

The definitive source of information on Taiko events in the U.K. from Mugenkyo, Europe's foremost Taiko drum group

TAIKO TAIKO

Summer Issue 1999

Issue No.10

www.mugenkyo-taiko.co.uk

In March we welcomed back Kurumaya-Sensei from his three month home leave in Japan, then after only a few days of intensive rehearsals for our new set, we whisked him off on our three-week March tour. The first date of the year was a very special one - in Livingston - where the people we'd been teaching at the Howden Park Centre performed a guest spot with us. After an intensive six-week course, it all just came together at the last rehearsal. Well done to all who took part

& wow! what a magical night! Then we headed south: sold out shows in Ludlow, Cardigan and Halifax, a return visit to Hemel Hempstead for two nights, and first ever visits to Solihull, Derby, Banbury and Chichester, plus a load of educational concerts at schools in between. In Halifax, local artist Howard Ramsay made a grandiose backdrop specially for the occasion, which coincided with his excellent exhibition of art, hung on the bare stone walls of the atmospheric Square Chapel - a

very special occasion. We'll be back for two nights there in November to accommodate the overwhelming demand for tickets, hopefully with a second showing of the lovely backdrop. April is quieter in terms of gigs, but we're busy getting prepared for the exciting year ahead, packed with dates from north to south, including a visit to Germany, and of course our three-week run at the Edinburgh Fringe... more Mugenkyo news in the next issue out in September.



Mugenkyo Edinburgh Festival

This summer Mugenkyo will be performing at the Edinburgh Festival under the umbrella of the Japan Experience. The Japan Experience promises to present a wealth of Japanese performing arts, with top-class musicians, artists and dancers from Japan, including the seductive and sensational Shakti (who we will be performing joint concerts with at the Highland Festival in May - see dates on back cover). With a grueling schedule of 23 days (!) in a row of a daily one-hour concert and one-hour workshop, we plan to take the Edinburgh Fringe by storm. Be there if you can!

8th - 30th August Garage Theatre, Grindlay Court Centre, Grindlay St., Edinburgh

TAIKO WORKSHOP

with Mugenkyo

1 pm The Garage Citrus Club -
£6 (£4)

An insight into the fascinating and rarely accessible world of Japanese Taiko drumming. What are these magnificent drums made of? How were they used in ancient Japan? Learn a traditional Taiko rhythm and more... only at the Edinburgh Festival.

Theatre Box Office
0131 221 9009

Fringe B/Office
0131 226 5138
(9am - 9pm)


TheatreWeb Page -
www.hk.airnet.ne.jp/art/
(to be updated soon... please be patient!)

Mugenkyo Web Page -
www.mugenkyo-taiko.co.uk

MUGENKYO CONCERT

4:15 pm Garage Theatre 1 -
£8 (£7 & £6)

Featuring an array of drums imported specially for the festival, and with new compositions, it promises to be a powerful fusion of hypnotic rhythms, dynamic movement and raw energy.

 JAPAN EXPERIENCE

A Summer of Taiko

"Taiko to Tabla" with Joji Hirota and Peter Lockett
A world of percussion from our friends Joji and Peter.
"Just taking onboard these guys' credits is difficult enough. Indian percussion specialist Peter Lockett has graced recordings by Bjork, Kula Shaker and Bill Bruford, while Japanese drumming guru Joji Hirota has worked with the likes of Jah

Wobble and Bill Evans. But there's no jazz or pop here. Taiko To Tabla is a workout of inspired multicultural pieces by two maestros... Both sonically and in terms of musicianship, it is difficult to cite individuals who are this able. Put these two together, and there simply is nothing to touch them." - Nick Serre (The Mix Magazine) Catch them this summer.

Taiko to Tabla



- May**
- 7 Late : The Rocket, London
0789 966 7034
 - 9 7.30/8.00pm : Midland Arts Centre, Birmingham 0121 440 4221
 - 13 7.30pm : Corn Exchange, Newbury 01635 582 666
 - 29 Afternoon : Window on the World Festival, North Shields 0191 200 5415
 - 30 7.30pm : Spilsby Arts Centre 01790 752 936

- June**
- 12 8.00pm : Chequer Mead Arts Centre, East Grinstead 01342 302 000

- July**
- 17 Afternoon : Grantham International Festival 01476 406 155
 - 18 7.30pm : The Hawth, Crawley * 01293 552 941
 - 20 7.30pm : Rhythm Sticks Festival (QEH), South Bank Centre* 0171 960 4242
 - 22 The Platform, Morecombe, Lancs * 01524 582 803

* shows with Kobayakawa Suigun Taiko

And in July it's the *Kobayakawa Suigun Daiko* from Hiroshima, Japan, on their very first trip outside of Japan. We've tried to find out more about this group, but no-one we know in Japan have seen them or heard them! No doubt they'll impress with their large group and even larger drums. I'm sure Taiko enthusiasts will want to see the vast diversity of Taiko that there is on offer from Japan (4,600 groups at last count!). They will be performing joint concerts with Joji Hirota and Peter Lockett (*), as well as their own festival dates.

