

taiko taiko

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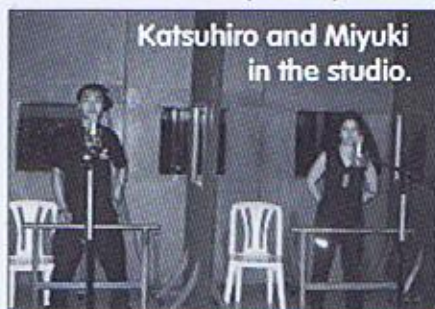
A "Bolly-good, Bollywood" Bombay Bash !!

It had been a year since we were first approached about filming in Bombay, but only at the very last minute did the possibility become reality. We were to appear in the Bollywood film *Awara Paagal Deewana* (Crazy About You). As far as we know, its the very first time Taiko drumming has been used in an Indian film! Despite being a major commercial film, the budget unfortunately didnt stretch as far as getting the whole group out, so just Katsuhiko & I went with no equipment: we were to mime to our CD on imitation drums, joined by a handful of oriental looking extras. After the flight details changed 4 or 5 times and still ignorant of our return flight, we boarded a flight from Glasgow with just 12 hours notice.



The new Mugenkyo tour bus?

What seemed like complete haphazard-ness and disorganisation, we came to realise, was normal in the crazy world of Bollywood.



Katsuhiko and Miyuki
in the studio.

After a short sleep in our Bombay hotel, we were met by our minder and taken to the office, a mansion in the Juhu Beach suburbs, complete with iron gate and security guard, a Mercedes and Porsche in the driveway, and lots of underlings scurrying about. We were summoned into the producers vast office, lets call him F. F showed us the *Rising Sun* video and its clip of Taiko drumming. "This is what I want!" We were then shown the drums being made, which had only just been started on. How on earth were they going to finish the drums and costumes by tomorrow?! We were then driven to the studio by the uniformed chauffeur in the air-conditioned white Mercedes, dodging wandering cows, goats loose in the street and beeping traffic. We looked at the other world through darkened windows, passing rows of cardboard shacks, children half clothed and barefoot, people and dogs scavenging through piles of rubbish. The contrast between the worlds was heart-wrenching. We arrived at the modern high-tech recording studio, also owned by F. Here we edited one of our tracks down to one and a half minutes, then overdubbed "kakegoe" shouting.

We were then taken to the editing suite upstairs. Our scene was actually the last scene to be filmed, and most of the film had already been edited, nearly ready for the release date 2 months from now. They proudly showed us the musical clips. It's set to be a typical Bollywood film, an all singing all dancing extravaganza, where in the middle of the action, the actors would suddenly burst into song, the camera would pan out to reveal 100's of dancers who weren't there a minute ago, and sing and dance a huge musical number. F and his many staff were very keen to look after us and entertain us, but we made our excuses and left, as it was to be the only time we would have off in Bombay (or so we thought). We spent a couple of hours wandering around the markets of Bandra near the hotel.



There they go again!



The drummers!

The following morning at 8:30 we went down to the hotel lobby and waited. And waited. Outside, in front of the hotel opposite where the shooting was to take place, there were 100's of people gathering, trucks with equipment, a flurry of activity. Our minder finally took us across the road. There we waited and waited, along with the hundred odd extras, just milling about with no-one around to organise the proceedings. However by now I had started to understand the dynamics of the situation, and guessed that we'd better get changed and ready, because when things happened here, they happen fast. Sure enough, as soon as we'd changed we were expected to be on set. We met the other drummers, international students from Bhutan, Myanmar, and tribal peoples from the north of India who'd volunteered to be extras for the first time. We were shocked to find out that not only did they not have a clue that they would be drumming that day, they had only been called up the night before! We were then faced with the challenge of coaching them to look like Taiko drummers, with the only rehearsal time being in between takes!

(cont. pg 3).

MUGENKYO

Established in 1994, Mugenkyo is Europe's first professional Taiko drum group. We perform over 120 concerts a year at theatres, arts centres, festivals and schools. Mugenkyo's goal is to develop Taiko as a European art form, both through our performances and our educational programme.

"Taiko Taiko" is Mugenkyo's quarterly newsletter. Its aim is to spread information about the art form of Taiko and publicise Taiko events in the UK.

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Thank you to those of you who sent in donations towards the cost of this news-letter:

Evelyn Brookes, Jeff Hogg, Jocelyne Pineau, Mr. M. Wippell, Mrs. M. Finon, Sue Hines, Christine & Derek Brice, Alex Weeks, Scott Collins, Liz Reid, Linda Hendry

Please remember, it costs money to put out a newsletter. Please help us to continue by sending donations - a book of stamps, postal orders or cheques (made payable to Mugenkyo), all gratefully accepted.

