

Getting Ready for Earth Celebration

Usually booming with the sound of taiko, [Kodo Village](#) is relatively quiet now with twenty of our performers currently on [tours in Japan](#). The office however is busy and bustling with preparations for our annual summer international performing arts festival, [Earth Celebration \(EC\)](#). This year we have a brand new website and it has even more handy info this year to make your trip to Sado Island easy and breezy. We are also creating new information to send out with your tickets to help you prepare for the festival in advance. [Concert tickets](#) went on sale on June 1st and EC is currently accepting [workshop applications](#). Make sure you apply during the first intake to avoid disappointment! Once you have your tickets and [accommodations](#) organized, all you need to do is come and join the fun. We hope to see you on Sado this summer!

Here are a few words from EC Executive Producer Atsushi Sugano ([Kodo Cultural Foundation](#) Managing Director), who has been a pivotal part of EC since it all began in 1988.

The 25th Earth Celebration

Earth Celebration (EC) began in 1988 as a celebration of the opening of Kodo's homebase, Kodo Village, on Sado Island. In the Kodo Village prospectus, we expressed our feelings

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Earth Celebration welcomes visitors to Sado Island from all over the world every August

Introducing “Legend”

A Look at the Programme for the New One Earth Tour Production

Our brand new production has been touring in Japan for a few weeks now. It is certainly creating a stir with its new costumes, seamless flow, and young cast, and we are receiving an overwhelming number of questionnaires at the end of each performance. The impact of first production by our new artistic director is certainly great. We look forward to seeing how the production evolves and grows as it tours, like any living organism.

Here is a look at some of the programme notes: a message from the artistic director and new piece introductions. We'll feature a report on one of the performances in Tokyo next issue of Kodo eNews, so please stay tuned!

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Earth Celebration*continued from page 1*

regarding Sado Island as follows:

“Originally mankind was part of nature, breathed with nature, lived together with her. Since we settled on Sado Island, nature’s voices- the songs of birds and insects in the fields, the whisper of the trees in the wind, the sound of the waves breaking on the rocks- have seeped inside us, unseen. They have become the starting point for our creativity. We remain with Sado as the base for our lives because there is space for both nature and us to live together.”

It’s hard to believe a quarter century has passed since then, but this year marks the 25th anniversary of EC, a true milestone for the group and for all of you who have helped make the festival what it is today. We invite you to create this year’s EC with us, exploring the full potential of this festival as we consider the significance of holding it on Sado Island where EC first began.



At the main events, the Shiroyama Concerts, Kodo will perform three different performances on an outdoor stage surrounded by Sado’s natural splendor. We will invite [Hiromitsu Agatsuma](#), who continues to explore both tradition and innovation through the Tsugaru Shamisen, and together we hope to make the sounds of Japan resonate across the globe.

This year, there will be a special stage set up in the bustling Harbour Market,

with performances by Kodo and a rich array of other artists adding color to the “garden of Earth Celebration.” The workshop lineup will offer both past favorites as well as new opportunities for participants to experience the history, nature, and culture of Sado Island.

I hope you will all come to create your very own Earth Celebration experience. We look forward to seeing you again this year.



Our annual international performing arts festival offers a range of attractions including outdoor concerts at Shiroyama Park, workshops, fringe events (free-admission performances by invited and general guests), and the Harbour Market (food/drink, crafts, ethnic goods, et al). As the name suggests, “Earth Celebration” transcends borders and cultures to bring a brilliant collage of art and music to a very special corner of the world. This summer, come and celebrate with us.

**Main events are held August 17 -19, 2012.
(Pre-Events held August 10-16.)**

Tickets on sale now!

**For details, please visit the
Earth Celebration 2012 Official Website**

2012 Kodo Special Performances on Sado Island

On May 6th Kodo eNews spoke to Yoshikazu Fujimoto just before he went on stage for the final show in the tiny fishing hamlet of Shukunegi, a couple of kilometres from Kodo Village. This was a special small concert featuring the four remaining founding performing members of Kodo, Yoshikazu Fujimoto, Chieko Kojima, Yoko Fujimoto and Motofumi Yamaguchi together with Ayako Onizawa and eight 2nd year apprentices. The nine performances were held between April 27th through May 6th and were kicked off by a special free performance for the villagers of Shukunegi. Another round of these performances will be held from July 6th through the 16th. If you would like to see Kodo up-close and personal in their own backyard, why not join us here on Sado in July?