Kobayakawa Suigun Taiko Tour Dates in July

- 17 Lunchtime : The Wirral (location tbc)
Evening : Bradford Festival free open-air event in town centre
- 18 7.30pm : The Hawth, Crawley, West Sussex *
- 20 7.45pm : Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, London *
- 22 7.45pm : The Platform, Central Promenade, Morecombe *
- 23 Afternoon : West Wiltshire Show, Trowbridge, Wiltshire
Evening : WOMAD, Richfield Avenue, Reading



Shane's Japa

The performance I witnessed in Osaka left a strong impression with me and would do for some time to come. The variety of power energy focus and humour transfixed the 6,000 strong audience for the entire three hour show.

Eisa Taiko with their incredible array of what would be best described as circus

"I was on the Taiko Express with an Odaiko player at the wheel"

taiko, which included around 25 (acrobatic) members leapfrogging one-another, whilst tossing small hand-held taiko high in the air; somersaults, backflips and not once did they miss a beat or drop a stick. This

was all done with constant, sporadic whistling from 3 or 4 members. It was real festival stuff, which I'm sure would work just as well as a street performance too.

Zampa Ufujishi were equally enjoyable. Their strengths although extremely visual, lay mainly in the complex rhythms and movements, with the two sisters beating out solos in unison whilst the accompaniment from the 8 or so others played

Brother Drum a Taiko-Folk music fusion

A show that weaves together the power and beauty of Taiko with melodies and songs from both Japanese and Anglo-Celtic roots. "It is heavily percussive, gloriously tuneful, and full of passion and innovation..." at least that's what our old friends, Mark Alcock, James Barrow, Claire Spencer and the lovely Liz Walters, told us! (Longstanding readers may remember these names as all of them have at one time or another performed with Mugenkyo in the past) Joined onstage by Jonathan Kirby, who trained with San Jose Taiko in USA, Yoshio Shimasaki, of Akatsuki Taiko from the Gyosei College in Reading, and by Marco Leinhard, a master Shakuhachi player formerly with Ondekoza from Japan. Other musicians include Maclaine Colston on hammered dulcimer, and George Whitfield on accordion. "Brother Drum" will be performed on only four UK dates this year. An innovative venture into the realms of Taiko Fusion, Brother Drum will entice with the future possibilities of the art form...

brother drum dates

- June**
- 9 Town Hall, High Wycombe 01494 512 000
 - 11 Guildhall Arts Centre, Gloucester 01452 505 089
 - 16 The Phoenix, Exeter 01392 667 080
 - 17 New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth 01705 649 000

1 adventure part 2

intricate cross rhythms creating sophisticated and dynamic pieces. By now I was on the Taiko Express" with an odaiko player at the wheel, and there was no getting off.

Next stop *Eitetsu Hayashi* known as the undisputed odaiko champion. He played constantly for almost 1 hour initially with Kinosita Sinichi,

Japan's top shamisen (3 stringed traditional instrument) player, and were joined after 20 minutes with 8 other Odaiko players. Even with the size of this venue they still managed to look crammed on stage. Immense stamina and ki energy left everyone shaking inside and out.

And so to the grande finale with all forty or so performers plus Zampa's 3 lion dancers on stage.

Gig number one - nine out of ten.

This experience had inevitably left me eager to rehearse with Kurumaya Sensei. Thankfully I didn't have too long to wait.

The day after the festival I was

awakened by the sound of taiko, as I slid open my bamboo panelled and rice papered bedroom doors. KS had selected a stack of taiko videos for me to consume over breakfast. What better way to start the day than with taiko videos..... Scots porridge, miso soup, a bowl of rice and some fried squid.....! Well I got used to it anyway.



Most of the viewings were of KS's own group *Hibiki Daiko* (*Mugenkyo's favourite*). It was great to see Fukui style taiko being played at its best.

Kurumaya is known throughout Japan for his innovative performances, paying particular attention to details such as light and visuals as well as using different instruments like trumpets, keyboards, synthesisers etc.

Watching his fantastic performances coupled with the regular interruptions of his students, radio and newspapers telephoning and faxing made me realise how special my host, teacher and friend really is, and how honoured I should be to learn from him.



Together with Hibiki Daiko and Japan's biggest Uchiwa (fan drum).

It was time to rehearse. *Hibiki Daiko* have to be the most "street" of all the taiko teams I've watched. Although they rehearse religiously for their theatre shows, creating highly choreographed movements, they have an incredible relaxed manner and intuitive relationship with one-another that can only come from playing together for so long. Sixteen years to be precise.

To rehearse with this great group with the beautiful Hokuriku mountain range as a backdrop had to be one of the highlights of the trip. They were full of compliments of my playing and hoped one day I'll return to perform with them.

The conclusive part in the next issue of Taiko Taiko see's Shane on tour with Hibiki Daiko, Meeting some intrigued media types and tales of Sake fuelled, midnight Karaoke bars.