In search of the perfect rock in Snowdonia.



We then set off for Wales, with dates in St. Asaph, Harlech and Builth Wells - all the concerts and school workshops were sell-outs. We had the great fortune of having a day off in between, and accomplished a group hike in Snowdonia, up a mountain, round a lake, getting completely soaked in the process.

So with colds and sniffles all round, we concluded our March tour with a return visit to Glastonbury Town Hall, another sold out concert and the most vociferous crowd ever for the concluding festival piece, Matsuri. The hall literally shook with the stamping of feet, dancing around and shouting. Fantastic!

At the moment we're back at base, working hard on the Dojo, getting it ready bit by bit for our first workshops we plan to hold in late November (full details on how to participate in our September issue). We're looking forward to an exciting summer ahead, including five days in Germany, a festival in Holland, and lots of theatres and festivals in the UK.

Not a Baaaaad year so far...



Spring is here, and the year is flying by yet again thanks to our busy and exciting schedule. In February we taught a beginners Taiko course at the Howden Park, Livingston, repeated again in April. The workshops were lots of fun, with a mixture of participants - adults and youths. At the end of the sessions they were able to play a fun and energetic Taiko piece which looked absolutely great!

The Livingston Posse



at the Glasgow Hina Matsuri



Our 2002 touring started in Cambridgeshire, with some smaller concerts at village halls. In Sawston we actually had to hoist the Odaiko (big drum) through a window, as it wouldn't fit through the doors! On 3rd March, the traditional celebration of girls in Japan called Hina Matsuri, there was a veritable feast of Taiko at the Glasgow Botanic Gardens with Mugenkyo, the wonderful Psycho Taiko from Clevedon Secondary School, and a whole host of groups formed specially for this event, taught by Val Forsyth at Clevedon School. Thanks to Mugenkyo classes in the area over the last 4 years, a local source of Scottish-made Taiko drums a la Dave Samuels, and the enthusiasm of people we've taught (especially Val!) there has been an explosion of groups in the central Scotland area, with many newly-formed Taiko groups.

Fame at last!



After Glasgow we ventured south once again. The Fuji Television network filmed a special feature on Katsuhiko, to be broadcast in Japan, filming interviews & the concert itself at Salisbury City Hall.

The next week it was Teresa's turn to be the star of the show, with a first-time concert on her home-island of Arran. The venue was completely packed out. Despite being nervous about performing in front of scores of

A Window of opportunity opened up to us!!!



...and the people flocked to see the show.



"Hey, who's that guy?"

Adam

At the beginning of the year we welcomed new trainee with the group, Adam Walker. Adam had played kit drums in bands for 8 years before



being wow-ed by seeing Taiko for the first time in Edinburgh. After a lengthy audition process last year, Adam started with the group in February, replacing paradiddles with doudokess, and thin drumsticks with huge batchi!



With the aid of their brilliant new costumes, made by the brilliant Hayley, the members of Mugenkyo pledge allegiance to the Taiko cause, and vow to: "Never give up, and never surrender".

Joji Hirota Taiko Group

The highly acclaimed percussionist Joji Hirota and his Taiko group will be playing the following dates around Britain.

Go on, you know it will be good!!

May

- 8 Lincolnshire, Bishop Grosseteste college
- 9 Folkingham Village Hall
- 10 Tealby Tennyson & Eyocourt Memorial Hall
- 11 Spilsby, Spilsby Theatre
- 16 Horncastle, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School
- 17 West Bridgford, All Hallows Hall
- 18 Dean Hole Community Centre, Notts
- 19 Upper Broughton Village Hall, Notts

June

- 3 Newbury, Donington Society
- 6 Warwick, Warwick Arts Centre (Taiko to Tabla performance)

Bombay cont.

The hierarchy was evident on the shoot, with no-one being permitted to approach their superiors, least of all F. At lunchtime we were separated by where, what and how we ate. We were still in the dark about our return flight. Our persistent insistence on knowing times and schedules must have been a thorn in their side. Every question I had had the same reply "Don't worry, we'll take care of it". Even though we were most honoured guests, we didn't have the right to know what was going on!

Most of the day was spent filming the action in the foreground. The lead guy (a star swooned over by millions of Indian girls) is at an international reception in a hotel, where there just happens to be a Taiko group playing. He pulls a gun and shoots the big guy, then there's a fight scene with the security guards, all to the soundtrack of Taiko. It was only at 10 that night that they started filming the close-ups of the drumming. Although we'd all been at it for over 11 hours, the hard-working director and cameramen started getting excited about the shots they were getting, climbing up the flimsy fake Odaiko to film from above, shooting take after take. The shots are to be used not only in the film itself, but also in the advertising trailer.

