



TAIKO TAIKO



The definitive source of information on Taiko events in the UK from Europe's foremost Taiko drum group.

summer 1997

issue 3

MUGENKYO SUMMER DATES:

JUNE

- 6 Goole, The Gate Goole Arts Theatre 01405 720 219
Dunhill Road, 8pm or 763 652
- 7 Sheffield, The Crucible, 7:30pm 0114 276 0621
- 11 Stourport on Severn High School 01299 827 027
- Language College, Minster Road, 7:30pm
- 13 Durham University, Musicon, 0191 384 3720
Collingwood College or 0191 374 3210
- 14 Edinburgh University Japan Day
Dave Hume Tower, 6:40pm
- 20 Wellingborough, Castle Arts Centre 01933 270007
Castle Way **SOLD OUT**
- 21 Spalding, Lincs, Ayscough Hall Gardens
Church St, 9:00pm, plus 2:30 lec-dem (free event)
- 23 London, Studio Theatre 0171-224 8421
North Wharf Rd, 7:30pm
An evening of Japanese drums & percussion, with
Mugenkyo and Japanese percussionist **Joji Hirota**
sharing a double bill, and joining together for an
exciting finale!
- 27 Glastonbury Festival (see programme), 12 midday
- 28 London, Under One Sun Festival
nr. Ashfield Parade, Southgate (free event)

JULY

- 1 Paisley Arts Centre 0141 887 1010
New St., 7:30pm
- 4 Glenuig Hall 01687 470 267
nr. Lochailort, 8pm
- 5 Dingwall Town Hall 01349 868 486
High St, 7:30pm
- 6 Culloden Academy
nr. Inverness, 8pm
- 9 Cockermouth, Jenning Theatre 01697 320 664
Solway Arts Festival, Kirkgate Centre, 7:30pm
- 10 Henley Festival, Riverside, 10:15pm
- 12 Norwich City Festival, Bethel St. Stage, 8:15pm
- 13 Cardiff Bay Japan Day 01222 463 833
Inner Harbour, Waterside Dev't, 2:30 & 4:00pm
- 17 - 19 Phoenix Festival
Stratford upon Avon, (see programme)
- 20 London, Lambeth Country Fair
Brockwell Park, daytime
- 24 Falmouth Arts Centre 01326 317 090
Church St, 7:30pm
- 25 Bridport Arts Centre 01308 427 183
South St, 8pm

AUGUST

- 2 Abergavenny Borough Theatre 01873 850 805
Cross St, 7:30pm
- 3 Crawley International Festival 01293 553 636
The Hawth, Hawth Ave, afternoon
- 10 New Buckenham Castle 01953 860 251
Norfolk, 5pm
- 16 Nottingham, Rufford Country Park
afternoon (free event)

We'd like to wish everyone a great summer
& hope to see you at one of our performances!



Mugenkyo during the
promo shoot at the
Rushes "Motion Control"
studio, London.

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS TOUR

sponsored by the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation

In April 1997, Neil and Miyuki performed the "Mugenkyo school show" at eleven schools in the Glasgow and Edinburgh areas.

Japanese dancers thrill school

PUPILS at a Bo'ness Primary School were thrilled by the visit of an all-action Japanese drum ensemble this week.

Representatives of the award-winning Mugenkyo Taiko drum group (right) kept the Grange School youngsters spellbound throughout their 75 minute routine on Friday.

Earlier this week Mugenkyo completed a three-week tour of Scottish schools. Taiko drumming is an ancient Japanese folk art which, over the past 20 years, has become very popular in live performances.

Now some 4000 groups are playing in Japan with a number of these making their way to Europe and Great Britain. Mugenkyo will return to Scotland later this year for more live performances.

They have appeared on TV and also on Radio 4 and have been awarded a Japanese Festival Award for their work with schools.

A spokesman for Grange Primary School said: "The event was paid for by the Parents' Association as a treat. The Primary Seven children are doing a project in Japan at the moment."

The whole school and the staff thought it was a wonderful experience. It was really exciting.



