

Summer is Here

We returned to Sado Island from our spring tours to find unseasonably hot weather waiting for us. The remainder of June was jam-packed with rehearsals for [Amaterasu](#) with Tamasaburo Bando and Harei Aine, and these performances have just begun a month on stage at Akasaka ACT Theater in Tokyo. We also rehearsed for the upcoming [Earth Celebration](#) performances with Tsugaru shamisen player Hiromitsu Agatsuma. For photos and stories from these rehearsals, visit the [Earth Celebration Facebook page in English](#), and take a look at our interview with Mr. Agatsuma on [page 3](#).

With Tamasaburo Bando on Sado in June, we also made time for rehearsals for the new [Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Mystery](#), which will premiere in November. The performance is taking shape nicely after performers traveled to various parts of Japan in April to study various local, traditional performing arts. The program features traditional performing arts that Kodo has studied for many years and arranged for the stage, as well as new ones studied especially for the program. It also features classic and brand new compositions by Kodo members, which we can not wait to share with you all.

This month, we look forward to welcoming tour groups and visitors from around the island and afar to our [Special Performances on Sado Island](#). Last year, we held these concerts in three seasons, but this year there are just two sessions, in spring and summer. So this is your last chance in 2013 to see our distinguished members perform in historic Shukunegi, up-close and at home in the charming Shukunegi Community



The cast of the final Japan tour of "Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend" outside Asakusa Public Hall in Tokyo

Hall. If you decide to come along, the Kodo Cultural Foundation may be able to assist with your accommodations bookings and they also have an array of tour options for discovering Sado while you are here. See our website for [details](#). For assistance in English, please send them an [email](#).

In this issue, we have featured a photograph report of our spring tours, and we are pleased to share a selection of photos taken by photographer Takashi Okamoto in Asakusa of our members. Also, have a look at the Schedules on [Page 8](#) for a list of countries we plan to visit in Europe on tour with Kodo One Earth Tour 2014: Legend. We've listed them here first for our

readers! We look forward to hearing your feedback on [Facebook](#) and by email about the Amaterasu performances. Please keep in touch, and thank you for support!

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The school tour cast bids farewell to an energized audience after one of their twice-daily performances

Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend finished its year-long domestic tour in Asakusa, Tokyo, on June 9 with a performance that was broadcast live worldwide via Ustream.



Kodo School Workshop Performances in Spring 2013.



Mr. Akio Tsumura and sons of Miyakejima Geino Doshikai with Kodo in "Matsurine." Mr. Tsumura taught Kodo this style of drumming, which originates from Miyake Island south of Tokyo.





Earth Celebration 2013

Hiromitsu Agatsuma Interview: “Expressing Japanese Sounds and Rhythms”

Master of the Tsugaru Shimisen, Hiromitsu Agatsuma shared the stage with Kodo for the first time at last year's [Earth Celebration \(EC\)](#). Visiting Sado in April for rehearsals designed to take this year's collaborations to new heights, Agatsuma spared some time to speak with Kodo eNews' Junko Susaki about the new songs he plans to debut at EC 2013 and the art of expressing Japanese sounds and rhythms.

Working Towards a Balanced and Profound Collaboration

Junko Susaki (J.S.): What was it like collaborating with Kodo last year?

Hiromitsu Agatsuma (H.A.): *I had been wanting to play with Kodo for a quite a while, but Kodo has such a long history and well developed style that I thought it might be hard for an outsider to step in. One-on-one collaborations can be quite free and easy to manage, but much of Kodo's repertoire consists of large orchestral pieces. Through communal living, Kodo players*

enjoy an intimacy and united style that few groups have, so I felt a bit intimidated going in there on my own from the outside. However, last year I was given this unique opportunity and I slowly became used to the Kodo style of making music.

At last year's EC, I was very impressed by the power of this Japanese group which sends out its message and music from Sado Island to the world. As a Japanese person and player of Japanese musical instruments, I feel a strong desire to share the unique qualities and wonder of Japanese music with the world. I hope this year we can go deeper with the collaboration, incorporating more of my own compositions, and create new music together.

Kodo's artistic director, Mr. Tamasaburo Bando, suggested that one collaboration is not enough to truly understand each other, and that both Kodo and I could benefit from spending more time together and creating something more significant. So, here I am, joining Earth Celebration two years in a row.