Midnight came and went and we started to get anxious about our flight, which we now knew to be at 2:15 am. Don't worry said F You'll make your flight. Well in this world F's word is law. At 1:15 am we finally finished filming, we got changed quickly and were escorted at high speed by taxi to the airport, but were too late. Even F's power has its limitations! So we were taken back to the hotel, and we finally collapsed into bed at 4am. The next day although completely exhausted and aching, we took the opportunity to sightsee, and had another eventful day, this time making it to the airport in plenty of time. The in-flight meal on the way home was our 12th curry in a row, having eaten nothing else for breakfast lunch or dinner in three and a half days! We returned exhausted but grateful for our wonderful experience, a glimpse inside the crazy world of Bollywood.....by Miyuki.



This year, Mugenkyo are taking a year off from our usual slot at the Garage Theatre at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August. But festival-goers are in for a real treat as Amanojaku, one of the top professional groups in Japan, will be there instead. They hail from Asakusa, the downtown area of traditional Tokyo. The leader Watanabe-san originally played with the famous Oedo Sukeroku. The two other main players in the group, Mayumi and Hiromi are among the top female Taiko players and they are regularly joined by another player and a flautist. As they have toured extensively in Brazil and other Latin American countries, their rhythms and performance certainly display the influence of Latin beats and exuberance. Their rhythms are intricately layered, their timing is immaculate and their style is powerful. They absolutely must be seen!

Garage Theatre August 4th-26th 11.00-11.45 & 18.30-19.30

ORDER FORM

See overleaf for goods.

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All prices include VAT, packaging and postage within the UK (please allow 21 days delivery) Please make cheques or postal orders payable to... MUGENKYO
MUGENKYO
 P.O. BOX 5124
 Lanark
 ML11 0WA

MUGENKYO tour dates

May

2-3	Germany, Braunschweig Classix Festival	0049 5312 388 913
8	Norwich, Maddermarket Theatre	01603 620 917
9	Surrey, Epsom Playhouse	01372 742 555
10	Bexhill, De La Warr Pavilion	01424 787 949
11	Hertford, Castle Hall	01992 589 026
12	Brighton, Sallis Benney Theatre	01273 709 709
13	Cardigan, Theatre Mwdan	01239 621 200
17	Scunthorpe, The Baths Hall	01724 277 744
18	Beverley, The Picture Playhouse	01482 868 033
19	Hull, Truck Theatre	01482 323 638
21	Perth Theatre	01738 472 706
22	Cheltenham, Bacon Theatre	01242 258 002
23	Wakefield, Theatre Royal	01924 211 311
24	Haverhill Arts Centre	01440 714 140

June

2	East Riding, World Music Festival	01482 868 033
3	Blackpool, Parklife Festival	01253 478 104
4	Loughborough, Streets Alive Festival. (Free, daytime event)	
7	Harrogate Theatre	01423 502 116
13	Great Yarmouth, St. George's Theatre	01493 858 387
14	Tunbridge Wells, Trinity Theatre	01892 678 678
15	Richmond, Georgian Theatre Royal	01748 823 021
21	Doetinchem, Netherlands Buitengewoon Festival (evening)	
23	Putney Lower Common, Wandsworth Show	02088 716 363

July

5	Falmouth, Princes Pavilion Theatre	01326 211 222
9	Rhyl, Pavilion Theatre	01745 330 000
10-12	Bath, Theatre Royal, Ustinov Studio	01225 448 844
18	Tamworth, Assembly Rooms	01827 709 618

August

2	Newbridge, Co. Kildare, Eire, Riverbank Arts Centre	00353 45 448 333
23	Ludlow, Assembly Rooms	01584 878 141

September

6	Ripon International Festival, Ripon College	01765 605 508
20	Hexham Abbey	01434 652 477

For any additional dates, go to www.mugenkyo.com



Japan 2001.

Mugenkyo would like to say a very special thank you to **Japan 2001** for their generous subsidy to purchase Taiko drums for the launch of the Taiko Dojo. Congratulations also to the Glasgow Taiko Trust, Greenwich Mean Time Taiko (Mark Alcock) and Taiko Wales (James Barrow) for their successful applications for funding for Taiko drums. With so many more Taiko drums soon to be available in the country, there should be a huge surge of Taiko activity in the next few years. The future of the UK Taiko scene is bright!

Skinnny-fit T-shirt. One size, red w-black trim. £10

Front



Back



Medium/x-large t-shirt. Black w/white print, or black w/orange print. £10

Front



Back



CD - £12
Tape - £8

CHILDREN OF DRUM



"Children of the Drum" by Mark Coutts-Smith. A large format book of beautiful photographs and text, this is the first major publication about the Kodo Drummers in English. £23.95