

# TAIKO TAIKO

ISSUE 33

SUMMER 2006

## MUGENKYO CONCERTS IN GLASGOW & EDINBURGH WITH SPECIAL GUEST FROM JAPAN - KATSUJI KONDO

In April we were honoured by the visit of the renowned taiko player and teacher Katsuji Kondo, the former frontman of the Kodo Drummers. He arrived with his student, Mio Shoji, a Shinto priestess from the only shrine in Japan dedicated to Wadaiko (Japanese drums). After a week of rehearsals, Mugenkyo & our guests performed two successful concerts at the Edinburgh Queen's Hall and the Glasgow Tramway. Mio Shoji's Shinto blessing, a chanted prayer with taiko accompaniment, created a magical atmosphere to open the concert. Other highlights included Katsuji Kondo's shamisen (a three stringed Japanese lute), and their powerful duo "Amaterasu". We ended the concert performing an upbeat piece onstage together, which brought the audience to their feet. Fantastic!

As part of his visit, Katsuji Kondo also taught two workshops at the dojo, an open one-day workshop and a taiko player's workshop.



Mio Shoji performs the Shinto ritual

As the former head teacher at the Kodo Apprentice Centre on Sado Island, and also having set up his own dojo in the mountains of Nagano prefecture, Katsuji Kondo is an extremely experienced teacher, and we were very excited to host his workshops. Both sessions were completely full, with participants from all over the UK, and from as far afield as Dublin and Frankfurt.

It was both a great experience to learn from such an experienced drum master, and also wonderful to meet, communicate with, and create links with so many other taiko players. Thank you to all who participated in the workshops!



Katsuji Kondo performs "Amaterasu"



Katsuji Kondo Open Workshop at the Dojo



A virtuoso Shamisen performance

Concert photos thanks to Lin Smith

# 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](http://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](http://www.mugenkyo.com)

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

**T.H.Evanson, Steve Hughes, Andrew Moncrieff, Sue Whyte, Stuart & Janet Kirkpatrick, B. Tredgett, Patricia Thomson, John Bolwell, Audrey Devine, Harumi Williams, A.Hinchcliffe, Jane Hill & the Wells City Band, Marion & Doug Taylor, Vince Hogg, D.E.McKeown, Liz Sonko**

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.

# THE MAY TOUR AND BEYOND...

Immediately after Katsuji Kondo's visit (see front page), we went straight into rehearsals for the Mugenkyo spring tour. With the addition of Katy McAulay on these dates, a member of Taiko Academy, we toured with a lineup of six players for the very first time, which expanded our scope both onstage and behind the scenes. Katy could be seen performing onstage in the second half of the show; in the first half she was cueing the lights in the lighting box. This helped make a huge difference in the accuracy of the timing of the lighting, which enhanced the show greatly, so much so that Katy has earned a place on tour with us again this autumn.

The spring tour consisted of 21 theatre concert dates, returning to a few regular venues such as the Worcester Swan and the Llangollen Royal International Pavilion, and going to a few new ones, such as the Stoke-on-Trent Victoria Hall and the Reading Hexagon.

We were very excited on this tour to have our brand-new tour van: a Mercedes Vario – the silver mean machine. A bit bigger than our old blue van "the Tardis" we now have 9 seats and plenty of room for more drums. Our old van has been retired to schools visits and smaller performances. Thank you old van!

After the spring tour, we went straight into our summer schedule, which nowadays consists of splitting up into sub-groups to teach schools outreach workshops, weekend workshops at the dojo, and festival performances and events with the addition of members of Taiko Academy, under the banner of our new performing entity based at the dojo: the Dojo Drummers. It's been a busy summer so far, and we're finally into a quieter August to catch up & rest and begin preparations for our two tours of the autumn: The Way of the Drum tour in September, and the Mugenkyo tour in October – November.



**Thank you to Roger Bygott for the following poem, written after a Mugenkyo performance at the Llangollen Pavilion.**

Taut skins shudder;  
thunder dark across the sky.  
Sound carves out a space  
where grace is always falling.

Drumming up a storm,  
calling for rain,  
praying for rice,  
warding off weevils,  
banishing blights,  
beating on a barricade,  
bearing away pain.

*Hear us you gods:  
we are down on your doors,  
we will play till we spin with spirit,  
till our bamboo sticks have shooed away  
the insects in the fields,  
till our sweat has trickled to tears,  
our salt turned to earth.*

*Hear us,  
hear beyond words  
all this rising up  
for your coming down,  
like birds out of the blue.*

They stop.

Falling silently,  
invisible feathers  
land on our palms.

Stillness out of the storm  
we take into the night.



# The Way of the Drum

## 2006 Tour Dates

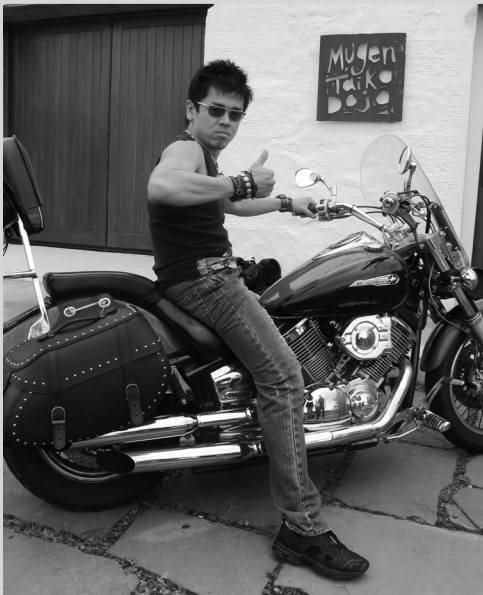
Learn more about the background to taiko in an intimate and entertaining show presented by the Mugen Taiko Dojo. Mackie, Miyuki, Georgie and Lucy from Mugenkyo will be performing traditional taiko pieces and styles, with explanations about the history and instruments. On this tour we will be joined by Shonagh Walker from our Taiko Academy here at the dojo. For those of you yet to see it, "The Way of the Drum" is completely different to the Mugenkyo concert, and will give you a unique insight into the history and traditions behind the music, as well as the usual thundering rhythms & high energy you've come to expect from us!

