

Let the 25th Earth Celebration Commence

Summer is here and the sound of the cicadas is a clear reminder that it's time again for [Earth Celebration](#) (EC). All of our performers are on Sado rehearsing for the [Shiroyama Concerts](#) and looking forward to welcoming our guest artists, workshop instructors, staff, and of course participants to the island. It's a special feeling when Kodo and Sado Island come together to welcome people from all over Japan and the world for EC, Japan's longest running outdoor festival. It is a labor of love that we truly enjoy sharing with everyone who gathers in Ogi to make it happen.

On August 17, the Shiroyama Concert "Opening Night" will kick off the festival with [Shogo Yoshii](#) making his debut as artistic director. We asked him about the kind of festival atmosphere he wants to create and share at EC this year.

[Shiroyama Concerts: Day One](#)
["Opening Night" — Celebrating Diversity —](#)

Islands.

When I use the word "Island," I'm not necessarily referring to a land mass surrounded by water, but rather the idea of an island, something that has some distance between it and other entities.

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Tamasauro Bando joins the Dadan performers for the curtain call at Akasaka ACT Theater in Tokyo

Kodo Dadan Concerts 2012

Kodo Dadan, which means "men drumming" and features young male Kodo performers in a bold exploration of pure non-stop physical percussion, returned to theaters again this year stronger than ever. This cutting-edge performance made its foreign debut in February with four sold-out concerts at [Théâtre du Châtelet](#) in Paris, France. Then we held [performances in Japan](#) in July in Tokyo, Kanagawa, Aichi, Kumamoto, and Kyoto.

Kodo staff member Melanie Taylor joined the 2012 tour in Tokyo to see how Dadan has evolved in three years since its premier, captured on DVD, and to explain some of the differences

between this performance and the One Earth Tour.

Raw-fined Power

Dadan is a performance that takes the audience on a ninety-minute ride. The concert features solely male performers and percussion instruments

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This gap arises from both geographic and human factors. Sometimes it can feel like a barrier, but the things cultivated inside this isolated domain have a special individuality, and that fascinates me.

Depending on how you look at it, earth is one island, the five continents are islands, a country is an island, there are politically defined islands, and individuals are all unique islands.

I think the key to EC is to value the unique identity of each of these

Shogo Yoshii

different “islands,” or in plain words, to praise diversity.

In thinking on this, the word “Glocal” came to mind. Combining “Global” and “Local,” it is an interesting word that bring the micro and the macro together; I think it suits Kodo really well.

For the festival's "Opening Night," I want to create a performance where the individualities of each performer come to life and allow each of them to enjoy playing in the most natural way, without pretense.

I feel that Earth Celebration will truly begin when we create a diverse “island” in Shiroyama Park and share it among everyone there.

This year at EC we will welcome our main guest artist, shamisen player Hiromitsu Agatsuma, as well as singer Anna Sato from the Amami Islands who will appear on stage for “Opening Night.” Also joining us on Sado to lead taiko workshops are Hiroo Asanuma from Hachijo Island and Akio Tsumura and his sons from Miyake Island’s Kamitsuki Mikoshi Taiko. I’m excited just thinking about all these esteemed guests.

Shogo Yoshii's idea notebook. He links keywords that come to mind and his vision takes shape.

I have the great responsibility of taking the reigns for the artistic direction for the first performance at the 25th Earth Celebration. While I am nervous at the thought of this undertaking, I also intend to enjoy this challenge to the fullest.

Shiroyama Concert “Opening Night”
Artistic Director Shogo Yoshii (Kodo)

A Message from Shiroyama Concert “Opening Night” Guest Artist Anna Sato

I am honored to be able to take part in Earth Celebration for the first time, especially for this year's milestone 25th anniversary. I hope that the music created together with both Kodo and the audience will speak to the hearts of everyone present. I expect that the *shimauta* (island songs) passed down to me from generations past in my home of Amami will deepen my bond with you all. With these hopes in my heart, I look forward to letting my songs echo out across the vast, unspoiled nature of Sado Island.

Profile: *Anna Sato*

Anna Sato has been singing Shimauta (island songs) from the age of three. She learned the songs of Amami from her grandfather, a unique musical education that led her to win many Shimauta contests. She began her music career in Tokyo from the age of eighteen and has released seven CDs to date. In July 2011, she garnered worldwide recognition for her performance at the World Gymnaestrada in Switzerland, and she is now an official vocalist for Cirque du Soleil. Most recently, in March of 2012, she appeared in the Okinawa International Asia Music Festival.

