

TAIKO TAIKO

ISSUE 40

NEW YEAR 2010

HAPPY YEAR OF THE TIGER!

We are in our annual "quiet winter season", where we concentrate on the educational work at the Dojo and prepare for the year ahead. The office is abuzz with activity booking for the next year to 18 months. The Dojo is busy with teaching and rehearsing, as well as repertoire being written, costumes designed, plans made...

This winter we have been overhauling our Dojo training system, and expanding it to include new members. What was formerly known as Taiko Academy & Taiko Night have integrated into one system – and over the winter we have had sessions 3 nights a week, with over 30 people training regularly at the Dojo. The next audition to join the Dojo Training – the first step to becoming a performing member - is coming up on the 23rd of March, for anyone interested in getting involved with taiko on a regular basis.

In December, we were very honoured to be invited to a special reception at the residence of the Consul General of Japan, Mr. Masataka Tarahara - an event held especially to commemorate our 15th Anniversary Year.

The Year of the Tiger looks set to be another interesting one for the group. Following on from our last few years of interesting collaborations, we are currently preparing for a first-time project with the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, with a set of four concerts in April. Mugenkyo also have a major UK tour coming up in the autumn.

We hope to see you at a concert or workshop in 2010!

photo: Marius Shanzer



"THE WORLD OF GODS"

Collaboration with the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra

A unique collaboration between Mugenkyo & the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra – the powerful sounds of Taiko combined with the acclaimed 15-piece jazz orchestra, featuring music especially composed by SNJO director Tommy Smith, depicting the forces of nature in graphic dimensions.

Don't miss the opportunity to see this first-time musical adventure!

APRIL 2010

8 St Andrew's, Byre Theatre	01334 475 000	www.byretheatre.com
9 Edinburgh, Queen's Hall	0131 668 2019	www.thequeenshall.net
10 Glasgow, RSAMD	0141 332 5057	www.rsamd.ac.uk
11 Stirling, MacRobert Arts Centre	01786 466 666	www.macrobert.org

For more details on the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra & Tommy Smith:

www.snjo.co.uk

www.tommy-smith.co.uk

Photo by Colin Robertson, courtesy of www.tommy-smith.co.uk



TAIKO TAIKO

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

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.



The Mugen Taiko Dojo is the first purpose-built Taiko training centre in the UK.

At the Dojo, we introduce the art form of Taiko through regular classes & residential workshops.

The Dojo's extensive outreach programme also brings Taiko to schools and communities throughout the UK.

MTD

P.O. Box 5124 email: MTD@taiko.co.uk
Lanark tel/fax: 01357 522 008
ML11 0WA
U.K. www.taiko.co.uk

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

Sheila Sharman, Mike Ray, David & Jane Alcock, Joseph Harris, Susan Rettie, Mr R. & Mrs J.E. Dunn, Helen Sutton, Jayne Davies, Ken & Pat Haywood, Barbara Hoare, Zoe Tracey, Ian P. Gelder, Jo Wood, Tony Woolston, Mr P.R. Payne, Bernard Dinan, William Stavert, Paul Hopkinson, H.D. Hughes, Margaret Williamson.

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.

Photos thanks to Marius Shanzer.

NEW EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Join the new-format email newsletter & save trees!

From March we will be changing how we send our email newsletter, and there will be a new look, more regular updates & news as & when it happens throughout the year.

Send us an email with your name & town where you live, and we'll switch you over to our email newsletter.

MUGENKYO ON FACEBOOK

Check out our new Facebook page: search for "Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers" - see photos, join in discussions & comment on posts.

DVDs & CDs

The 15th Anniversary Concert at the Tramway in Glasgow was filmed for a DVD, capturing all the magic of this special occasion. The DVD will also contain rehearsal and backstage footage, and interviews with all the performers. The release date is projected to be April / May – check our online shop for updates. Full information on the DVD will be published in our next postal newsletter, out in August.



In the meantime, this is a good opportunity to get hold of our first DVD "One Vibration" – we have less than a hundred copies left, so don't delay!

Our latest CD "Era" released in September, has been a big hit (!) This is our most popular CD to date & features the hypnotic "Essence", the majestic "Belenos", the groovy "Tomoe", and Teresa's dynamic Odaiko big drum solo "Gekko" – highly recommended!



MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS UK TOUR AUTUMN 2010

These are the dates so far confirmed for our autumn tour – keep checking the website for updates!
Full list will be published in our next newsletter, due out in August.

September

Tue 21 Alnwick Playhouse
Wed 22 Harrogate Theatre
Thu 23 Ripon Festival
Fri 24 Bradford, St. George's Hall
Sat 25 Worcester Swan
Sun 26 Loughborough Town Hall
Tue 28 Horsham Capitol
Wed 29 Clacton-on-Sea Princes Theatre
Thu 30 Chelmsford Civic

October

Fri 1 Dartford Orchard
Sun 3 Milton Keynes, The Stables
Mon 4 Epsom Playhouse
Tue 5 Southsea, King's Theatre
Thu 7 Stourbridge Town Hall
Fri 8 Frome, Merlin Theatre
Sat 9 Ilfracombe, Landmark Theatre
Sun 10 Cardiff, St. David's Hall
Mon 11 Brighton Theatre Royal
Wed 13 Bournemouth Pavilion Theatre
Thu 14 Cranbrook, Queen's Hall Theatre
Fri 15 London, New Wimbledon Theatre
Sat 16 Bury St. Edmunds, Theatre Royal
Sun 17 Kings Lynn, Corn Exchange
Tue 19 Mansfield, Palace Theatre
Wed 20 High Wycombe, The Swan
Thu 21 Cheltenham Town Hall
Fri 22 Wakefield, Theatre Royal
Sat 23 Rochdale, Gracie Fields Theatre
Tue 26 Harpenden Halls
Thu 28 Retford, Majestic Theatre
Fri 29 Barrow-in-Furness, Forum 28
Sun 31 Inverness, Eden Court Theatre

November

Wed 3 Dundee, Whitehall Theatre



MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS 15th YEAR TOUR & ANNIVERSARY CONCERTS

Last autumn we celebrated our 15th year with 44 concert dates across the UK, including first-time visits to the beautiful Gaiety Theatre, Isle of Man, the historic Bath Theatre Royal, and the prestigious Gateshead Sage - all three near-capacity crowds with an excellent reception. It was our longest tour to date, with our biggest touring line-up to date. The concert itself built on the history of the group, featuring old favourites such as Ikkyo and Phoenix, as well as introducing new pieces such as Essence, first unveiled in our CD "Era", released on the eve of the tour.

On this tour we were joined by special guest dancer Lale Sayoko – on the previous tour in autumn 2008 the combination worked so well that we wanted her to join us in our celebrations. Lale Sayoko brought another dimension to the concert with her variety of dancing styles. In addition to classical bellydance, performed with Odaiko, Neil's solo on the big drum, Lale also performed a unique and mysterious dance using the "hanya" mask and animal-like movements, as well as a graceful and ethereal veil dance with our piece "Tojimbo", and the seductive Turkish-influenced "Shishi Shamadan".

The highlight of the tour was four magical concerts in central Scotland, where special guests Liz Walters and Mark Alcock joined us for our 15th Anniversary concerts in Glasgow, Dunoon, Motherwell & Falkirk. Mark and Liz are the original members of Mugenkyo, when we first grew from being a two-piece to a group, whilst based in London. An absolute highlight of the concert was when the original four of the group: Mackie, Miyuki, Liz & Mark joined together to perform Ikkyo, transporting us back 15 years to the very beginnings of the group.

Liz's experience in the Hokuriku style of improvised solos enabled her to instantly join with us performing the piece "Onsen". Mark delighted the audience with his expert "chappa" hand-cymbal performance, which had gained him the moniker of "chappa-man" all those years ago. Another highlight of the concert was performing our favourite piece "Phoenix" with the full line-up of 9 people – with Liz playing shiburoku solos and the classic cross-hands style of our teacher Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei, and Mark joining the grooving shiburoku base rhythm, and Lale Sayoko being the most glamorous "gong-girl" we've ever had!

Mark now leads his own group Taiko Meantime, based in Greenwich, London, and Liz founded the Tamashii School of Taiko, which is both a taiko school and a performing group, based in Buckinghamshire and London. Their pure passion for taiko makes them two of the most important people in the taiko movement in the UK, and will always be a part of our taiko family.

