

TAIKO TAIKO

ISSUE 32

SPRING 2006

ANNOUNCING THE ARRIVAL OF...THE DOJO DRUMMERS!



photo: Chris Nicoletti

The Dojo Drummers are a new performing group based at the Mugen Taiko Dojo, consisting of the most experienced members of Taiko Academy joined by members of Mugenkyo. The Dojo Drummers have been set up especially to represent the dojo at festivals, special events and private engagements. This development now enables us to expand our performing capabilities and bring taiko to an even wider audience.

For more info see: www.taikodojo.com/performance/drummers.php

The debut performance of the Dojo Drummers took place at the Closing Ceremony for the 2005 EU-Japan Year of People-to-People Exchanges at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh (a very fitting debut, as Mugenkyo had performed at the opening ceremony in Tokyo in January last year). The energetic set wow-ed the audience of Japanese businesses and dignitaries, with a front row full of gold chains of mayors and lord provosts.

Mr. Shuhei Takahashi, the Consul General of Japan, summed up the appreciation of the audience: "Your performance of Taiko Drumming provided the perfect dramatic and spectacular opening to our evening and wholly captivated our audience. For many, it was their first opportunity to see traditional Japanese drums played live, and you presented them with a rare and magical sense of Japanese culture."

Since then, the Dojo Drummers have been busy performing in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Gloucester.

Upcoming public performances:

Sun 23 April Helensburgh Blossom Festival (free outdoor festival – daytime) 01436 672 642

Sat 24 June Peterborough Festival (free outdoor festival – daytime) 01733 237 073



photo: Lin & Gary McWilliams

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

Mugen Taiko Dojo
P.O. Box 5124
Lanark
ML11 0WA
U.K.

mail@taikodojo.com
tel/fax: 01357 522 008

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

Christine Brice, Joe Daggett, Don Smith, Mr. K. Haywood, Jane Hill, William Stavert, Olive & Keith Aveling, Jane & Richard Farrimond, Sheila Sharman, Carol Murphy, Ms. J Woodhouse, Simon Willder, June Wilcock, Audrey Devine, B. Tredgett.

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.

CONGRATULATIONS, THREE HELLOS & ONE GOODBYE



Georgie Harris - Mugenkyo member

Georgie is now officially a full member of Mugenkyo, following her year of being a trainee with the group. She brings to the group her energetic and charismatic presence onstage, her skills on the shinobue bamboo flute, and her hard work behind the scenes, including her role as the dojo janitor & Miss Fixit! In addition to becoming a central performer in the Mugenkyo line-up, she is also training to become a dojo outreach teacher. Congratulations, Georgie!

Lesley Watson - Administrator

Welcome to Lesley, our new administrator at the taiko dojo office, who started with us in January. With her friendly nature and her hard work & efficiency, she is a great addition to our growing team. We now have two full time office staff, including Anna, who has now moved on to deal with all of the bookings for the various groups here..



Lucy Searle - Trainee member

Lucy is the new Mugenkyo trainee for 2006, a member of Taiko Academy who started training at the dojo in October 2003. At her original Project Taiko audition Lucy played the trumpet, and also has a background in piano and choral singing. Her bendy limbs & wild hair have become her trademark in Taiko Academy. A quick learner with excellent rhythm, we have great hopes for her this year!



Katy McAulay - Guest tour player

Katy is also a member of Taiko Academy, and will be performing on a few pieces & will be part of the crew on the Mugenkyo spring tour. Katy started training at the dojo in May 2004, and is affectionately known as "Combat Kate", for her military precision. Katy is a freelance journalist by profession, and is currently working on her first novel.



Adam Walker

A sad goodbye to Adam who has now left the Mugenkyo group, due to family circumstances and to pursue his own path. We will all miss his charming personality both on and off stage, and wish him all the best for the future.