Anna Sato



EC-Related Event: Sado Experience Festival

Introducing Five Courses to Discover the Attractions of Sado Island



Kotoura Sea Kayak Experience

During Earth Celebration this year, there will be unique activities on offer to explore the nature and history of Sado Island (Sado Experience Festival). Even if you have come to Sado Island before, there is sure to be more to discover here. Half-day and full-day courses are available. For details, please visit the [Earth Celebration website](#).



Ogi Peninsula Geo-Tourism



Lecture: Shukunegi and Tsuneichi Miyamoto



Osado Natural Giant Cedar Forest Walk



Ogi Port Traditional Townhouse Tour

Photos: Sado City Tourism Division,
Sado Tourism Association

Earth Celebration 2012

8 **17** FRI 18 SAT 19 SUN

Kodo welcomes special guest artist Hiromitsu Agatsuma

Earth Celebration
25th Anniversary

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 Still Available!

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

Kodo Dadan Concerts 2012*continued from page 1*

and it showcases a unique side of them that is simultaneously raw and refined. The performers are pushed to extremes and become so primal in their drumming frenzy, but the director demands that they also exhibit control, composure, and precision. You could say that the drummers portray the spectrum of a man from primate to gentleman through their drumming. This production was designed by [Tamasaburo Bando](#) to challenge and develop male members of Kodo, and in three years, it has certainly grown with each tour. *Dadan* has a framework that allows the cast to be switched in and out to create new challenges and dynamics. The cast has changed and evolved since its 2009 premiere. This year there are eight men and their ages range from 25 to 41. In some parts you are made to think the younger ones are the raw and the older refined, and then the balance flips and you see they all need to show many shades in

between these extremes. Three years of touring with Kodo means up to 200 performances for each of them. The training is constant and I think that is why *Dadan* is always fresh, because it shines a light on the honed strengths of our constantly evolving drummers. I am repeatedly surprised how deep the performers can dig down to bring out gut-driven power for this performance. They bring their experience from other Kodo performances to *Dadan* and take what they gain in *Dadan* back to the Kodo stage. This perpetual motion is not just for ninety minutes on stage. The ripples go much further throughout the ensemble and into our other performances, collaborations and compositions.

When you see *Dadan*, the thing that first stands out as different from a standard Kodo performance is the absence of songs, dances, flutes and female performers. *Dadan* uses taiko drums of all shapes and sizes, played in many different ways, small gongs and Grantang, which are xylophone-like instruments from Indonesia. The various drums are used to portray a diverse range of sounds and the bamboo Grantang adds a gentle, melodic rainbow. The performers seem to be carried by these rhythms as they move from instrument to instrument. The stage is bare, with no backdrops or wing curtains. You can see ropes and steel bars, equipment cases and exit doors. It is a raw workspace and you can watch every set change in plain view. The appearance of the performers is a mixture of raw muscle and refined hairstyles. They wear slacks with simple lines in monochromatic tones that draw attention to their faces and physiques. Their torsos and limbs are adorned with glitter, which on stage mixes with all the beads of



Getting ready backstage for Dadan takes more equipment than the usual toothbrush and shavor

sweat as they drum. This year, I saw the performers being made up for the stage and the shapes of their faces were not coloured, but rather defined with makeup techniques as if carved into a clearer version of themselves. These differences to our regular performances challenge us to seek the fine line between too much and not enough. By the passionate reaction that *Dadan* continues to receive from its audiences, it seems to be getting the balance right in ways that I personally have yet to comprehend. *Dadan* is a production that shares the essence of drumming and men and like a good book, you can find new depths in the characters, the taiko included, each time you dive into it. I hope this production will continue to challenge our performers and uncover their potential and that it will also challenge audiences to pour themselves simply and fully into something in their own lives; to find “raw-fined” power through earnest effort.



During “Dadan,” the performers use a video camera and large screen to give the audience a range of perspectives

Kodo Dadan Concerts 2012 — France & Japan

Artistic Director:
Tamasaburo Bando

Cast: Tomohiro Mitome,
Masaru Tsuji, Yuichiro Funabashi,
Yosuke Oda, Masayuki Sakamoto,
Tsuyoshi Maeda, Yosuke Kusa

School Tour Report

School Visit with Kodo

By staff member Melanie Taylor

The [School Workshop-Performances](#) have become an important part of Kodo's touring activities. In 2011, over 30,000 people watched these performances. You can't buy tickets, you don't see them advertised, but the audiences are energetic and these Kodo performances are just as passionate as those that take place on theater stages. Kodo has the challenge of connecting & communicating with an audience somewhat different to theater goers: they are younger, not always there by choice, and in a learning environment. We have the special opportunity to create an impact on the lives of young people in the course of one of their school days.

