



The natural hilltop amphitheatre setting unique to the Shiroyama Concerts at Earth Celebration (Photo: Johnny Wales)

Together & Full Of Power

Thank you very much to everyone who joined us on Sado Island in August for the 26th [Earth Celebration](#). In this issue, we hope you will enjoy some photographs from the festival as well as a personal report by Kodo eNews' Johnny Wales, allowing you to see or relive the three days of taiko, music,

dance, and exchange we enjoyed this summer when the world came to our hometown of Ogi.

Our "[Amaterasu](#)" performances with Tamasaburo Bando and Harei Aine are in Kyoto now and have just begun the last weeks of performances of the

collaboration. Read more about this year's "[Amaterasu](#)" on page 2. If you are in Japan, we hope you will catch the performance live while it is on stage.

On Sado, we have put up posters around the island for our new upcoming "[One Earth Tour: Mystery](#)" which premieres here at the end of November. This performance will then embark on its first tour, at home in Japan. After a long creation period, we look forward to seeing "[Mystery](#)" take shape on stage. Stay tuned for comments from our performers about the new programme in the November issue of Kodo eNews.



Hiromitsu Agatsuma and Kodo at EC 2013

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New Faces in the New-Look *Amaterasu*

“*Amaterasu*” is about to take to its third and final theater stage for performances this year. In July in Tokyo, we had 23 sold-out performances at Akasaka ACT Theater, welcoming around 29,000 audience members. In Fukuoka in September, the 23 performances at Hakataza Theater marked our first time performing “*Amaterasu*” in Kyushu, home to the real cave where the sun goddess is said to have hidden in Takachiho, Miyazaki. This month, “*Amaterasu*” returns to the Minami-za Kabuki Theater, one of the venues from the 2006 premiere, for 21 performances from October 5th to 27th. We thank everyone for traveling from around Japan and internationally to see our unique collaboration with Tamasaburo Bando and Harei Aine.

This year’s “*Amaterasu*” features a cast that is almost entirely different than the first production seven years ago. Like the “One Earth Tour” performances directed by [Tamasaburo Bando](#), first and second-year performers were selected to take on key positions in this production. The newcomers have to deal with heavy responsibility and mental strain, but as new performers they also have a unique freshness. Here are some impressions from two of the junior members from the “*Amaterasu*” cast.



Jun Jidai

I never even imagined that my first performance tour as a Kodo junior member would be with “Amaterasu.” I am surrounded by Kodo seniors who have all experienced large productions before. In this performance, when I stand on stage with them, I feel the “difference in sound” between them and I, and the “difference in appearance.”

However, in the eyes of the audience, whether you are a new performer or not, you are seen as “Kodo.” So, on stage I decided I have to quit being a new person. Closely watching the senior members, I try to make myself more beautiful and grand than them! That is what I decided I needed to do on stage everyday for this production. The gap between them and myself will not get narrower without time. That is why I have to work on my technique myself more and more and in future performances, I want to continue to chase after my seniors.



Kosuke Urushikubo

I am filled with thanks to be featured on stage as a junior member in the “Amaterasu” production and to have been cast in the role of Tsukuyomi, who appears at the beginning of the first act of the performance. Also, in the first act I am one of the performers who has to work with the fabric props on stage. The way the fabric needs to be shown and the timing is crucial, but the size of the stage and the lighting is quite different when you compare the Kodo Village rehearsal hall and a theater stage, so it was difficult for me to fix the way I handled the fabric on stage.

I want to make full use of this precious chance, get further and further into the production, and give a performance that will satisfy the audiences.

From the Audience Questionnaire

Like an argument, like a dance, moving the taiko as it was being played was wonderful. I have learnt just a little bit of taiko but I could see that they were drumming powerfully without straining. I learnt so much from them.

It resonated in the wild part of my being. This contrasted the suppleness of Tamasaburo Bando and it was harshly beautiful.

The discipline of each person playing taiko, the grand scale of four or more people playing different-sized drums together. It has been a while since I saw a performance like this and it shook me to the core.



Tamasaburo Bando as *Amaterasu* with Yosuke Oda as Susano’o, and junior member Kosuke Urushikubo as Tsukuyomi.



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Earth Celebration 2013

1. Tomoe (Kodo "DADAN")
- 2-3. Day 1 of EC 2013, the audience didn't let the rain dampen their spirits
4. Color (Kodo "DADAN")
5. Giant video screens for the first time at EC for Kodo "DADAN"
6. Yoko Fujimoto & Masami Miyazaki in "Song Jack-in-the-Box"
7. Chieko Kojima in "Leave It To Chieko!"
8. Eiichi Saito and Yoshikazu Fujimoto in Kodo Small Ensemble "Shukunegi Ichiza"



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8



"Irodori" with Hiromitsu Agatsuma



"Onidaiko" from Amaterasu

Kodo with special guest artists Hiromitsu Agatsuma (left photo centre) and Harei Aine (right photo center).