Here we are in the Shukunegi community hall. This building has very deep associations with our group, beginning in 1970 when it was used as one of the venues for the summer school that led to the founding of Ondekoza. This building also goes back to Kodo's roots too because we played here right after we first reorganized and changed our name to Kodo. Hanayui has also performed here and in 1981 Kodo held a summer school in this



The bamboo windbreak on the seaside edge of Shukunegi used as hoarding for the poster advertising Kodo's show



Encore! The confetti was to celebrate the last spring performance.

space.

We wanted to play here because after all this is our home ground. We want to take our music *around* the world but we also want to play our drums here at home. It's very good to be able to take the time to enjoy the atmosphere and beauty of the place where we live. Shukunegi in particular has taken great strides in preserving its historic architecture, more than anywhere else on the island. And here is this wonderful wooden performance space with a stage and *hanamichi* (literally *flower path*, a raised alleyway from the rear of the theatre to the stage which is used in Japanese theatre traditions like Kabuki for dramatic entrances and exits). Nowadays this is normally only used for village meetings, but it used to be a venue for visiting theatrical performances, it even had a rotating turntable under the stage, which unfortunately no longer remains.

In this series of

performances we will each be playing to our strengths, so rather than doing much new material, this will be more like hits of the past. The younger generation is gradually taking over Kodo's main stage so this has left me room to do much more solo activity than was possible in the past. I have been travelling both in Japan and abroad, often appearing as a guest of other taiko groups. Because I can use their drums I only have to pack my costume and drumsticks and off I go. When you are part of the main Kodo stage your movements are necessarily restricted to large venues. The logistics of putting on a full Kodo performance are such that we could never play in a tiny village like this.

Not only do I get to meet lots of taiko people but I also serve as a kind of Kodo front man, hopefully stirring up interest in taiko and our group. I really enjoy this kind of work.

There wasn't anything in this space before we fixed things up, no lights, curtains, really just an empty space. So we have been very busy cleaning the

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Kodo Special Performances on Sado Island
continued from page 3

place out, putting in carpeting and curtains and making it suitable for a performance. Now it will be easier for the village to use the space for more than just meetings. About 70 of the villagers came to the pre-concert we did for them and we have averaged about 120 people for each performance since. It is lovely to see so many older people who wouldn't normally think of going to a large Kodo show. And because we do the concert at three in the afternoon, it is light in the auditorium and we are up close and can see their expressions. So it has been a much more intimate experience for both the audience and us. And lots of fun too.

Interview and photos by Johnny Wales



The apprentices give a rousing send-off to the audience after the show

Introducing "Legend"
continued from page 1

From the Artistic Director

I present to you "Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend," my first work as the new artistic director for Kodo. In this production, I wanted to create a performance that pays homage to the profound expressions of Kodo to



date, adds splendor and levity, and harmonizes all elements into a single flow that undulates throughout the programme. I have also composed new pieces in the hopes that they will be passed on to future generations. In these days of tremendous challenge and difficulty, my aim is simply to create a performance that will transport the audience into an inspiring alternate reality, even if just for a brief spell. For this performance, in addition to Kodo's standard *hanten* (traditional Japanese coat), I have also introduced some original costumes with additional fun and flair. I hope that both seasoned fans and first-time audience members will enjoy the entirety of this programme.

I will continue to do all within my power to excel as the Kodo artistic director, and I hope that this programme will act as a catalyst for helping Kodo to reach a new audience.