This year, Yosuke Oda took over the direction of this programme for the first time. Knowing Yosuke's style of performance, I was expecting a really fiesty, strong, maybe even macho, upbeat taiko programme. I wasn't disappointed. But the key word in our several conversations about his new programme was "*kanojo-tachi*," which is the feminine form of "they" or "them" in Japanese. In this programme, he is talking about Eri Uchida, Mariko Omi, and Maya Minowa in particular. They all became Kodo performers in the last three years, and they are all known more for their drumming than anything else on stage. (Some Kodo women specialize in dance or song, but not these three.) He chose this cast of seven to perform pieces already in the Kodo repertoire and some which were just in his head. His own never-before-seen compositions feature on the programme, *Ake no Myojo* explained above and *Hana Akari*, a song accompanied by bamboo flute, koto harp and shamisen. The finale of the programme called *Yama Warau* is a new upbeat taiko piece by Yuichiro



Comical P.P.C. makes the kids laugh and cheer



The female members take on Yosuke Oda's new challenging piece "Ake no Myojo"

Funabashi which leaves the audience and performers on a fun, high note. (I hope to see this one at Earth Celebration's Shiroyama Concerts one day, the dance area will erupt.)

I watched rehearsals in April and saw a few different programmes. This cast had to perform four or so different versions, longer for older students, shorter for younger students, and irregular ones for mixed audiences and special events. The school performances need to be interactive, age-suitable, attention-grabbing, and enjoyable. Yosuke had included his own new compositions, and when I watched them for the first time, both featuring songs and one with a dynamic taiko dance, it was a vivid reminder that Yosuke's capacity is not just in his muscles. The programme was a great mix of Kodo standard numbers, pieces from *Dadan*, new numbers and interactive components. It was nice

to see seven drummers trying new instruments, making the audience laugh, and communicating with the audience. And playing taiko with all of their energy like a tight, athletic jazz unit.

In mid-June I went to join the tour for a day in Sanjo City, Niigata. That day, they were performing twice at one elementary school that day, in

continued on next page

Kodo School Workshop- Performance Tour 2012 *May-June*

Director: Yosuke Oda
Cast: Yuichiro Funabashi, Yosuke Oda, Masayuki Sakamoto (Until June 6), Tsuyoshi Maeda (From June 9), Eri Uchida, Mariko Omi, Yosuke Kusa, Maya Minowa

School Tour Report*continued from page 5*

the morning for Years 1-3, and in the afternoon for Years 4-6. After a month of touring, Yosuke told me he was very satisfied with the *people* his programme had developed. For example, Eri now plays the koto, Mari (Mariko Omi) and Maya now sing solo, Yuichiro is settled into his role as MC and developed speaking skills he could use for a solo projects, and Kusasuke (Yosuke Kusa) has found a new presence and is getting laughs performing in comedic *P.P.C.* These are all things I had yet to see on the Kodo stage. The composition he made for the female members, *Ake no Myojo*, has become a very powerful piece. The ladies have been challenged and have grown through this one piece and it really shows in the rest of their performance. Listening to him, I couldn't help but look forward to school the next day.

I saw the one-hour elementary school

programme twice that day. It was very well received, cast and programme alike. This performance started with a bang, ended with a boom, and was smooth and punchy while delivering a great range of upbeat taiko pieces and interludes of melodious song. The children roared with laughter watching *P.P.C.* and also laughed and cheered when each member introduced themselves with a nickname or an anecdote. You could tell they enjoyed the conversation and friendly approach. Yuichiro was great as the MC. There was no hint of fake "children's television presenter" in his voice. He held the attention of the 300 or so children with a calm but steady pace and friendly, natural style of talking. The three ladies performed *Ake no Myojo*, striking in their black costumes with skirts that enhanced their spinning movements. The children watched closely as the performers twirled rapidly while drumming and dancing, creating patterns of motion and rhythm. I felt a new strength

radiate from their posture when they stood still. During the taiko experience corner, about 15 children came forward to play the taiko, enjoying games and drumming to the beat together. The kids watching them were drumming on their knees or playing air taiko. Yuichiro really helped maintain the energy of each performance piece through his commentary, so that in the last two pieces, the sea of kids was undulating with energy. It was quite remarkable, considering the attention spans you'd expect in a muggy school gym in summer. After watching Yosuke insatiably play the mighty *O-daiko*, some of the little boys were air-drumming like mad during *Yatai-bayashi*, and other kids went up on their knees for a better look. A cheer rose from the pupils when Yuichiro announced one last piece and all the children clapped along to pulsing *Yama Warau*, grooving and enjoying the rhythm with Kodo as one.

