

# TAIKO TAIKO

ISSUE 47

SPRING 2014

## MUGENKYO: CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

This year is the 20th year since Mugenkyo was formed - a real milestone for the group. From the barren landscape of taiko when founders Neil & Miyuki first returned from Japan in 1994, to the healthy taiko scene now, we have seen the growth & development not just of Mugenkyo & the Mugen Taiko Dojo, but of the whole taiko "scene" in the UK.

Over the course of the year we will have various celebratory events - keep in touch with us via our website, blog, facebook page & sign up for our email newsletter for regular updates. Happy anniversary to us!



## MUGENKYO CONCERT TOUR -- MAY 2014

We are back out on tour in spring & autumn to celebrate our landmark year, showcasing new beginnings, new repertoire & new faces.

Th 1	WHITLEY BAY	Playhouse	0844 248 1588	<a href="http://www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk">www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk</a>
Fr 2	MIDDLESBROUGH	Town Hall	01642 729 729	<a href="http://www.middlesbroughtownhallonline.co.uk">www.middlesbroughtownhallonline.co.uk</a>
Sa 3	LANGHOLM	Buccluch Centre	01387 381 196	<a href="http://www.buccluchcentre.com">www.buccluchcentre.com</a>
Su 4	BLACKPOOL	Grand Theatre	01253 74 33 46	<a href="http://www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk">www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk</a>
Tu 6	HUDDERSFIELD	Lawrence Batley Theatre	01484 430 528	<a href="http://www.thelbt.org">www.thelbt.org</a>
We 7	WELLINGBOROUGH	The Castle	01933 270 007	<a href="http://www.thecastle.org.uk">www.thecastle.org.uk</a>
Th 8	KINGS LYNN	Corn Exchange	01553 764 864	<a href="http://www.kingslynncornexchange.co.uk">www.kingslynncornexchange.co.uk</a>
Fr 9	HERTFORD	Hertford Theatre	01992 531 500	<a href="http://www.hertfordtheatre.com">www.hertfordtheatre.com</a>
Sa 10	MARGATE	Theatre Royal	01843 292 795	<a href="http://www.theatreroyalmargin.com">www.theatreroyalmargin.com</a>
Su 11	COLCHESTER	Charter Hall	01206 282 020	<a href="http://www.charter-hall.co.uk">www.charter-hall.co.uk</a>
Tu 13	BIRMINGHAM	Elgar Concert Hall	0121 345 0492	<a href="http://www.thsh.co.uk">www.thsh.co.uk</a>
We 14	LLANELLI	Ffwrnes	0845 226 3510	<a href="http://www.theatrusirgar.co.uk">www.theatrusirgar.co.uk</a>
Th 15	FROME	Merlin Theatre	01373 465 949	<a href="http://www.merlintheatre.co.uk">www.merlintheatre.co.uk</a>
Fr 16	WORCESTER	Swan Theatre	01905 611 427	<a href="http://www.theswantheatre.co.uk">www.theswantheatre.co.uk</a>
Sa 17	BUXTON	Opera House	0845 127 2190	<a href="http://www.buxtonoperahouse.org.uk">www.buxtonoperahouse.org.uk</a>
Su 18	CREWE	Lyceum Theatre	01270 368 242	<a href="http://www.crewelyceum.co.uk">www.crewelyceum.co.uk</a>

# 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 introduce taiko as a cultural art-form and develop it as a modern performing art 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 & performances by the Dojo Performance Team.

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

MTD

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

John Sparrow, Michael E. Smith, Joseph Harris, Harumi Williams, Pauline Wilkes, Anthony Clewer, Mrs J Smith, Suzan Northway, John Sparrow, Rozalia Harris, Denise Zollman, Angela Willder, Hilary MacPherson, June Radford, Janet Amos, Susan Deakins, Jan Short, Pat & Ken Haywood, Sybil Mackie and Nigel Savage.

Please remember, it costs money to put out "Taiko Taiko". 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:

Colin Robertson [www.iconphotography.com](http://www.iconphotography.com)

### "TAIKO TAIKO" email newsletter

Switch to the email newsletter & save trees! Send us an email with your name & town where you live, and we'll include you on our regular email bulletins.

# TAIKO TAIKO

EMAIL NEWSLETTER OF MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS & THE MUGEN TAIKO DOJO

Join us on Facebook search for "Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers"



# WELCOME NEW TRAINEES

Following the auditions in December, we're delighted to welcome the six successful new entrants to the Dojo training system: Ken Talbot, Lynda Dargie, Ffion McNeill, Brendon Neill, Morag Kewell & Dave Gallacher. You will see them at one of their debut performances this May performing with the Dojo team at the Dundee Degree Show, the Edinburgh Marathon, and even the Festival del Oriente in Milan!



## "TARTAN TAIKO" EXHIBITION & WOMEX CONFERENCE

Last autumn we not only performed two concert tours at over 30 venues across the UK, we also were busy presenting Mugenkyo and the Dojo at an exhibition & conference.

Mugenkyo had an official presence at the WOMEX world music conference in Cardiff at the end of October, and our Odaiko display and busy stall attracted hundreds of visitors, from promoters, venues to festivals worldwide.



In September last year, we opened an exhibition at the gallery space of the East Kilbride Arts Centre - an installation presenting the art-form of taiko drumming, with displays on instruments, costume and history.



# AROUND THE WORLD WITH A SUPERSONIC BANG

Last summer Mugenkyo performed a full one-month run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, at one of the major venues of the festival. The run was huge success, attracting full houses, standing ovations and glowing reviews.