### SEPTEMBER

<b>8</b>	<b>Gateshead, Caedmon Hall</b>	<b>0191 433 8420</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Widnes, Fairfield High School</b>	<b>0151 423 3571</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Wolsingham Community College</b>	<b>01388 527302</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Hemel Hempstead, Old Town Hall</b>	<b>01442 228091</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Sudbury, Quay Theatre</b>	<b>01787 374745</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Weybridge, Cleves School</b>	<b>01932 224300</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Goole, The Gate Arts Theatre</b>	<b>01405 763652</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Richmond, The Georgian Theatre</b>	<b>01748 825252</b>
<b>*19</b>	<b>Glasgow, Rutherglen Town Hall</b>	<b>0141 613 5700</b>
<b>*20</b>	<b>Paisley, Town Hall</b>	<b>0141 887 1010</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Glasgow, Ramshorn Theatre</b>	<b>0141 552 3489</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Isle of Skye, Sabal Mor Ostaig</b>	<b>01471 844207</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Ardross Community Hall, Inverness</b>	<b>01349 880591</b>

\* With special guests "Taiko Nite", our weekly taiko group at the dojo

## THE ROCK'n'ROLL TAIKO TEACHER RIDES INTO TOWN



In August, we were very pleased to welcome Hiroshi Motofuji to the dojo, who was invited to this country thanks to AMC, the Asian Music Circuit based in London. After a summer school in London run by AMC, Motofuji-san travelled to Scotland to run a one-day workshop for Taiko Academy, and an open guest teacher weekend workshop.

Motofuji has a 30 year history of playing taiko, originally with the renowned Tokyo group Oedo Sukeroku, one of the best-known groups in Japan. With Oedo Sukeroku, Motofuji served as group leader, and was responsible for training new members.

After 10 years with the group, Motofuji became an independent player, forming fusion groups with rock music, and working as a session player for different projects with many genres of music. He is currently at the forefront of the new wave of taiko players in Tokyo, both as a solo player and with his three-man taiko group: DaKT.

We hope that we will be able to welcome him back to the dojo again next year. Watch this space!



# MUGENKYO AUTUMN TOUR

## SEPTEMBER

30 Perth, Concert Hall 01738 621031

## OCTOBER

3 Hamilton, Town House 01698 452299  
5 Hartlepool, Town Hall Theatre 01429 890000  
6 Durham, Gala Theatre 0191 332 4041  
7 Birkenhead, Pacific Road Theatre 0151 647 0752  
11 Swindon, Wyvern Theatre 01793 524481  
12 Tewkesbury, Roses Theatre 01684 295074  
13 Taunton, Quartz Festival 01823 340829  
14 Worthing, Pavilion 01903 206206  
16 Exmouth Pavilion 01395 222477  
17 Yeovil, Octagon Theatre 01935 422884  
18 Birmingham, MAC 0121 440 3838  
19 Wrexham, NEWI 01978 293565  
20 Bangor, Theatr Gwynedd 01248 351708  
21 Harlech, Theatr Ardudwy 01766 780667  
22 Whitby, Musicport Festival 01947 603475  
25 Bury, The Met 0161 761 2216  
26 Pwllheli, Neuadd Dwyfor 01758 704088  
27 Newtown, Theatr Hafren 01686 625007  
28 Newport, Riverfront 01633 656757  
30 Cardigan, Theatr Mwldan 01239 621200

## NOVEMBER

1 Loughborough, Arts Centre 01509 222899  
2 Welwyn Garden City, Campus West 01707 357117  
3 Haverhill, Arts Centre 01440 714140  
4 Margate, Theatre Royal 01843 293877  
5 Dorking, Dorking Halls 01306 881717  
7 London, Chelsea Cadogan Hall 020 7730 5744  
8 Barking, Broadway 020 8507 5607  
9 Newark, The Palace Theatre 01636 655755  
10 Retford, Majestic Theatre 01777 706866  
11 Halifax, Square Chapel 01422 349422  
12 Bowness, Old Laundry Theatre 01539 488444  
17 Strontian, Sunart Centre 01397 709228

## INTRODUCTORY WEEKEND WORKSHOPS AT THE MUGEN TAIKO DOJO

- >> Experience learning taiko with members of Mugenkyo in a fun, accessible and uplifting workshop at the dojo.
- >> Drum to stay warm in the Scottish winter. (Central heating also available!)
- >> The perfect Christmas present for drummer wannabes.

Dates: 25 / 26 November  
2 / 3 December  
10 / 11 February  
17 / 18 February

Cost: £140 non-residential (contact us for residential rates)  
For further details: [www.taikodojo.com/education/workshop.php](http://www.taikodojo.com/education/workshop.php)

## FOLLOW-ON WORKSHOP

For people who have attended an introductory weekend.  
Dates: 9 / 10 December  
Cost: £140 non-residential (contact us for residential rates)

## MERCHANDISE

### MUGENKYO - 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!



### 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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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  
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