

TAIKO TAIKO

ISSUE 31

NEW YEAR 2006



Welcome to the New Year edition of "Taiko Taiko". Just to keep you up to date with what's been happening...

Our autumn season kicked off with a major television appearance on the BBC Proms in September. With an expanded line-up of seven, we performed a 20-minute set at the BBC Proms at Glasgow Green, televised live on BBC2 as part of the BBC Proms 2005: the Last Night of the Proms. As part of the set we performed two pieces on our own, and one joint piece with Scottish bagpipe player, Stuart Cassells, who was awarded the BBC Young Traditional Musician of the Year. Some of the footage, including an interview, rehearsals and vistas of the Dojo, was broadcast on BBC2 north of the border on Christmas Eve.

Later in September, we were very honoured to welcome the delightful Hanayui, sister group of the world-renowned Kodo Drummers, for a 12-date tour of the UK (see report inside). No sooner were we back from the Hanayui tour than we set off on our main five-week autumn tour, travelling the length and breadth of the country. With Adam taking a break from touring due to family circumstances, we had on board a fresh new face: Lucy Searle, member of the Taiko Academy who has been training at the Dojo since October 2003. The tour was extremely successful, returning to many of our favourite venues. Every night, the show ended with a girl-power rendition of the traditional piece: Chichibu Yatai Bayashi.

Now we've geared up for the winter season, when we concentrate on teaching work & behind-the-scenes preparations for the coming year. We've had such an eventful and exciting year, starting from performances in Japan, to the Grand Opening of the Dojo, to concerts with Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei, to an exciting collaboration with Hanayui.... We will be making the most of the quiet time over the winter months to recharge our batteries and get prepared for the year ahead. We have many events and projects to look forward to in the first part of 2006. Our teaching projects all come to a conclusion with the Big Bang – Dojo Showcase Concerts in March. We have the renowned Katsuji Kondo arriving in April to perform as a special guest at Mugenkyo concerts in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and teach guest teacher workshops at the Dojo. And in May we embark upon the next major UK tour for the Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers. It's yet another busy and eventful year ahead for the hardest-working taiko team in the western hemisphere!

NEW WEBSITES !

www.mugenkyo.com

www.taikodojo.com

Both websites have had a major overhaul, with much more in-depth information about our organisation. Over the next few months we will be adding further to the websites, so please keep checking them!

For Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers, the professional touring group, the website is: www.mugenkyo.com

On the Mugenkyo site, there is a new multi-media section with video clips of the show and a photo gallery – this will only work with broadband. Also newly added is the recent news section, with photos & news on the events & occurrences of the last year.

YET TO BE ADDED: the full history of the group, back issues of the newsletter, and more videos!

For the Mugen Taiko Dojo, our educational organisation, the website is: www.taikodojo.com

The Dojo site explains more about our educational outreach work, the workshops at the Dojo, and the groups and performances linked with the Dojo, in particular the newly formed "Dojo Drummers" (more about them in the next issue), our "Taiko Academy", and also our traditional taiko performance "The Way of the Drum". **YET TO BE ADDED:** a resource section, which will feature information on taiko, news, links to other sites, etc. We're working on this at the moment, & it will be up in the next few months.

Hope you like the new sites!
We'd also appreciate any comments or feedback you may have...



TAIKO TAIKO

The quarterly newsletter of the Mugen Taiko Dojo, and Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers, with information on forthcoming tours, news, teaching activities, projects, and concerts around the UK.



The Mugen Taiko Dojo is the first purpose-built Taiko training centre in the UK, located in rural Scotland. At the Dojo, we introduce the art form of Taiko through residential workshops and regular classes. The Dojo's extensive outreach programme brings Taiko to schools and communities throughout the UK. www.taikodojo.com

MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS

Established in 1994, Mugenkyo is Europe's first professional Taiko drum group, based at the Mugen Taiko Dojo, performing at theatres, concert halls and festivals. Mugenkyo's aim is to develop Taiko as a European art form, through performances and collaborations.

www.mugenkyo.com

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Thank you to those of you who sent in donations towards the cost of this newsletter:

Paul McAvinchey, Pat & Ken Haywood, Celia Bradley, Jane Hill and the Wells City Band, J. Thornton, Mr. K. Sims, Paul Hopkinson.