In particular, our ninja performers were a big hit both onstage & out on the street with the publicity stunts and flyer-ing campaign. Some members of our Dojo team joined Mugenkyo onstage as mysterious ninjas, for a specially expanded Mugenkyo line-up for the Fringe. With faces obscured, they performed with glowing taiko drumsticks for a dramatic choreographed piece which proved to be hugely popular with the Fringe audience and reviewers. Here are two of the many 4 & 5 star reviews:

**5 stars Three Weeks**

*"Combining their powerful drumming with fiercely energetic stage presence, the Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers are an almighty musical force... Showcasing their innovative taiko drumming, the group deliver an intense, playful and unique performance using a combination of bells, gongs, hand-held drums, flutes and a number of enormous odaiko drums."*

**5 stars Fest Magazine**

*"It's not just a banquet for the ears - there's also an impressive visual component to the show. The group exploit the hypnotic symmetries in the frantic movements of the musicians, using glow-in-the-dark drumsticks, masks and ribbon dancing under UV lights to dazzling effect. Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers show is one of discipline, power and intensity. Exotic enough to sustain interest and set itself apart from the majority of Fringe shows, while not being so esoteric as to alienate the audience, this theatrical performance is fiercely impressive."*

Straight after Edinburgh we were off on a 4-week Mugenkyo tour up & down the country. No sooner were we back, then we were off again - this time with the smaller & more intimate "The Way of the Drum" concert tour. Between the tours we squeezed in several extra performances, from a rain-soaked Lord Mayor's Show in London, to the 40 degree desert heat at the Formula One in Abu Dhabi, performing a specially arranged rock track with taiko drumming.

2013 concluded with an exciting end of the year. In December we were jet-setting around the world again, performing at a promotional event in Russia at a beautiful modern concert hall in Moscow, followed by the Dubai New Year's Eve celebrations.



## WIND POWERED DOJO!

Winter is our season of preparations & hard work behind the scenes, to get the performing teams, the office & the Dojo ready for the year ahead. We've had building work going on at the Dojo through the winter: a year-long project in several phases, which will lead to more space for the Dojo teaching activities in the years to come. Watch this space!

Visitors to the Dojo this year will start to see some major changes as the year progresses, as part of our 20th year overhaul & Dojo renovations. This month we have installed a ground-source heat pump & two wind turbines, to create the first eco-friendly wind-powered Dojo! They are both 6kW turbines, and will provide almost all of the electricity requirements of the Dojo when the wind is blowing (which is almost all the time up here on our windy hill in the wilds of South Lanarkshire!). We have named them "Fujin & Raijin", after the Japanese wind & thunder gods, who guard the Kaminarimon entrance of the Sensoji Temple in Asakusa, Tokyo.





## INTRODUCTORY WEEKEND WORKSHOPS AT THE DOJO



Weekend Workshops at the Mugen Taiko Dojo in rural South Lanarkshire are an excellent way to immerse yourself in the world of the Taiko Drum, learning the basics of the Mugen style of playing, trying out different traditional styles from Japan, and experiencing life at the base & HQ of Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers. Book now as they fill up fast!

31 May / 1 June - fully booked  
7 / 8 June - fully booked  
20 / 21 September  
8 / 9 November

£180 non-residential (contact us for residential)  
Further details: 01357 522 008 / info@taiko.co.uk



## COURSES & DOJO AUDITIONS

Our next intake for new course participants in Edinburgh is on the 28th May and in Glasgow on 18th June. Each 'Taiko Night' takes place on a Wednesday evening and runs for ten weeks. More info: 01357 522 008 / info@taiko.co.uk

All of our new entrants following the auditions last December had taken part in one or more courses previous to auditioning. Join a course if you're interested in putting yourself forward for the next set of auditions in September and November 2014. Contact us to find out more!

## CONCERT IN LIVINGSTON

We have an upcoming "Way of the Drum" show close to home which is sure to feature an expanded line-up & a few surprises. Come & see what we've been working on at the Dojo over the winter months!

DATE: Thursday 12 June  
VENUE: Howden Park Centre Livingston, West Lothian  
BOOKING: 01506 777 666

## MAIL ORDER MERCHANDISE

### MUGENKYO 20th ANNIVERSARY T

White & purple design on a black Fair Trade T-shirt.



### MUGENKYO DVD'S



#### "DOCUMENT LIVE"

Our latest DVD with one hour of Mugenkyo classics: Tomoe, Todoroki, Odaiko, Shichisan Stomp etc. with special guest Nobuko Miyazaki on flute.

### MUGENKYO CD'S



#### "ETERNAL RETURN"

Recorded in 2012 - with special guests Masaaki Kurumaya & Nobuko Miyazaki plus live tracks from our Japan tour

#### "ERA"

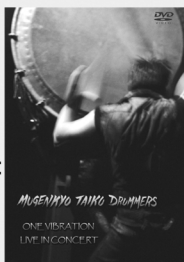
Recorded in 2009 - both traditional & modern

#### "TEN"

Recorded in 2004 - big taiko stompers & bamboo flute.

#### "MUGENKYO"

Recorded in 1997. Pure energy music!



## 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](http://www.taiko.co.uk))

### MUGENKYO CD'S

"Eternal Return" \_\_\_\_\_ £15  
"Era" \_\_\_\_\_ £12  
"Ten" \_\_\_\_\_ £12  
"Mugenkyo" \_\_\_\_\_ £12

### MUGENKYO DVD'S

"Document Live" \_\_\_\_\_ £20  
"Celebration" \_\_\_\_\_ £15  
"One Vibration" \_\_\_\_\_ £10

MUGENKYO T-SHIRT £15 \_\_\_\_\_ size: \_\_\_\_\_  
Available: XXL, XL, L, M, S

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \_\_\_\_\_ All prices include packaging & postage within the UK. Please allow 14 days delivery. Please make cheques payable to: **MTD Productions Ltd.**

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