Hiromitsu Agatsuma during rehearsals in April 2013 for EC

J.S.: Until now, Shiroyama Concerts have been once-in-a-lifetime encounters of Kodo with guest musicians. Should we expect a much more integrated collaborative performance as this is the second year in a row?

H.A.: *That will take a long time to accomplish, and both parties need to have a strong desire to do this. Kodo has engaged in many collaborations, and have I played the shamisen together with musicians of various genres. In a collaboration, one side tends to end up leaning on the other. Kodo players adjust themselves to play with guest players and vice versa. To meet at the center and bring the best out of both sides is very difficult, especially in a short time, right after an initial meeting.*

However, if we have a music score, like in western music, it is easier for each side to bring their own interpretation and meet somewhere in the middle. With this score, Kodo can continue to play the same piece in the future, even after the current players are replaced by newcomers. This cultivates versatility in the players, and they may develop a taste for improvisational work. So this year, we are working hard to go one or two steps further in our collaborative work.



Hiromitsu Agatsuma on stage with Kodo at EC 2012

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Earth Celebration 2013

continued from page 3

**Japanese Sounds and Rhythm:
Tradition and Innovation**

J.S.: We heard that you've brought an original three-movement composition that will debut at EC this year. Can you tell us about the vision you have for these songs?

H.A.: My musical background is rooted in Tsugaru folk songs. One of these songs is called "Aiya-bushi." Sado is home to a similar song called "Okesa-bushi," and both songs find their origin in the "Haiya-bushi" from Kyushu. The song spread from south to north through kitamae-bune (northern-bound ships) that made their way up Japan's western seaboard. My idea is to travel the other way around, from north to south, from Tsugaru to the roots. I thought I could make music with Kodo using unique rhythms and the essence of this song as an underlying motif. Many foreigners come to see EC, so I'm going to adapt a more classical music format. The song will have

the structure of classical music combined with rhythms and melodies unique to Japanese folk songs.

I love the special groove I find in Japanese folk songs including the Haiya-bushi. I think it has a global appeal and can be intriguing for a foreign audience. I'm Japanese and grew up in Japan, so I find great meaning in pursuing music that can only be articulated by Japanese musical instruments. Irregular beats, airy pauses, rhythms and melodies that make listeners think, "wow, I like Japan" without knowing why... This is the kind of music unique to Japan I hope to create with Kodo.

J.S.: We are very honored to hear that you find Kodo to be an attractive partner in this way.

H.A.: Kodo has a pillar – the taiko. They've performed in Japan and around the world for decades. Throughout the years, many players come and go, but the group persists. Over the years a certain style has been established. All groups go through difficult periods trying to evolve. Being too

strict about Japanese tradition is not fun; there needs to be some playfulness in this process. But being too liberal is unlike Kodo. By constantly undertaking new challenges, Kodo will pass on its traditional style and keep playing for many years to come.

I play shamisen constantly pondering both tradition and evolution. Many choose to strictly pursue tradition and go deeper down this road, but I won't be defeated by them. I want to be pertinent to the present day and create modern shamisen music. I want to make new music that will be admired even by conservative musicians.

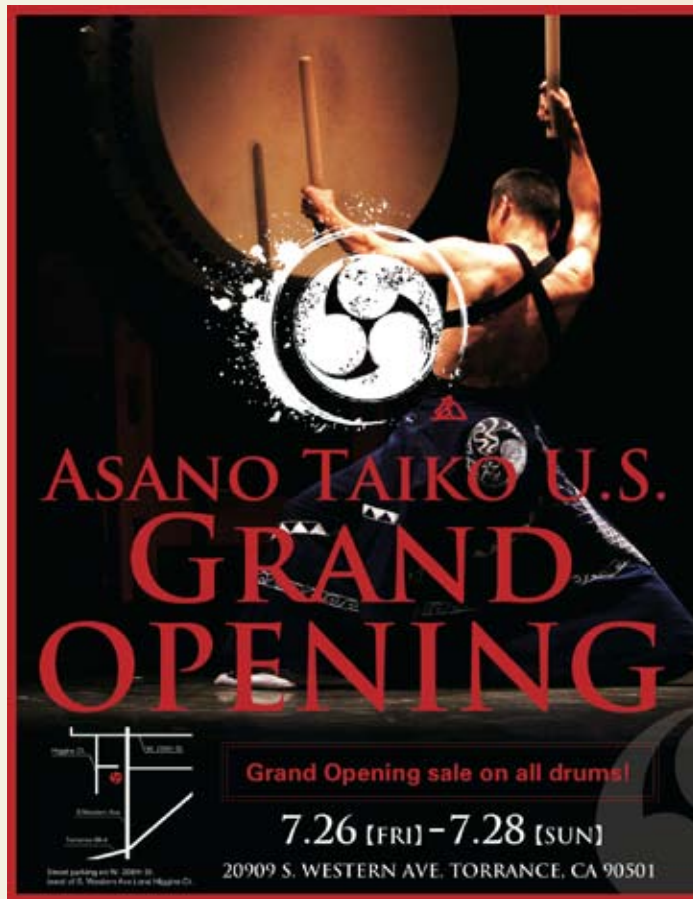
I hope this collaboration has a positive influence on both parties. If Kodo feels the same way, I'd love to play with them in various situations and locations. That is my dream.