After the morning performance, a third grade girl got up in front of the assembly to address Kodo. She thanked the cast on behalf of her peers and said "I had seen you before on TV and I was really looking forward to you coming to my school today. I was surprised at how much energy you have and I want to remember that energy everyday and use it in my own life." Our performances certainly evoke an array of feelings and ideas, from emotions to dreams about what they want to do when they grow up. Every time I watch, I think its the children's energy, the power of the audience, that helps us strive to make new programmes, new pieces, and to develop ourselves. A big thanks to them for making us want to shine brighter.



Yosuke Kusa cheers on a speedy drumroll by the workshop participants



Tsuyoshi Maeda leads the children in refreshing stretches after they sat still through the first half

In the July 2012 issue of Kodo eNews, we featured an article about this programme by director Yosuke Oda.

The next School-Workshop Performance Tour in Japan will be held in spring/summer 2013.



Kodo One Earth Tour: Legend Announcing New Tour Dates

December 2012 in Japan's Major Cities

This December, we will hold performances of Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend in some of the main cities in Japan. For this special year-end tour, the cast will expand to include veteran members Yoshikazu Fujimoto, Chieko Kojima, and Eiichi Saito and additional young performers. Details will be on our website on August 10.

Early 2013 Coast to Coast U.S.A Tour

We are pleased to announce that "Legend" will also be touring in the United States of America for two months in February & March 2013. It will be our first *One Earth Tour* outside Japan since our new artistic director took the reigns and we look forward to sharing this special production with audiences abroad. Details are still being finalized, but we can say at this stage that our 2013 USA tour will include the following states: Nevada, California, Washington, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, North Carolina, Florida, Washington D.C., Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York. Further locations and details will be announced here in Kodo eNews and on our Facebook page and website.



in brief...



We are pleased to announce that Kodo's artistic director Kabuki actor Tamasaburo Bando is going to be recognized as an Important Intangible Cultural Property Holder ("Living National Treasure"). We will share more details about this special honor in our September issue.

The Kodo Office will be closed from Aug. 16 (Thu) through Aug. 30 (Thu) for our annual music festival "[Earth Celebration](#)" and our summer vacation. If you can't join us for EC, Kodo eNews will catch you up on the festival in early September.

Thank you to everyone who joined us on Sado Island for the Kodo Special Performances in July. We are planning another series of [concerts in October](#), this time with guest artist Okinawan dancer Mitsue Kinjo.

Kodo will appear in the "[Tamasaburo Bando Special Performances](#)" at the Old Konpira Oshibai Kabuki Theater (Kanamaru-za) in Kotohira, Kagawa this November. The performances will be comprised of two acts and Kodo will appear in the second act. Kanamaru-za was originally built in 1835 and is now the oldest theater in Japan.



Kodo Performance Schedule 2012 - 2013

EARTH CELEBRATION 2012

August 17 (Fri) - 19 (Sun): Sado Island, Japan **TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE!**
Shiroyama Concerts with special guest shamisen player [Hiromitsu Agatsuma](#), & a unique version of *Dadan* directed by Tamasaburo Bando

KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2012: LEGEND

September - October: [Japan](#)

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

NEW December: Japan

Sado Island, Niigata, Aichi, Hiroshima, Hyogo, Kanagawa, Tokyo

KODO & TAIKOZ IN CONCERT - AUSTRALIA TOUR

September: Brisbane, Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne, Newcastle, Sydney

KODO IN BALLET PERFORMANCE "KAGUYAHIME: THE MOON PRINCESS"

October: Montreal, Canada

2013

NEW Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend

February - March: U.S.A. (Details TBA)

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

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



Kodo & TaikoZ in Concert will tour around Australia this September

Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend

~ JAPAN ~
September-October

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

- September 9: Kashiwazaki, Niigata **SOLD OUT**
- September 11: Kuzumaki, Iwate
- September 12: Kitakami, Iwate
- September 14: Yamagata City
- September 15: Koriyama, Fukushima
- September 16: Hitachinaka, Ibaraki **SOLD OUT**
- 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
- October 23: Narashino, Chiba



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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



Tourists visiting Sado Island can enjoy a traditional taraibune (tub boat) ride

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