

A Season for Giving Thanks

We are filled with gratitude to have received full-house audiences to every performance of “[Amaterasu](#)” with Tamasaburo Bando and Harei Aine this year. We have a selection of photos to share with you on page 6. We especially thank the readers of Kodo eNews who traveled to Japan to see this unique collaboration. A cast of Kodo performers is currently taking part in the “[Tamasaburo Bando Special Performances](#)” in Kagawa Prefecture. It is an honor for us to perform with Mr. Bando at such prestigious and historic theaters around Japan and we are glad when our friends and families have the chance to hear our taiko resonate in these wonderful, unique venues.

At the end of November, the brand new “[One Earth Tour: Mystery](#)” will open on Sado Island. Read more about this new production in the words of our artistic director and selected cast members in this issue of Kodo eNews. We have included some behind the scenes photos from our rehearsals too!

This autumn, we were happy to see so many people come along to the [Sado “Island of Performing Arts” Festival performances](#) and the live-in [Kodo Juku workshop](#). This month, we will pack up a set of our drums and ship them to Europe for our 2-month-long tour of “Kodo One Earth Tour: Legend” that begins in late-January. See page 5 for an inside perspective on this production by performer Masaru Tsuji. We hope you will help us spread



Light, Darkness, and Reverberations - “Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Mystery”

the word about our upcoming tours by sharing eNews and our posts on [Facebook](#). Thank you always for your support!

Enter an Indescribable World of Mystery

“[Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Mystery](#),” the new production directed by [Tamasaburo Bando](#) to premiere in November this year, will reveal an unusual realm, one that materializes at the theater. Taking Kodo to yet another frontier, this new performance transcends the real world to enter one where sacred beasts appear. This mysterious experience will transport the audience into darkness, a place with a nostalgic air that conjures the

spirit of the Japanese people and their indigenous nature. Through the music of Kodo, the profound world of “Mystery” will unfold.

The artistic identity of “Mystery” has taken shape through numerous rehearsals and new approaches. We

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Artistic Director Tamasaburo Bando on “Kodo One Earth 2013: Mystery”



Born in Tokyo, Tamasaburo Bando is the leading Kabuki female-role actor of our times and a National Living Treasure. He began his activities with Kodo in 2000 and became the ensemble's artistic director in 2012.

Tamasaburo moves the lion head to explain his ideas to the performers

It's hard to put into words, but I'm aiming at a world of mystery.

In the folk arts that have been handed down across Japan, there's a sacredness, an air of mystery within prayers. The drums express this, and I'd like for the audience to feel it. I hope theatergoers will experience the same sort of otherworldly splendor that you sense at a temple or a shrine, or when you discover things in nearby woods.

Another thing is, I like people to enjoy “darkness.” The beauty of something you come across lit by candlelight, a sense of something vague yet marvelous. Mystery enfolds within it fear, humor, charm, and various other qualities. In the “Serpent Dances” that have come down from old, the defeated serpent is endowed with a surprising level of sacredness. In this performance, many things will emerge from out of the darkness. While it's a drum concert, playing as only drums

can play, we've added plenty of visual interest.

A space or time of wonder can only be experienced by those who were actually there. Religious rituals and arts as well have been refined over a long span of time from the inspiration of those who went before us. In this staging of drums I hope the audience will enjoy to the fullest that magical sense of space and time.

Tamasaburo Bando
Artistic Director



Discussing choreography in the rehearsal hall



Enter an Indescribable World of Mystery*continued from page 1*

asked the performers, who have spent day after day intimately involved with this production, what kind of performance the audience might expect.

Yosuke Oda

"I think this production is rich in local color, but we are not performing local arts in their original form on stage, I think instead we are interpreting them cultivating a nostalgia so potent that Japanese people can almost smell their hometown air somehow. So what we are doing is something that you really can only experience at the theater. Everything else is the resonant tones of the taiko, which we beat with all our might. If you were to talk about "quintessential Kodo" in this performance, you would look at whether or not we beat the drums purely. That means whether or not we can scrape away our own desires and immerse ourselves completely in our drumming."