Tamasaburo Bando

**Kodo One Earth Tour 2012:
Legend
May - June**

Artistic Director
Tamasaburo Bando

Programme
Kaden **NEW**
Monochrome
Ibuki
Onidaiko **NEW**
Tsukimachi **NEW**
O-daiko
Yatai-bayashi

Cast
Tomohiro Mitome
Masaru Tsuji
Masami Miyazaki
Kenzo Abe
Masayuki Sakamoto (From June 8 -16)
Shogo Yoshii
Kenta Nakagome
Tsuyoshi Maeda (From May 12 - June 7)
Rai Tateishi
Shogo Komatsuzaki
Akiko Ando
Yosuke Inoue
Yuta Sumiyoshi
Tetsumi Hanaoka

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Introducing “Legend”*continued from page 4***New Pieces on the Programme****Kaden**

Composed by Tamasaburo Bando, 2012
 Featuring an arrangement of Peruvian
 folksong “El Condor Pasa”

Tamasaburo Bando has been working with Kodo since 2001, and “Kaden” reflects his desire to make something “timeless to be handed on to future generations.” The title refers to a soloist freely creating an image amongst other sounds, taken from the musical term *cadenza*. It also alludes to “Fushikaden” (The Flowering Spirit), the 15th century classic text by Zeami, the founder of Noh theater.

*“Kaden”***Onidaiko**

Traditional, arranged by Kodo
 Based on traditional performing art
 Iwakubi Onidaiko (Sado, Niigata)

Onidaiko (demon drumming) is a tradition upheld in numerous villages around Sado, and this piece is based on one of the many variations found on the island. Onidaiko was traditionally performed as an integral part of festivals, performed as an offering in hopes of abundant crops and good health. Through the course of their tireless dancing, the young demon dancers transcend their human form and become almost deities. It is this boundless energy and essence of the divine that we try to express on stage.

*“Onidaiko”***Tsukimachi**

Composed by Tamasaburo Bando & Shogo
 Yoshii
 Based on traditional performing art Hachijo
 Daiko (Hachijo Island, Tokyo)

Tsukimachi literally means “waiting for the moon.” Since the days of the lunar calendar, people have looked to the night sky in anticipation of the moon, and what better way to pass the time waiting than playing taiko? Surrender your dancing soul to the taiko, and the beat will echo out like the roaring sea or the wind on a moonlit night.

*“Tsukimachi”*

Dadan Explained by Its “Drumming Men”

Dadan means “men drumming” and from the poster visual, it can be difficult for audience members to tell the difference between this and other Kodo performances. Kodo staff Melanie Taylor interviewed three of the Dadan cast members who are all currently featured in “Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend” to share some insight from the stage. Here are the answers from Tomohiro Mitome, Kenta Nakagome, and Tsuyoshi Maeda, who all performed in Paris in February, and will next perform in “Dadan” in July and August in Japan.

Melanie: If you compare “Dadan” to Kodo’s standard “One Earth Tour,” what do you think is the highlight or attraction of “Dadan”?

Tomohiro: As the name (literally “men drumming”) says, *Dadan* is comprised of percussion instruments and men only. Yet within powerful expression there is also very subtle expression. Sometimes video is used on stage and it doubles our presence, which makes this production a brand new form of stage expression.

Kenta: I think that Kodo’s fundamental theme of “playing taiko” is in a concentrated form in “Dadan.” The concert returns to the origins of Kodo and simultaneously shows them in a modern way, making the act of “drumming” emerge vividly.

Tsuyoshi: I think Tamasaburo-san’s artistic direction for “Dadan” is the biggest difference. The stage setting, costumes, and way of expression are all nothing like what Kodo has done to date, but I think it really shows how earnestly Kodo play the drums.

Melanie: When you are on the Dadan stage, what differences are there in your own performance or taiko playing compared to a usual performance?

Tomohiro: Basically, my playing is the same, but the artistic direction makes the nuances or touches more sensitive, makes sure the sound is not monotone, delivers the unexpected to the audience and keeps them riveted to the end.

Kenta: At the beginning, the sound of the bamboo instruments is so quiet that it almost doesn’t exist, and then the sounds of the taiko build up and explode in “Tomoe.” From that point on, I concentrate on just drumming and drumming. From start to finish, the sound is all linked together on stage, and it feels like it carries my own spirit along with it.