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

JOINT CONCERT TOUR WITH HANAYUI

Hanayui first came to Scotland in March 2004, performing as special guests at our concert at the Queen's Hall in Edinburgh. Following the success of this concert, Hanayui were keen to return to the UK, and we were also keen to have the opportunity to work with them again. We felt that the combination of Mugenkyo's energy and Hanayui's grace worked well together, and we were very excited about the prospect of this collaboration.

After Hanayui's arrival we had just one day of planning the show, and only three rehearsal days before we set off on the road. With such little rehearsal time, we were expecting for the two groups to perform many of their own pieces separately. However, as we started rehearsing in the Dojo, we found that we really sparked together, and ended up collaborating on nearly every single piece of the two hour show! Every night our rehearsals ended at midnight, as we all enthusiastically challenged the creation of a brand new show. It was also fantastic to work together with so many different elements - song, dance and taiko drumming: Teresa and Adam sang "Banks and Braes", a Scottish folksong, to which Mitsue danced, Masaru joined in with several



Mugenkyo taiko pieces, Miyuki danced alongside Chieko and Masaru's Kagura, Mitsue danced to our piece "Tomoe", and Neil had the great honour and pleasure to perform Hanahachijo with Chieko. These were some highlights, but for us, every moment was as memorable as the next.

The tour itself was a great success. We performed at 12 venues all across the length and breadth of the UK, from St. Andrew's to London. The venues ranged in size from 200 to 2000. Most of the venues were full,



with packed and enthusiastic audiences. In Taunton and Nottingham we received complete standing ovations. In London the three dates at the Sadler's Wells Lillian Baylis were completely sold out, with people queuing up for returns at the box office. We received many emails and letters from audience members saying how much they liked the show.

Many commented that the show was extremely varied, with so much texture and beautiful quiet moments as well as powerful drumming. Many people also said that rather than looking like two separate groups, we appeared completely as one, which we were very happy to hear.

The day after returning from tour, Hanayui conducted a day-long workshop at the Taiko Dojo. The workshop was sold out long beforehand, with participants learning a lot about Japanese folk traditions, including dance, song, movement & taiko.

Overall, it was a wonderful opportunity for us to be able to work with such talented performers and really great people, and we were also able to learn so much from the experience.

Chieko, Mitsue and Masaru all contributed to having a positive influence on Mugenkyo. But most of all, we've strengthened our friendship with Hanayui, and we look forward to our next adventure together!

Hanayui: Chieko Kojima, Mitsue Kinjo, Masaru Tsuji.

Hanayui show photos:
Dave Heathcock



UPCOMING WEEKEND WORKSHOPS AT THE DOJO

The introductory workshop is open to adults of all ages, from age 16 and up. It is suitable for complete beginners, taking the participants step by step from the fundamentals through to learning a taiko drum piece by the end of the weekend. For further information and photos and comments, please see:

www.taikodojo.com/education/workshop.php

Introductory Weekend Workshops

4 / 5 March – full

11 / 12 March – full

3 / 4 June – book now!

The follow-on workshop is suitable for everybody who has completed the introductory weekend workshop. See next issue of "Taiko Taiko" for upcoming Follow-ons.

Follow-on Workshops

4 / 5 February – full

18 / 19 February – full

CONCERTS BY VISITING TAIKO GROUPS FROM JAPAN:

THE KODO DRUMMERS

The world famous Kodo Drummers from Sado Island, Japan, will be touring the UK in February. Kodo are widely regarded as the kings of taiko, with absolute technical precision, a strong repertoire featuring gutsy traditional pieces such as Miyake & Yatai Bayashi and complex contemporary compositions such as Monochrome, and of course their famous "Odaiko" big drum. This is a tremendous opportunity to see Kodo, especially as they are visiting many venues outside of London for the very first time. Don't miss this!



4 Feb	Dublin, National Concert Hall
5 Feb	Belfast, Waterfront Hall
8, 9 Feb	London, Barbican Centre
11 Feb	Gateshead, The Sage
12 Feb	Manchester, Bridgwater Hall
13 Feb	Birmingham, Symphony Hall
16 Feb	Edinburgh, Festival Theatre
18 Feb	Basingstoke, The Anvil
20 Feb	Brighton, The Dome
22 Feb	Truro, Hall for Cornwall
23 Feb	Plymouth, Pavilion

WADAIKO YAMATO

The flamboyant taiko drumming show of Wadaiko Yamato will be rockin' London in March. Exhilarating beats, euphoric rhythms & irrepressible energy. See them in action!