We were joined for the anniversary concerts by photographer Marius Shanzer, who flew over from New York especially for the occasion – you can see some of his excellent photos here. We also filmed the concert at the Glasgow Tramway, soon to be released on DVD (watch this space!)

The final date of the tour – the Theatre Royal in Bath – was an undeniable highlight, with Liz Walters & Mark Alcock re-uniting with us onstage in an unplanned surprise visit. The sheer delight of the occasion and its unexpected nature made it an unforgettable evening, a memory we will all treasure for years to come.



Liz Walters

www.taikoschool.com



Mark Alcock

www.taikomeantime.com



Lale Sayoko

www.lalesayoko.com



"Ikkyo" with its original lineup - for the first time in 15 years!

INTRODUCTORY WEEKEND WORKSHOP

How about those New Year's resolutions to exercise & to take up something new? Fulfill both with a weekend workshop at the Mugen Taiko Dojo.

Learn to play the taiko drums with senior players of Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers. The workshop takes you step-by-step from the stance, bachi drumstick grip, basic rhythms, through to learning a whole taiko drumming piece by the end of the weekend. Book soon – the introductory workshops fill up fast!

Dates: Sat 22 / Sun 23 May 2010
or Sat 4 / Sun 5 September 2010

Cost: £180 non-residential (contact us for residential rates)
For further details: 01357 522 008 / MTD@taiko.co.uk



FOLLOW-ON WEEKEND WORKSHOP

Learn the piece "Iki Iki Daiko" – this piece, true to its name, is full of life & lots of fun to play. The workshop is only open to those who have attended an introductory workshop or equivalent course.

Date: Sat 3 / Sun 4 April 2010

Cost: £180 non-residential (contact us for residential rates)
For further details: 01357 522 008 / MTD@taiko.co.uk

INTENSIVE COURSE

An opportunity to immerse yourself in Taiko over the course of 3 days. Learn the techniques and exercises used for training the future members of Mugenkyo. The intensive course may be booked either independently, or in conjunction with the Follow-on Workshop.

Date: Wed 31 March / Thu 1 April / Fri 2 April 2010

Cost: £240 non-residential (contact us for residential rates)
For further details: 01357 522 008 / MTD@taiko.co.uk

NEW SUMMER DATE – JUST ANNOUNCED!

Saturday 14 August
Mugenkyo Full Concert
at the Piece Hall, Halifax
Further info: 01422 349 422

We have performed at the Halifax Square Chapel either once or twice a year for over 12 years – and without a Square Chapel date this autumn, we thought we couldn't go without a performance in Halifax for a whole year! So here it is, a full concert at the majestic Piece Hall, a beautiful outdoor venue for a summer's evening of taiko.



MERCHANDISE

MUGENKYO CD'S



"ERA"

Recorded in 2009 - two Odaiko big drum pieces, our own versions of traditional classics, plus the very modern "Belenos".

"TEN"

Recorded in 2004 - big taiko stompers & bamboo flute, plus bonus CD-rom.



"MUGENKYO"

Recorded in 1997. Pure energy music!



MUGENKYO DVD

"ONE VIBRATION LIVE IN CONCERT"

A document of our autumn 2006 concert
16:9 Widescreen PAL Length: 40 min



DOJO T-SHIRT

White & mustard print on black T-shirt
Certified fair-trade - organic cotton
sizes: XXL, XL, L, M, S, kids (size 8)

BACK: Large Japanese calligraphy drum symbol by Zen priest



FRONT:
Mugen Taiko
Dojo logo



ORDER FORM

Please use this form for postal orders
(All our merchandise can also be ordered from the on-line shop at www.taiko.co.uk)

MUGENKYO CD'S £12

"Era" _____ "Ten" _____ "Mugenkyo" _____

MUGENKYO DVD £14 _____

DOJO T-SHIRT £17 _____ size: _____
Available: XXL, XL, L, M, S, kids (size 8)

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

All prices include VAT, packaging and postage within the UK. Please allow 14 days delivery.

Please make cheques payable to: **MTD Productions Ltd.**

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