Earth Celebration 2013 will be held August 23-25 on Sado Island, Niigata. For further details, please visit the [EC website](#).



Rehearsals at Kodo Village for the 2013 collaborations

Yoshikazu Fujimoto & Yoko Fujimoto at Asano Taiko U.S. Grand Opening Event



SCHEDULE

July 26 (Fri)

2-DAY TAIKO INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS including:

11:00am -12:50pm - Yoshikazu Fujimoto (Kodo) - Odaiko
1:45pm - 2:30pm - Akitoshi Asano (Asano Taiko Co., Ltd.) -
Lecture on History of Taiko

CONCERT 7:30pm-9:30pm

July 27 (Sat)

2-DAY TAIKO INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS including:

2:30pm - 4:20pm - Yoshikazu Fujimoto (Kodo) -
Odaiko / \$50
4:30pm - 6:20pm - Yoko Fujimoto (Kodo) -
Voice Circle / \$50

CONCERT 7:30pm - 9:30pm

July 28 (Sun)

CONCERT 2:30pm - 4:30pm

This summer, Asano Taiko U.S. is opening an exciting new facility dedicated to taiko in Torrance, California! To commemorate this momentous occasion, they are planning a Grand Opening at their facility. In addition to a store-wide sale on instruments, there will be hands-on workshops for taiko players, a 2-day intensive, a taiko history lecture by Akitoshi Asano, and performances with guest artists from Japan and Hawaii, including Kodo's distinguished members Yoshikazu Fujimoto and Yoko Fujimoto, as well as the staff of the new Los Angeles Taiko Institute (LATI)!

Tickets for the Grand Opening are on sale now. Reserve your spot today and join Asano Taiko for an exciting weekend!



Yoshikazu Fujimoto



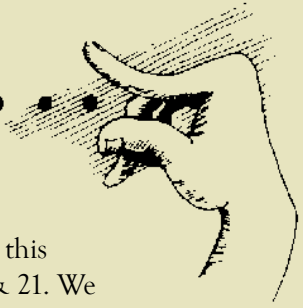
Yoko Fujimoto

*All three concerts present the same, 120-minute program with guest artists;
Yoshikazu Fujimoto (Kodo), Yoko Fujimoto (Kodo), Yu Imafuku (Iwami no Kaze), Shunsuke Kimura, Eri Domoto (Iwami no Kaze), Ai Suenaga (Iwami no Kaze)
Los Angeles Taiko Institute (LATI) Staff; Yuta Kato, Kris Bergstrom, Jen Baik, Jason Osajima, David Wells, Yuri Yoshida
Special Guests from Hawaii; Zenshin Daiko (July 27 only)

For further details including the full schedule of workshops and activities, please visit the [Asano Taiko website](#).



in brief...



In Kawasaki this August, taiko ensemble Bonten is planning a week of live performances and the first item will be [Chieko Kojima's dance performance "Dojoji."](#) Chieko will portray the famous tale of Anchin and Kiyohime through taiko and dance in this collaboration with Bonten and Mitsuko Nakabayashi (Satsuma biwa lute) on August 20 & 21. We hope you'll join her there!

This summer, Taiko no Sato Kyowakan is holding two workshops by Kodo's distinguished members. On August 11, join Chieko Kojima for her "[Chieko's Onna-uchi \(Women's Style Taiko\)](#)" [workshop](#), which she will tailor to each participant personally, so repeaters and first-timers can both join in with ease. (Chieko's workshop is full, but you can ask Kyowakan directly to be put on the waitlist.) On September 15, Motofumi Yamaguchi will hold a [shinobue \(bamboo flute\) workshop](#) for anyone who is interested in this beautiful, natural instrument. Flutes will be lent to participants free of charge, so there is no excuse not to give it a go!