Yamatour

The dynamic and exciting YAMATO are currently on tour in Europe. The group made a huge impact at last year's Edinburgh festival and are sure to attract full houses on their return to Britain. Sadly their only U.K. dates are in London.



Book early!

17th - 23rd May
Peacock Theatre,
Sadler's Wells,
London
0171 314 8800

Taiko Workshops in Reading

Sat 29th & Sun 30th May,
10:30 am - 5:30 pm - £25 per day

At Stoneham Court, Reading
Two separate hands-on workshops,
one for beginners and one for experienced drummers.

Call James Barrow 0118 946 3317
for more details and to book a place.

Name: _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Items Ordered

Mugenkyo CD	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mugenkyo Cassette	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mugenkyo T-Shirt	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kodo Book	£23.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

Total Enclosed

All prices include VAT. Packaging and postage within the U.K. (please allow 21 days for delivery) please send cheques or postal orders payable to MUGENKYO P.O Box 5124, Glasgow G76 9YA

MUGENKYO

mugenkyo summer dates

MAY 1999

- 7 Wasserturm, Dusseldorf, GERMANY, 8pm 02150 3697
- 14 Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-on-Trent, 8 pm, 01283 516 030
- 15 Oxford Festival of Contemporary Music St. Barnabas Church, Jericho, Oxford, 8 pm, 01865 798 600
- 22 Megawatt Festival, Battery Park, Greenock, (free festival-afternoon)

Highland Festival

(festival box office: 01463 711 112)

- 24 Strathy Village Hall, 7:30 pm
- 25 Ullapool Village Hall, 8:00 pm
- 26 Avoch Community Centre, 8:00 pm
- 27 Invergordon Arts Centre, 7:30 pm, 01349 868 486
- 28 Ospray Suite, Aviemore, 9 pm (with Shakti)

- 29 Inverness Station Hotel, 7:30 pm (with Shakti)
- 31 Kyle Hall, Plockton, 8:00 pm
- 1st June Broadford Village Hall, Isle of Skye, 7:30 pm

JUNE 1999

- 5 The Welfare, Swansea, 01639 843 163
- 10 Barnet Arts Festival Barnet Big Top, Barnet Copthall Centre, Great North Way, Hendon, London, 7:45 pm, 0181 440 1647
- 11 Rotherham Arts Centre, 01709 823 621
- 12 Gate Arts Centre, Goole, 01405 763 652
- 19 Pontins Holiday Camp, Norfolk, 8 pm TBC
- 26 George Square, Glasgow (free festival-afternoon) TBC

JULY 1999

- 2 Haverhill Town Hall, Suffolk, 7:30pm, 01440 714 140
- 4 Broxbourne Civic Hall, Hoddeston, Herts, 01992 441 946
- 14 Kilchoan Community Centre, Argyll, Highlands, 01972 510 711
- 15 Glenuig Hall, Inverness-shire, Highlands, 01687 470 214
- 16 Marco's Leisure Centre, Fort William, 8 pm, 01397 702 102
- 22 The Courtyard Theatre, Hereford, 7:30pm, 01432 359 252
- 23 West Wilts Show, Town Park, Trowbridge, Wiltshire 01225 770 387 (free festival-afternoon) TBC
- 24 Hall for Cornwall, Truro, Cornwall, 8pm, 01872 262 466
- 30th - 1st Aug Waterford Spraoi Festival, EIRE 051 841 808

TAIKO

MUGENKYO CD

£12/cassette £8 (includes p&p)

Running time: 48 mins
"brilliant rhythmic precision"
"... the energy and power of Taiko thundering into your home"

New Design

T-SHIRT £12 (includes p&p)
Available in grey or gold with black print
MED & XL
LARGE
MUGENKYO
LOGO ON BACK



KODO BOOK

We are pleased to be able to offer "Children of the Drum" (softback) £19.85 + £4.10 p&p = £23.95 by Mark Coutts-Smith, published by Lightworks Press
A must for all serious Taiko fans!



A big



To those of you who sent in donations towards the cost of this newsletter!

thank you

Hiromi Hasegawa, Livingstone Class, Patricia Thompson, Jane Laird, Liz Monder, A. Hunter, Carla Cornelli, Peter Crotty, Jason Ozin, Mr G Clarke, C J Bowes, G K Lever, Mrs S Thompson, Roger & Christine King, Mr & Mrs Atwood, Ken Bentley, Mr S Lane, David & Rowan Douglas-Mort, Mr B R Greaves, Jean Childs, Linzi McDonald, G A & Mrs Boote, Keith Norton, Sheena Penson, Margaret Dolan, George & Yoko Mathers, I Sturrock, Shirley Spratley, Mr S Phillips, M Finon, Lynne Matthews, Gail Forest, Eddie Laurence, Linda Hendy, Heidi Potter, Jenny Pennell, Mrs B Hoare, Bryan Cunningham, Chris Galer, Rana Partridge, Margaret Maddison, Jacqueline Grant and Caryne Pearce.

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Or alternatively, buy our merchandise!