INTRODUCTORY WEEKEND WORKSHOPS

Learn the basics of taiko at an introductory weekend at the Mugen Taiko Dojo.

Comments from previous participants:

"In all my years, and believe me that's quite a few, I've never been stirred, excited and energised by the pure energy and vitality that was generated and flowed freely, emanating primarily from yourselves and caught infectiously by us all. What a weekend - you certainly knew how to light up my lights."

"What a team you are - each of you in your own way, helping, guiding, persevering to impart your knowledge to raw beginners to finally end up with a piece of Taiko drumming that was more than satisfying to each and every one of us, in every way possible."

Dates: 3rd & 4th June - full
10th & 11th June - book now

Cost: £140 non-residential (contact us for residential rates)

For further details, please see: www.taikodojo.com/education/workshop.php

FOLLOW-ON WEEKEND WORKSHOPS

The follow-on workshop is suitable for everybody who has completed the introductory weekend workshop.

Dates: 24th & 25th June

Cost: £140 non-residential (contact us for residential rates)

Email us on: workshops@taikodojo.com or call: 01357 522 008

THE BIG BANG - DOJO SHOWCASE CONCERT

This year's Big Bang was bigger than ever, with performances by the three regular groups at the Dojo: the fourth generation of Project Taiko, a fast-progressing Taiko Academy, and for the first time ever, Taiko Night. This annual series of concerts is the culmination of the year's teaching work at the dojo, which intensifies over the four winter months. This year the Big Bang expanded in the number of concerts as well as number of participants, with four concerts in total, in East Kilbride, Giffnock, Livingston and Glasgow.



"Project Taiko" has been a highly successful teaching project at the dojo, and has now completed its fourth cycle. Every year, applicants between the ages of 18 – 26 audition to join the project, and train for four months at the dojo leading up to the Big Bang. The standard is high, and as before, the audience were amazed that most of the participants had never picked up a pair of taiko bachi drumsticks before. A few selected members from the Project Taiko group will now go on to join Taiko Academy.

The 2006 Big Bang was a milestone for the "Taiko Academy", who for the first time were the mainstay of the Big Bang show, both on and off-stage. Their performance included a wide range of repertoire, from the thundering "Todoroki" to the strenuous "Yatai Bayashi" to the delightful traditional piece "Gezan Bayashi". Off-stage their work on the show included tying all the drums, marking the stage for the lighting, and moving the drums on and off for the other groups. Their performance was the pinnacle of a year of hard work, as the members of the group pushed themselves physically and mentally to reach this level. You'll be able to see some of them perform this year as members of the new group based at the dojo, the "Dojo Drummers", as they continue the next stage of their training.

New this year were "Taiko Night", who were the delight of the audience with their upbeat piece "Iki Iki Daiko", which means "full of life". It also has a double meaning: "ikki ikki" means "down in one"! Taiko Night was set up in November last year as a group who get together simply to enjoy playing taiko, and consists of adults of all ages. They certainly did enjoy their time at the Big Bang and reminded everyone how enjoyable taiko can be! They have been an important part of the growing community at the dojo. They also look ready to step up a level, thanks to members of the group chomping at the bit! Somehow the taiko bug gets to us all!

VISITORS TO THE DOJO

Over the winter months, we were delighted to have some special visitors to the Dojo. First we had a visit by Ali Roe, who was a member of Mugenkyo in 2000 – 2001, and subsequently emigrated to Canada. After a long break, she has now resumed her taiko playing, and is keen to spread Fukui-style playing in Canada! We wish her all the best.



In February we ran a master-class for the St. Andrew's taiko group for the over-50's: Byre Rhythm. With an abundance of energy and enthusiasm that would put many younger taiko groups to shame, the members of the group learned new techniques, movements and rhythms from Teresa and Miyuki in an intensive four-hour session. After playing on drum kits taken apart to make taiko-type drums, and some sporadic workshops with us over the last couple of years, Byre Rhythm has recently purchased a set of Scottish-made taiko drums from Dave Samuels of Woodworks, who makes excellent okedo-type drums. With their new set of beautiful drums, new taiko techniques and great positive energy, they're a welcome addition to the taiko scene north of the border. We wish them well.