Two new staff members joined the [Sado Island Taiko Centre](#) team this spring. Kodai Mazaki completed the [Kodo Apprentice Centre programme](#) in January this year. He was studying there to become a Kodo staff member. Mirai Ito is from Aichi Prefecture and she is so fond of Sado Island that she moved here to live last year. She is also a Sado Hometown Ambassador. We hope you will join us in welcoming them to the Centre.

Kodo Special Performances on Sado Island: Summer

Join us again for the popular "Kodo Special Performances on Sado Island" at Shukunegi Community Hall this July! The concerts are centered around Kodo's distinguished members, who formed the foundations of Kodo today when they came together on Sado Island, connected by the performing arts, and joined Kodo's antecedent group Sado no Kuni Onedekoza decades ago. These special performances are filled with deep gratitude for Sado.

Come and thoroughly enjoy an "escape from your daily life" and the summer season on Sado Island with Kodo. This is the last time you can see these special concerts in 2013!

[Summer] July 13 (Sat) - 21 (Sun)

*No performance on July 17

Shukunegi Community Hall, Ogi Area, Sado Island, Niigata

Appearing: Yoshikazu Fujimoto, Chieko Kojima, Motofumi Yamaguchi, Masami Miyazaki, Rai Tateishi, others.

For further details, please visit our [website](#).





All aboard! Tsuyoshi Maeda, Kenta Nakagome, and Yuta Sumiyoshi prepare to ride the Panda Bus, which advertised our Asakusa concerts on its side.



Kenta Nakagome and Masaru Tsuji

Portraits of Kodo in Asakusa

by photographer
Takashi Okamoto

Yuta Sumiyoshi puts his hand in the print of “Living National Treasure,” our artistic director Tamasaburo Bando.



Shogo Komatsuzaki, Mitsuru Ishizuka, and Kenzo Abe lead the cast of “Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend” for a walk through sunny Asakusa

Kodo Performance Schedule 2013 - 2014

ROLEX JAPAN PRESENTS “**AMATERASU**”
Tamasaburo Bando & Kodo collaboration
July 4-28: Tokyo
September 5 -29: Fukuoka
October 5 -27: Kyoto

EARTH CELEBRATION 2013

Annual performing arts festival hosted by Sado Island and Kodo. This year features a reunion performance with Tsugaru Shamisen player Hiromitsu Agatsuma and an enhanced outdoor version of Kodo “Dadan.”
August 23 (Fri) - 25 (Sun): Sado Island, Japan

KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2013: MYSTERY

November - December: Japan
Sado Island, Aichi, Osaka, Okayama, Niigata, Kanagawa, Tokyo (TBC)

2014

NEW KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2014: LEGEND

January - March: Europe
Italy, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Sweden
(Further details TBA)

SOLO & SMALL GROUP PROJECTS, SPECIAL EVENTS, WORKSHOPS,
NEWS & INFORMATION
Please visit the [top page of our website](#) and scroll down for details.

Rolex Japan Presents “Amaterasu”

~ JAPAN ~

July, September, October 2013

For further details, please visit our [website](#).

July 4 (Thu) - 28 (Sun)
Akasaka ACT Theater, Minato Ward, Tokyo
Ticket reservations have now closed. Door sales & standing tickets will be subject to availability.

September 5 (Thu) - 29 (Sun)
Hakataza Theater, Fukuoka City
Tickets On Sale July 20.

October 5 (Sat) - 27 (Sun)
Minami-za Kabuki Theater, Kyoto City
Tickets On Sale July 15.



Earth Celebration 2013

Outdoor Festival on Sado Island, Niigata, Japan

KODO Taiko Performing Arts Ensemble

Shiroyama Concerts: 8/23 (Fri), 8/24 (Sat) & 8/25 (Sun)
Ogi Shiroyama Park Special Stage

Tickets are on sale now! For event details, please visit the [Earth Celebration website](#)

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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



Hydrangeas, Kuninaka Plain, Sado Island

Resources

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[Kodo Tour and Performance Schedules](#)

[Kodo on YouTube](#)

[Kodo CD Listening Booth](#)

[Kodo Bravia Promotion Video](#)

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[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



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