Yuta Sumiyoshi

"This production is different from our last one, "Legend," where the artistic direction let you catch a glimpse of classic Kodo at the end of the concert. For this performance, 90% of the compositions are new and the programme was created from scratch



Left to right: Assistant director for "Mystery," performer Yosuke Oda (left), lighting designer Kenichi Mashiko, artistic director Tamasaburo Bando, and guest choreographer KAZUMI-BOY.

under Tamasaburo's guidance. I think it will be quite fresh considering these points of difference, and new elements such as the Great Serpent from Iwami Kagura (Shinto dancing and music) of Shimane Prefecture. Also, there are dramatic and theatrical elements like never before throughout the programme. And taiko... I think the way it has been put together is really interesting.

Recently, Tamasaburo talked to us about 'amplitude of expression.' It was a discussion of how 'Kodo always plays taiko, then does something completely different, and then we see how the ensemble has changed when they come back to playing taiko.' I think that the bigger my 'amplitude,' the better I can play new expressions on the taiko. So I really want to be proactive and try to do everything I am told."

Mariko Omi

"I love the word 'mystery,' this word reminds me of darkness. When there is darkness, the power of imagination really works, doesn't it? I think traditional arts might be what people create from that darkness. I think this production will express human

curiosity getting the better of one's fear to see something exciting, yet somewhat scary. We are all enjoying the rehearsals, laughing out loud with Tamasaburo as we choreograph how we will enter the stage.



I think 'Mystery' is filled with the spirit of the Japanese people and their indigenous nature as well as nostalgic flair that Kodo brings to the production. It is kind of like an 'Imagination Jack-in-the-Box.' It's as if there is all this billowing smoke (laughs) and from the smoke something appears, then women appear, demons appear, and you wonder what will come

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Enter an Indescribable World of Mystery*continued from page 3*

out next?... I picture it getting more and more fun, moment by moment, for us on stage and also for the audience.”

Kenzo Abe

Recently, the Iwami Kagura teacher showed us the movements of the Great Serpent, and his movement was so... it was like a real snake. There was a human being inside but he was so dedicated to the serpent's movements and it was really terrifying and mysterious. For a taiko group to do this Great Serpent dance, it may seem like an unexpected leap, but I feel the right connection to the title “Mystery” when we are rehearsing. And to make the

Serpent look mysterious, as you would expect, you really need to erase any human airs. I think that our job when we bring a form of folk entertainment to the stage is to absorb the essence of the art from the local people who uphold it, and then to perform it as our own unique expression.

Tamasaburo told us that he wants to intuitively portray what he feels is beautiful, and I really feel that from his performance. It is fantastic to watch various ideas logically put together to create just that. I am moved when I rehearse with him because I realize I am in the presence of someone who makes his ideas take shape.

We are still in the middle of creating



the “Mystery” production and there are innumerable components to work with. I’m looking forward to linking them all up into a story that leads to a great climax.



Taiko rehearsal scenes



New lighting props are made. A mystical atmosphere is created with both visuals and sound

“Kodo One Earth Tour: Legend” Reflections on the Production to Date

In recent years, Kodo has not toured with the same programme and almost the exact same cast for longer than a year. By welcoming a new artistic director, of course there were many demands placed on the performers on stage, and they were also challenged in terms of how they should exist off stage. This “Legend” programme placed the weight of many “firsts” on the shoulders of all involved right from the start.

It has been a year where everyone kept running forward, looking straight ahead. The four newest members have moved up the ranks and continue to grow stronger. They are now seniors to the new junior members who joined the ensemble this year. We are reminded that Kodo’s ongoing work is like a living being, one that is always making progress.

Kodo performer and ensemble executive [Masaru Tsuji](#) has taken part in every performance of “Legend” to date. With leader [Tomohiro Mitome](#), he shared a massive responsibility for the ensemble on this ground-breaking tour. Through each performance, both Mitome and Tsuji felt and learned many things. When we hear them talk about it, our group can see that “Legend” has indeed become a legend for Kodo now that the long domestic tour has come to an end. And it will continue to evolve on its upcoming tour in Europe early next year.