"Irodori"



"Miyake"



"LION"

Drumming up a storm of classic Kodo pieces and new beats



"Nobi"



Performing "Concertogrosso for Japanese Instrumental 'Genesis'" with Tsugaru Shamisen player Hiromitsu Agatsuma

Earth Celebration 2013

Kodo eNew's Johnny Wales' impressions of the 26th incarnation of Kodo's Earth Celebration on Sado Island, August 23rd-25th.

Like everyone involved with Earth Celebration – even tangentially – my schedule during the event is anything but normal. For visitors from around Japan and the world this is their chance to see Kodo on their native ground, but if the truth be known, the days surrounding this event are anything but normal for us. This is a time when we, the islanders, get a chance to welcome the world to our home, so while you are all looking in at us, we, in turn, are looking out at the world who comes to visit. So it was that I was up at 6 am on the first day to take out our dog for her morning walkies. It was overcast, with a 70 percent chance of rain, but over the quarter century of the festival we have been extremely lucky with the weather. I only remember one actual typhoon. Anyway, on Sado Island our tremendously variable weather usually assures that even if it rains half the day, the other half is often sunny and fair. During the walk that morning I suddenly looked up and there, right overhead, flew a *toki* (Japanese Crested Ibis), the light shining through its wings to reveal the beautifully delicate pink of its plumage. This is one of the rarest birds on earth and in the several years since their re-introduction to the island I have only seen one of them on about 5 occasions. With a shout of 'Toki!' – which startled our dear dog – I thought to myself 'Now this is a good omen for the celebration!'

Mother Nature was toying with me. Not an hour after I had arrived on the site in Ogi the deluge began. Biblically. And that pretty much encapsulates the first day. Though the workshops carried on at various indoor venues, the outside Fringe events were washed out, as was my camera and everything I wore. Fortunately the rain slackened somewhat as the evening performance



Miyakejima Geino Doshikai on the Fringe



*Left: Niibo Chuo Seinenkai from Sado Island Performing Arts (Katagami-style demon dance, Niibo)
Right: A young local upholding Sado's traditional onidaiko (demon drumming)*

approached. Kodo and the audience soldiered on bravely with only intermittent rain during the concert and a memorable time was enjoyed by all (especially the fellow selling plastic raincoats to the visitors as they headed up Shiroyama mountain). My friend selling *kakigori* in the Harbour Market did less well, her total sales of the shaved ice treat for the day? Zero.

The second day was much more like it. Hot and sunny, I don't think I was alone in saying to myself, 'Let's just pretend that didn't really happen and *this* is the first day of the event'. Together with a full programme of workshops, the Fringe events carried on as always on the stage in the grass at the centre of the Harbour Market. There, nearly 150 stalls sold food, clothing and crafts from around the world. You could even get a massage or a temporary henna tattoo. By its nature the acts at the Fringe run the whole gamut of musical variety, so

while strolling through the market when you hear something you like, you can simply plop yourself down in the grass and take it all in. For me, the highlight of the day was the Miyake Taiko, a drumming style from Miyake Island. Most of the island's inhabitants had to move to the Tokyo mainland after a devastating eruption of Mt. Oyama in 2,000. They courageously cling to their native culture while in exile. Followers of Kodo will be familiar with their show-stopping version of Miyake learned from some of these same drummers. This is real roots taiko being played by the people who have upheld it locally for generations. There is nothing like an original.

That evening the broad expanse of grass encircled by cherry trees atop Shiroyama was a much more agreeable place to watch Tsgaru shamisen player Hiromitsu Agatsuma perform with

continued on page 6

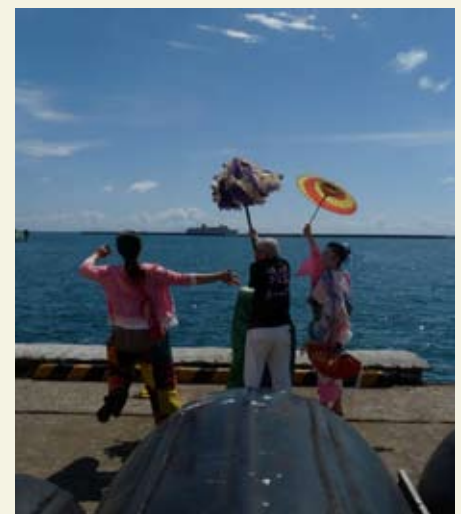
Earth Celebration 2013*continued from page 5*

Kodo for the second year in a row.

After the performance, visitors were free to dance the mesmerizing Okesa dance in the lantern-festooned streets of Ogi, and feel for a while like they too were part of life on Sado.

We were blessed with fair skies again on the 3rd day of the event (or second if you are counting like I was) and we were finally starting to see the annual rite of fairer-skinned visitors take on that particular shade of EC red from too much of a good thing. I was most struck with the drummers from Hachijo Island, playing *Hachijo Daiko* which many of you will have seen performed so beautifully by Kodo's Chieko Kojima. There is no getting past the beauty of authenticity, and it was in recognizing the playing of people like this that Kodo has so long drawn its inspiration. The day was wrapped up by another pleasant evening on the grass of Shiroyama with a frosty one, this time Kodo joined by Hiromitsu Agatsuma's shamisen and the unique dance & vocal stylings of the famous Takarazuka troupe's former star Harei Aine. After the concert people meandered down the lantern-lit path of the mountain to gather for the somnolent dancing of *Yoi no Yunzuru*, less show perhaps than closing ritual for another EC and the end of summer.

