

PRESENTS



鼓鼓童
童
KODŌ

A World Stage Event

Wednesday, February 4, 2009 • 8 pm
Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center, UC Davis

There will be no intermission.

KODŌ
ONE EARTH TOUR 2009

PROGRAM

(Program subject to change)

Zoku (Leonard Eto, 1989)
Tobira (Tsubasa Hori, 2006)
Miyake (Traditional, arranged by Kodo)
Tamayura-no-Michi (Shogo Yoshii, 2008)
Monochrome (Maki Ishii, 1976)
Koi-koi Fusha (Mitsuru Ishizuka, 2008)
Jang-Gwara (Ryutaro Kaneko, 1992)
Sankan-shion (Eiichi Saito, 1992)
Kumo-no-Namiji (Shogo Yoshii, 2008)
O-daiko (Composed and arranged by Kodo)
Yatai-bayashi (Traditional, arranged by Kodo)

North American Management

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The artists and your fellow audience members appreciate silence during the performance. Please be sure that you have switched off cellular phones, watch alarms, and pager signals. Videotaping, photographing, and audio recording are strictly forbidden. Violators are subject to removal.

PROGRAM NOTES

Zoku

Zoku means tribe, family, or clan. In this case, the tribe is the group of people who have come together to play the drums. When you hear the rhythms, your body will start to move on its own, perhaps reflecting a primal stirring within the subconscious.

Tobira

I longed to see a world beyond this one, so I searched for the door or 'Tobira,' that would take me there. Until I open the door, I have no idea what awaits me on the other side. In this piece, each beat is filled with the spirit of the drummers as they imagine embarking into an unknown world.

Miyake

Miyake is one of the seven volcanic islands of Izu, south of Tokyo, and has a festival centered on this unique style of drumming. The drums are set very low to the ground, requiring a strenuous stance, and the men drum with relentless power, like ocean waves beating upon the island shore.

Tamayura-no-Michi

Tamayura refers to dew resting on blades of grass. Beautiful yet fragile, it seems to speak of life itself. *Tamayura-no-Michi* (dew road) speaks of our journey through life, shining softly like the fleeting morning dew.

Monochrome

Weaving constant rhythmic patterns together with highly irregular ones, *Monochrome* develops spirally to an exciting climax. The listener might interpret the sounds as those of the changing of the seasons, or perhaps even the progression of life itself. The ambitious pace greatly expands the range and power of expression of the roped *shime-daiko*.

Koi-koi Fusha

When this trio wanders into the spotlight, fun is bound to unfold.

Jang-Gwara

Small metal cymbals are found in the Near East, Middle East, and Asia, first coming to Japan in the early days of Buddhism as religious instruments. Today, they are known as *jangara*, *chappa*, and *tebira*, and are used for accompaniment at festivals. In this piece, players use various techniques to show the range of rhythms and sounds that can be produced by this ancient instrument.

Sankan-shion

Sankan-shion, meaning “three cold days, four warm days,” refers to a period towards the end of winter when this recurring pattern is said to occur. Through the long, severe winter, Sado is surrounded by heavy grey seas and threatening skies that make spring seem a long way off. So, at this time, although they can still hear the whistling winter winds, the people of Sado begin to pray that spring really is just around the corner. Embodying that hope, this piece is played on the powerful *miya-daiko*.

Kumo-no-Namiji

Kumo-no-Namiji literally means “sea route through the clouds,” referring to a chain of white clouds that resembles the wake of a boat. This song was modeled on *Kiyari Uta*, a work song for hauling large trees and rocks. It was sung not only to keep workers in time and to fire up team spirit, but also as a way of calling out to

the nature around them. Different versions of the song still exist in several parts of Japan. *Kumo-no-Namiji* expresses the Japanese people's deep-rooted sense of reverence towards nature, and a hope that the sound will linger in the sky like a path through the clouds.

O-daiko

This great drum, carved from a single tree, measures about four feet across and produces intense sounds that possess a deep tranquility. Lose yourself in the vibrations created when the power of the ancient drum and the pure drive of the drummer become one.

Yatai-bayashi

Every year on December 3 in Saitama Prefecture, an all-night festival is held featuring richly decorated two-story *yatai* (carts) pulled from village to village. The people hauling the *yatai* are urged on by the powerful beating of the *taiko*, concealed in the cramped first story of the carts. This gave rise to a technique of drumming while seated. Our version of the traditional *Yatai-bayashi* is played at a faster tempo, giving it a unique and fervent flavor.