February also saw the visit from the Kodo organisation at the dojo. We were especially honoured by a celebratory piece played by Yoshikazu Fujimoto as a dojo opening gift. We then all enjoyed a good curry together – which workshop participants will be familiar with as a "Mackie workshop special". The next night we gathered en masse along with the rest of the taiko community among the enthusiastic audience at the Kodo concert in Edinburgh, with a total of 60 tickets block-booked by the dojo. The concert was brilliant as expected, and provided yet more inspiration for all of us.



MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS

SPRING TOUR

SUMMER FESTIVAL
APPEARANCES:

APRIL

- 27 Alnwick, The Playhouse 01665 510785
- 28 Llangollen, Royal International Pavilion 01978 860111
- 29 Grantham, Guildhall Arts Centre 01476 406158

JUNE 17 / 18
Evesham Eastern Festival
 01386 565518

MAY

- 1 Stoke-on-Trent, Victoria Hall 0870 060 6649
- 2 Burnley Mechanics 01282 664400
- 3 Warrington, Parr Hall 01925 442345
- 4 Scunthorpe, Plowright Theatre 01724 277733
- 5 Lincoln, Drill Hall 01522 873894
- 6 London, Edmonton, Millfield Theatre 020 8807 6680
- 7 Bedford, Corn Exchange 01234 269519
- 8 Doncaster, Civic Theatre 01302 342349
- 9 Preston, Charter Theatre Guild Hall 01772 258858
- 11 Whitley Bay, Playhouse 0191 252 3505
- 14 Hertford, Castle Hall 01992 531500
- 16 Luton, Library Theatre 01582 547475
- 17 High Wycombe, Town Hall 01494 512000
- 18 Frome, Merlin Theatre 01373 465949
- 19 Reading, The Hexagon 0118 960 6060
- 20 Banbury, Mill Arts Centre 01295 279002
- 23 Worcester, Swan Theatre 01905 611427
- 24 Weston-super-mare, Playhouse 01934 645544

AUGUST 11 / 12
Shrewsbury Flower Show
 01743 234 050



NEW WEBSITE SECTIONS:

Dojo news & events:
www.taikodojo.com/news.php

Dojo history highlights:
taikodojo.com/history/2002/history.php
taikodojo.com/history/2003/history.php
taikodojo.com/history/2004/history.php
taikodojo.com/history/2005/history.php

Taiko Taiko Newsletter back issues:
www.mugenkyo.com/newsletter.php

- JUNE 28 Falkirk, Town Hall 01324 506850**
- JULY 14 Isle of Bute, Rothesay Pavilion 01700 500623**
 (as part of Bute Live Festival)

MERCHANDISE

MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS - CD'S



LATEST CD - "TEN"
 Recorded in 2004 - 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!

MUGEN TAIKO DOJO - T-SHIRTS

Red print on black T-shirt
 Certified fair-trade - organic cotton
 sizes: S, M, L, XL



FRONT:
 Small logo on left breast - Mugen Taiko Dojo woodblock stamp



BACK:
 Large Japanese calligraphy "HIBIKI" meaning reverberation

ORDER FORM

MUGENKYO CD'S £12
 First CD - "Mugenkyo" _____
 Latest CD - "Ten" _____

DOJO T-SHIRTS £15
 Small _____
 Medium _____
 Large _____
 XL _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____
 All prices include VAT, packaging and postage within the UK. Please allow 21 days delivery. Please make cheques payable to:

MTD Productions Ltd.

Send this form to: Mugen Taiko Dojo
 P.O Box 5124
 Lanark ML11 0WA

NAME: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 TOWN: _____
 COUNTY: _____
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