The morning after begins the clean-up, interrupted temporarily by the departure of most visitors on the morning ferry. Kodo and Sado Islanders are out in force to bid farewell to our guests from the dockside where a thousand strands of colourful tape are thrown down from the ship as it pulls way to the sound of taiko and flute, which carries on till the ship is just out of sight. We on the dockside then raise our voices in a collective shout of 'COME BACK AGAIN!' And then we who remain – and our guests who have gone – return to our quieter, less-heartily celebrated lives.

*Yoi no Yunzuru**Hiroo Asanuma plays Hachijo Daiko**Jangara Nenbutsu Odori/ Suganami Seinenkan (Taira, Iwaki City, Fukushima)**Kodo's dockside farewell to the festival goers*



This page shows the faces of some of the many participants at Earth Celebration 2013 enjoying everything that the festival and Sado Island offer. Thank you once again to everyone who joined us this year! EC 2014 will be held August 22-24. We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's Celebration. Details will be announced in May 2014 on the [EC website](#).

Member Notices

Performer [Masami Miyazaki](#) will step down from the Kodo stage after her performance at the Sado “Island of Performing Arts” Festival in October. She will continue working with us as a member of the [Kitamaesen Co., Ltd.](#) staff, primarily as a workshop instructor. We thank you in advance for your continued support of her activities.



We would like to also announce that performer [Shogo Yoshii](#) left Kodo at the end of August. We thank you all for your support of his activities to date.

I decided to leave Kodo and continue my performance activities independently. I know I am still an inexperienced performer, but I will hold everything that I was taught at Kodo dear to me as I go back to square one, retrain myself, and push forward, pursuing even higher goals.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep-felt thanks to everyone on Sado Island, everyone who looked after me at our tour destinations, and to all the people who supported me as friends and fans.

While I am sad to leave Kodo, I am also excited for the future and look forward to the day when I can meet you all again.

I will do my best.

I kindly ask for your continued guidance and encouragement.

*All my best,
Shogo Yoshii*



Kodo Appearance in “Tamasaburo Bando Special Performances”

October 31 (Thu) - November 10 (Sun)

The Old Konpira Oshibai Kabuki Theater (Kanamaru-za), Nakatado, Kagawa

Kodo will appear in the “Tamasaburo Bando Special Performances” at the Old Konpira Oshibai Kabuki Theater (Kanamaru-za) in Kotohira, Kagawa. The performances will be comprised of two acts and Kodo will appear in the second act. The Old Konpira Oshibai Kabuki Theater (Kanamaru-za) was originally built in 1835 and is now the oldest theater in Japan. It is designated as a national Important Cultural Property and has been restored to its former Edo period glory.

For details, please see our [website](#). In 2012, these performances all sold out well in advance, so reserve your tickets early to avoid missing out!



Kodo Performance Schedule 2013 - 2014

“AMATERASU”

Tamasaburo Bando & Kodo collaboration
October 5 -27: Kyoto

KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2013: MYSTERY

November - December: Japan
SADO ISLAND, AICHI, OSAKA, OKAYAMA, NIIGATA, KANAGAWA, TOKYO

2014

KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2014: LEGEND

January - March: Europe
Italy, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Netherlands,
Sweden, Estonia **NEW**

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 2014: Legend

~ EUROPE ~

JANUARY - MARCH 2014

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

- January 29: Rome, Italy
- January 31: Milan, Italy
- February 1: Milan, Italy
- February 2: Milan, Italy
- February 7: Paris, France
- February 8: Paris, France
- February 9: Paris, France
- February 11: Paris, France
- February 12: Paris, France
- February 15: Poole, UK **NEW**
- February 17: Birmingham, UK
- February 19: Liverpool, UK **NEW**
- February 20: Manchester, UK
- February 25: Gateshead, UK **NEW**
- February 28: Brighton, UK **NEW**
- March 3: Munich, Germany
- March 4: Munich, Germany
- March 5: Berlin, Germany
- March 9: Stuttgart, Germany
- March 11: Frankfurt, Germany
- March 15: Hannover, Germany
- March 17: Groningen, Netherlands
- March 19: The Hague, Netherlands
- March 22: Uppsala, Sweden
- March 24: Tallinn, Estonia **NEW**

Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Mystery

~ JAPAN ~



- Nov. 23: Sado Island, Niigata
- Dec. 3: Nagoya, Aichi
- Dec. 7 & 8: Osaka City
- Dec. 10: Okayama City
- Dec. 13: Joetsu, Niigata
- Dec. 14: Nagaoka, Niigata **SOLD OUT**
- Dec. 15: Niigata City
- Dec. 18: Yokohama, Kanagawa
- Dec. 20 - 23: Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo
- Dec. 24: Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo
(Closed performance)

For further details, please visit our [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



*Hamakawachi Onidaiko from Sado Island Performing Arts
(Maehama style demon dance, Hatano)*

Resources

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