PERFORMERS

Takeshi Arai
Kazuki Imagai
Kazunari Abe
Masaru Tsuji
Masami Miyazaki
Yuichiro Funabashi
Mitsuru Ishizuka
Yoshie Sunahata
Yosuke Oda
Masayuki Sakamoto
Natsuki Saito
Kenta Nakagome
Tokio Takahashi
Hiroko Shimauchi

STAFF

Artistic Director: Mitsuru Ishizuka
Lighting Designer: Katsuhiro Kumada
Company Manager: Jun Akimoto
Assistant Company Manager: Yoshiko Ando
Technical Director: Martin Lechner
Stage Manager: Tatsuya Dobashi
Assistant Stage Manager: Masafumi Kazama
Conditioning Trainer: Mitsunaga Matsuura

KODŌ

Thirty-eight years ago, a small group of young people in Japan yearned for a new way to live. Disappointed with the direction of modern Japanese society and eager to rediscover traditional roots and values, they left their busy urban cultures behind and traveled north to remote Sado Island, in the Sea of Japan.

They found a home in an abandoned schoolhouse by the sea and began to play the world's oldest instrument, the drum (*taiko*). Surrounded by Sado Island's rich performing arts traditions, they began to study other instruments as well—the *shamisen*, *koto*, and *shakuhachi*. They explored dance, song, and stagecraft along with the *taiko*'s limitless depth and range.

Years passed and the group's numbers grew. In time, Sado Island's unique culture, its four powerful seasons, and great natural beauty found expression in their art. There was not only a primal fierceness and determination to their work, but a playful, child-like curiosity as well. So they called themselves Kodo, which means "heartbeat" but also "children of the drum." They discovered that hearing the sounds of the great drum (*o-daiko*), carved from a single, massive tree trunk, babies fell fast asleep in their mothers' arms, lulled by the great heartbeat sound.

In ancient Japan, the *taiko* played a central role in most communities. In fact, it was said that the physical boundaries of a village could be defined by the farthest distance at which the *taiko* could be heard. When Kodo began touring the world nearly three decades ago, they discovered that the sound of the *taiko* had a similar effect. Wherever people heard the *taiko*, there was an instant sense of community, of one-ness. So the name One Earth Tour was born, and carried by the sound of the *taiko*, it has traveled the world with its message of shared humanity, environmental awareness, and peace ever since.

Kodo exploded onto the world stage at the Berlin Festival in 1981 and has delivered more than 3,100 performances in more than 45 countries. The group's many recordings are widely available.

KODŌ LIFE AND ACTIVITIES

Kodo Village: Kodo lives on Sado Island, Japan, in a village of its own design and construction. It includes living, practice, recording, and office spaces, farm land, and carefully tended forests.

Kodo Cultural Foundation: The KCF was founded to support the cultural and environmental preservation of Sado Island.

Kodo Apprentice Centre: Kodo's Apprentice Centre offers intensive training in diverse traditional performing arts and related disciplines.

Sado Island Taiko Centre: Kodo helped design and construct the beautiful new Sado Island Taiko Centre. High on a hill overlooking the sea, Taiko Centre staff conduct year-round workshops and seminars for visitors of all ages.

Earth Furniture: To show how a local resource could be sustainably managed, Kodo designs and manufactures interior furnishings from native, renewable timber. Cured by the sea, built by hand, and designed by Kodo Board member and renowned designer Makoto Shimazaki, it is sold under the name Earth Furniture.

Earth Celebration: Every August, artists and fans from around the world travel to Sado Island to attend three days of original music and cultural events during the highly acclaimed Earth Celebration music festival, currently in its 22nd year.

KASA: Based in Los Angeles, Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit established with a mission to support the vibrant *taiko* community and culture in North America. Visit KASA's website for more details: www.kodo.or.jp/kasa

For more about Kodo, visit www.kodo.or.jp

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Located off Japan's north coast in Niigata Prefecture, Sado is the country's largest isolated island. Centuries before Kodo made it their home in the early seventies, Sado was famous for its strong cultural traditions and exotic natural beauty. Its long history as a hub of maritime trading and as place of exile for nobles, artists and intellectuals, created a unique culture of creativity that also includes cuisine, sake brewing and indigenous crafts.

Sometimes referred to as the Isle of Performing Arts, Sado has more Noh theaters, per capita, than anywhere else in Japan. And local festivals with music, dance, song, and taiko, are a central part of life year round.

Accessible by train and ferry, Sado is a veritable microcosm of Japan. There is a new English language website about Sado: www.visitsado.com



Joining Friends of Kodo is the best way to keep in touch with all things Kodo. Among other benefits, you'll receive the *Kodo Beat* quarterly newsletter, advance notice of concert dates, priority participation in Kodo special projects, offers on new Kodo merchandise, and more.

Visit Kodo's website for details:
www.kodo.or.jp