: Kita Ward, Tokyo
- May 19: Kumagaya, Saitama **SOLD OUT**
- May 20: Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo
- May 24: Nagano City
- May 26: Osakasayama, Osaka
- May 28: Tanabe, Wakayama
- May 30: Kota Town, Nukata, Aichi
- May 31: Yokkaichi, Mie
- June 1: Nagaokakyo, Kyoto
- June 3: Kobe, Hyogo
- June 4: Settsu, Osaka
- June 7: Takamatsu, Kagawa
- June 8: Kochi City
- June 10: Yawatahama, Ehime
- June 12: Tsuyama, Okayama
- June 13: Takahashi, Okayama
- June 16: Gero, Gifu





**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



*Bunya puppet performance by Mushimonza in Osaki, 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](mailto:heartbeat@kodo.or.jp)

Kodo CDs, Merchandise, Instruments  
Email: [store.eng@kodo.or.jp](mailto:store.eng@kodo.or.jp)

Friends of Kodo  
Email: [friends.eng@kodo.or.jp](mailto: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](mailto:heartbeat@kodo.or.jp)



[Get Adobe Reader](#)

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

Photography in this issue: Higashi Design, Heather Jeché, Maiko Miyagawa, Takashi Okamoto, Ranaei Family, Joe Small, Buntaro Tanaka (Bt\_arts), Chieko Wales, Johnny Wales, and Kodo's Taro Nishita

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.