Here is what Masaru Tsuji had to say about this production from the inside:

I think the birth of a legend occurs when a person or group finds their true path and gives everything to work towards a certain

goal. When people see this happening, even if they just get a glimpse of it, they begin to pay attention and quickly become fascinated. It is when the story of this phenomenon is passed down from one generation to the next that a legend is born.

I think your own true form is not like a hard rock that does not move, but rather it is soft, fluid, and always changing.

As time goes by, the scenery and state of things change, and of course humans are always changing over and over again. With change, each time something is constantly being born again. The first thing you need to do is to look at that change, to understand it, to experience the change accurately and for you yourself not to stay the same. So you feel the change with your own senses, act on it, and take it to a level where you express it yourself.

Kodo did not have a method in place for grasping or handling the items we were given to work with in “Legend”: tank tops, black pants, sneakers, accessories, sparkling costumes, and a large selection of new members.

Our artistic director made a number of intentional changes, and these changes caused a ripple effect throughout the group with each member responding in their own way. Through this tour, I strongly felt that this ability to adapt to change and create something new is the greatest power we have as people, and Kodo’s greatest strength is being able to do this together as a group, facing in the same direction.

If a hard stone is smashed, it ends up in pieces. Something soft and fluid can take on any shape and carry on through time.

Although we have all walked different paths to get to this point, the Kodo that exists in the here and now tells the tale of our collective legend.

Tickets for “Kodo One Earth Tour 2014: Legend” in Europe are on sale now. For details see page 7 and our website.

Masaru Tsuji





Amaterasu 2013

Thank you to everyone who joined us from near and far for our performances of “Amaterasu” in Tokyo, Fukuoka, and Kyoto with Tamasaburo Bando and Harei Aine. Here are some images of this season’s performance captured by photographer Takashi Okamoto.



Kodo eNews: Last Issue in December 2013

We regret to announce that Kodo eNews will end this year. The final issue will be Issue 46 - December 2013. Our research shows that people prefer to get news from us more often, so we will be putting more focus on our Facebook and blog pages. You will be able to read our eNews style articles online and we will send performance information to you by email each week rather than each month.

Thank you very much for reading our journal over the years. Please keep in touch with us in the years to come too!

Kodo Performance Information by Email: Coming Soon!

Would you like to receive the latest Kodo performance information by email?

To register your email address (computer/mobile phone), please send a blank email, with no subject or content, to kodoen@mbayn.jp. Please make sure that your device settings will allow emails from the domain "@kodo.or.jp." (Note: Subscription confirmation emails may be delayed until late November.)

This is a free service with no joining or subscription fees. We plan to launch this email service in February 2014. Please register now, and in the meantime, please keep in touch with us by checking our [Facebook page](#) and [website](#) for updates. Thank you!

Yoshikazu Fujimoto & Yoko Fujimoto Guest Appearance in Vancouver, Canada

On November 30, Yoshikazu Fujimoto and Yoko Fujimoto will take part in Chibi Taiko's 20th Anniversary Concert. They look forward to seeing everyone there for the celebrations!



20TH CHIBI TAIKO ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

SPECIAL GUESTS:
YOSHIKAZU FUJIMOTO & YOKO FUJIMOTO
OF KODO (JAPAN)
INOCHI TAIKO (SEATTLE)
Information & tickets:
tickets@chibitaiko.com
or chibitaiko.com

SAT NOV 30²⁰ 13
Vancouver Playhouse
7:30PM



Kodo Performance Schedule

2013 - 2014

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, Russia

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 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 (Tickets available from Club Tourism)

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

Kodo One Earth Tour 2014: Legend

~ EUROPE ~

JANUARY - MARCH 2014

Schedule is subject to change. For up-to-date schedules and box office 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
- February 17: Birmingham, UK
- February 19: Liverpool, UK
- February 20: Manchester, UK
- February 25: Gateshead, UK
- February 28: Brighton, UK
- 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
- March 31: Moscow, Russia



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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



Persimmons drying in the autumn sun.

Resources

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[Kodo on Facebook](#)

[Kodo Tour and Performance Schedules](#)

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Performances, Workshops, Bookings, and All General Inquiries
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