8 – 19 March London, Sadler's Wells Peacock Theatre 0870 737 7737

MUGENKYO MERCHANDISE



T-SHIRTS - Available in various sizes and colours - see order form on back.

Mugenkyo CD - "TEN"

Recorded in 2005 - with shinobue bamboo flute, bells, didgeridoo, voice and big booming taiko stompers...and a bonus CD-rom of show clips.



First CD - "Mugenkyo"



Recorded in 1997.
Pure energy music!

MUGENKYO CONCERTS WITH SPECIAL GUEST KATSUJJI KONDO



We are honoured and delighted to be able to welcome Katsujji Kondo to Scotland, performing as special guest at Mugenkyo concerts in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and running guest teacher workshops at the Dojo. Katsujji Kondo is one of the original members of Kodo, and after years of extensive touring with Kodo, became a solo performer and teacher. It is a great honour to welcome him here, as he is one of the most well-established and respected taiko teachers in Japan. In addition to being an excellent taiko player, Katsujji Kondo is also an expert at the Japanese three-stringed lute, the Shamisen, and also at Japanese folk-song. We are extremely excited to be working with him, and look forward to welcoming him to Scotland.



Fri 21 April, 7:30pm **Edinburgh, Queen's Hall** **£14 / 10 conc** **0131 668 2019**
Sat 22 April, 7:30pm **Glasgow, Tramway** **£14 / 10 conc** **0845 330 3501**

KATSUJJI KONDO WORKSHOPS

Sat 15 April OPEN WORKSHOP

This guest teacher workshop is for anyone who's been on a previous weekend workshop at the Dojo. Contact us now if you want a place, as this workshop will sell out fast!

Mon 17 April TAIKO PLAYERS WORKSHOP

This workshop is only open to those who have been playing / rehearsing / performing Taiko on a regular basis. Please contact us if you play taiko & you're interested in signing up for this one-off chance of learning from one of the most respected teachers in Japan.

KATSUJJI KONDO PROFILE

www8.ocn.ne.jp/~k-gumi-y

Born in Mie prefecture in 1958, Katsujji Kondo joined Ondekoza, the fore-runner of Kodo in 1976, training in taiko drums, tsugaru shamisen (three-stringed Japanese lute), folk dance and song. When Ondekoza changed their name to Kodo in 1981, Katsujji Kondo became the lead player, and was instrumental in setting up the new incarnation of the group. As a member of Kodo, he toured throughout the world, performing over 1200 concerts in over 20 countries. In 1987 he stepped down from touring, to become the head teacher at the Kodo apprentice centre, as well as setting up the intensive "Kodo Juku" workshops. In 1993 he left the group to pursue a career as a solo player and teacher, setting up a teaching

centre of his own in the mountains of Nagano prefecture. Developing his teaching technique further, in 1995 he set up the hugely popular "taiko juku" workshops, held yearly in Nagano. In 2000 he formed a new performing group, the Katsujji Kondo Taiko Gumi. He has also been continuing with his solo performances, recordings, and teaching taiko groups all over Japan.

THE BIG BANG! 2006 DOJO SHOWCASE CONCERTS

This year the showcase concerts have expanded in scale! Thirty drummers will be involved, all based at the Mugen Taiko Dojo in South Lanarkshire.

The Big Bang has also grown into a mini-tour, with four concerts over as many days. This annual showcase features both traditional taiko drum pieces which display the rich traditions of Japan, and also modern compositions written especially for the event.

Performing at the concerts:

"**Taiko Academy**", the intensive training group who will be displaying their skills and repertoire learned over the last year

"**Project Taiko**", brand new members who auditioned to participate in the Project leading to these concert performances

"**Taiko Night**", a new teaching group at the Dojo whose aim is to enjoy taiko, with participants of all ages.

Plus, members of Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers

Thu 23 March 7:30pm **East Kilbride, Village Theatre** **01355 248 669**
Fri 24 March 7:30pm **Giffnock, St. Ninian's High School** **0141 577 4970**
Sat 25 March 7:30pm **Livingston, Howden Park Centre** **01506 433 634**
Sun 26 March 4:00pm **Glasgow, Gilmorehill G12** **0141 330 5522**

MUGENKYO MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

SEE OVERLEAF FOR GOODS

T-SHIRTS £12 quantity
 Children's XL - blue _____
 Small - red _____
 Medium - black _____
 Large - khaki sold out
 XL - black sold out
 XXL - navy blue _____

MUGENKYO CD's £12
 "Mugenkyo" _____
 "Ten" _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

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