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Tsuyoshi Maeda (front left), Kenta Nakagome (front right), and Tomohiro Mitome (front center and on screen above Maeda) in “Dadan” in Paris

Dadan Explained by Its "Drumming Men"*continued from page 6*

Tsuyoshi: When I face the drums, I don't think my feelings especially change for this production.

Melanie: Dadan made its foreign debut in Paris this year. Please share your impressions of performing on that stage.

Tomohiro: For the city of arts, there

were new additions to the costumes and artistic direction, so it was specific to Paris. All four performances had full houses, and wildly enthusiastic applause and standing ovations, which made me feel for myself just how wonderful Tamasaburo-san's direction was, and that this production really is of a world-class level.

Kenta: I was happy to hear that people

were able to feel the spirit of Japanese people through this performance. It seemed like people feel our spiritual and cultural background without us being aware of expressing it.

Tsuyoshi: I felt like the audience reaction got better each day. Everyday Tamasaburo made a slight alteration to the production, and I think those small tweaks are what built up to that reaction. Even though we wore revealing costumes, no one had any objections and I think our performance was very openly accepted by the audience.



Upcoming Kodo Dadan Concerts in July & August in Japan

July 2-4	Minato Ward, Tokyo
July 7-8	Yokohama, Kanagawa
July 10	Nagoya, Aichi
July 14-16	Yamaga, Kumamoto
July 20-22	Kyoto City
Aug. 18	Kodo Dadan EC Special, Earth Celebration, Sado Island, Niigata

in brief.....



Performer Ayako Onizawa (left) will leave Kodo at the end of August to further her studies in Okinawan dance. Also, performer Kazuki Imagai (right) will step down from the Kodo stage and become stage staff from September. These two performers will take



the stage with Kodo for the last time at Earth Celebration 2012, so please come and cheer them on! We sincerely thank you for your continued support of their activities over the years.

Kodo is going to perform the music for ballet suite "Kaguyahime" in Montreal, Canada this October. It's a unique ballet accompanied by Japanese and Western percussion, and Japanese court music. We'll be performing most of the music from the orchestra pit, but we certainly hope you'll come to see the ballet and listen to us. For details, please see our [website](#).



Kodo Performance Schedule 2012

KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2012: LEGEND

June: [Japan](#)

Kyoto, Hyogo, Osaka, Kagawa, Kochi, Ehime, Okayama, Gifu

September - October: [Japan](#)

Niigata, Iwate, Yamagata, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Shizuoka, Aichi, Shiga, Osaka, Hyogo, Shimane, Tottori, Yamaguchi, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Nagano

SCHOOL WORKSHOP-PERFORMANCE TOUR IN JAPAN

June: Kagoshima, Tokyo, Niigata

KODO DADAN CONCERTS 2012 (Special Supporter: Rolex (Japan) Ltd.)

July: Japan

Tokyo, Kanagawa, Aichi, Kumamoto, Kyoto

EARTH CELEBRATION 2012

August 17 (Fri) - 19 (Sun): Sado Island, Japan **TICKETS ON SALE NOW!**

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.

Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend

~ JAPAN ~

June, September-October

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

- 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

- September 9: Kashiwazaki, Niigata
- September 11: Kuzumaki, Iwate
- September 12: Kitakami, Iwate
- September 14: Yamagata City
- September 15: Koriyama, Fukushima
- September 16: Hitachinaka, Ibaraki
- September 20: Shizuoka City
- September 23: Fuso, Aichi
- September 26: Hikone, Shiga
- September 27: Ibaraki, Osaka
- September 30: Yabu, Hyogo
- October 2: Matsue, Shimane
- October 3: Tottori City
- October 6: Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi
- October 7: Kitakyushu, Fukuoka
- October 8: Unzen, Nagasaki
- October 12: Miyazaki City
- October 13: Kagoshima City
- October 21: Karuizawa, Nagano

New Release: DVD

“Kodo Honoka”

Our milestone 30th anniversary tour finale, filmed in December 2011, is now available on DVD. Please order your copy from the [Kodo Online Store](#) or purchase at Kodo performance venues in Japan.



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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

Latest Album:
 Kodo Akatsuki



Unlike most Japanese festivals, Aikawa's "Yoi no Mai" in June is feminine and graceful.

Resources

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