Bo'Ness Journal, April 1997

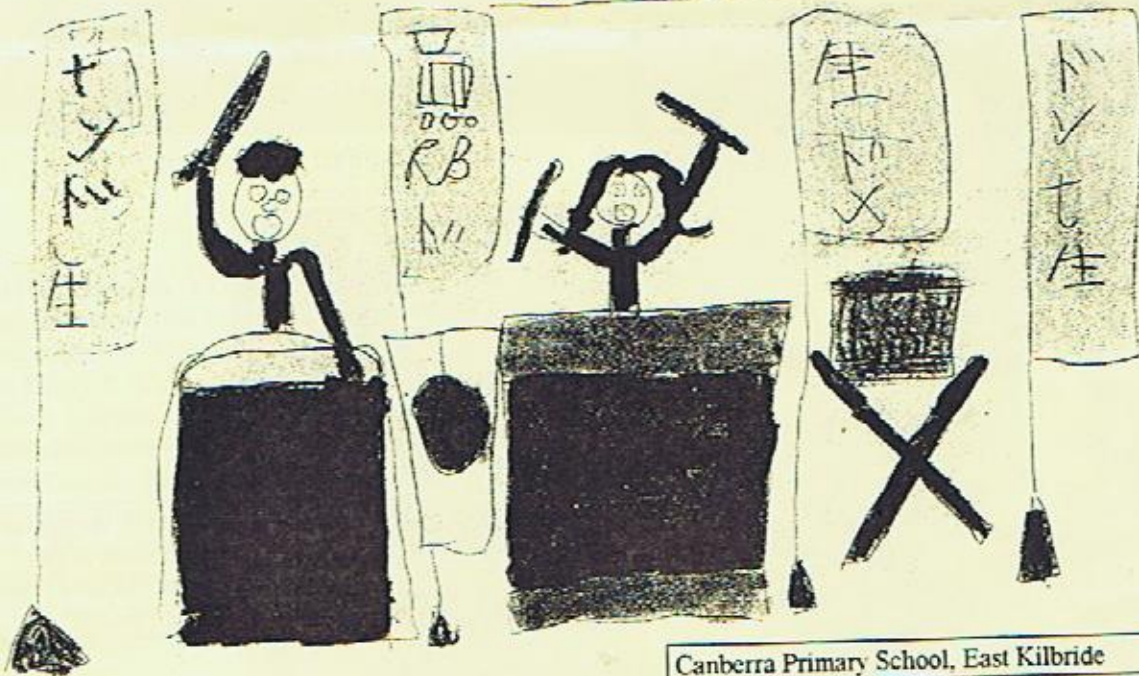


St. Helen's Primary School, Cumbernauld

"When you said that whenever you bang the drum spirits wake up, I imagined a buffalo inside the drum!" - Holly, Hillhead Primary School, Glasgow

"When they played, the drum vibrated like a small earthquake, vibrating me like a jelly on a plate." - Blackhall Primary School, Edinburgh

David Woolam



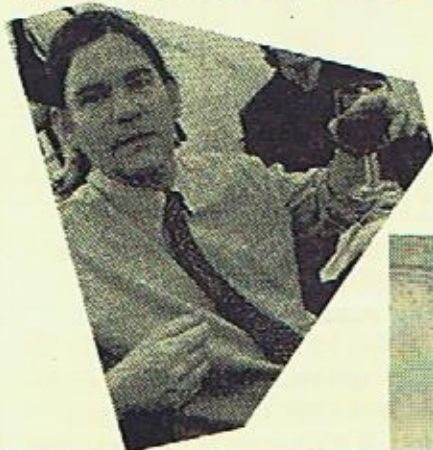
Canberra Primary School, East Kilbride

SO FAR THIS YEAR...

1997 has started off well for Mugenkyo, with sell out concerts in Ludlow, Belfast, Frome, Shrewsbury and Southwell. In Ludlow we had possibly our most enthusiastic audience ever. The audience at the newly opened Waterfront Hall in Belfast was fantastic too. We met so many great people in Northern Ireland, and we all agreed we'd like to get back there as soon as possible. Of course the after-show pints of Guinness were good too! At Frome, a coach-load of students from Hartcliffe school in Bristol who we'd taught last year, turned up and really made themselves heard! In April, we performed a concert as part of the "Kamui Project" at the Cockpit Theatre, London. Like last year's project, the show combined Taiko with music composed by Katsuhiko Uemura, and contemporary dance. Technical difficulties at the theatre meant that it was a mad rush right up until the doors opened, but we pulled it off somehow. Since January, we've been continuing our school shows, including the Scottish schools tour in April (see below), which was a resounding success, and there are now hundreds of budding young Taiko players in Glasgow! Also earlier this year Wadaiko Ichiro from Japan came to Britain (you didn't miss them, did you?!), and despite their heavy tour schedule, Inoue Ichiro found time in between vindaloos to write a piece especially for Mugenkyo, which we will be performing later on in the year. We can't thank Wadaiko Ichiro enough for all the support they have given us. The Taiko classes which started in April proved to be so popular that we had to fit two classes into an evening, back to back, with fifteen people in each class, and another 20 people who we couldn't fit in! Five weeks into the course, the groups are nearly ready to perform a piece! Sorry to everyone who didn't make the course, but don't despair - we are hoping to start another one in the autumn (details in the next issue).

WELCOME!!

A big welcome to Michael Brown, who is now part of the Mugenkyo team, in charge of bookings & promotion.
(tel/fax: 0181 265 3982 84 Algernon Road, London SE13 7AW e-mail 100340.2772@compuserve.com)



Welcome also to Neil Aldridge, who has been training with the group since February.



Goodbye to Katsuhiko Uemura, who will be returning to Japan at the end of June. A big thank you for all your hard work this year, both for Mugenkyo and the "Kamui Project".

Members of Wadaiko Ichiro helping us tie our lovely new "Shime Daiko", kindly donated by the Miyamoto Taiko Factory in Tokyo, on our last visit to Japan.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU to everyone who worked on the Mugenkyo promotional video: Joss Agnew, Jeff Baynes, Mick Duffield, Ian McPherson, Nick Wheeler, Mark Alcock, Thibaut Pradier, Harumi Williams, the crew at Rushes "Motion Control", and of course Michael Brown.

MUGENKYO are looking for a BASE!!

Following recurring problems with finding an inexpensive & neighbour-proof rehearsal space in London, we are now looking further afield, to set up a permanent base in the countryside (any area considered), where we can set up a studio to rehearse and teach classes. Know of a local farmer who wants to sell off a barn? Or a disused railway station? Or better still, an abandoned & haunted chapel? Let us know if you have any ideas!

We are always looking for possible future members of Mugenkyo (both female & male). No previous drumming experience is necessary, but you must be energetic, creative, rhythmically oriented & able to make a serious time commitment. Call Neil on 0171 251 8550.

... FROM CANADA

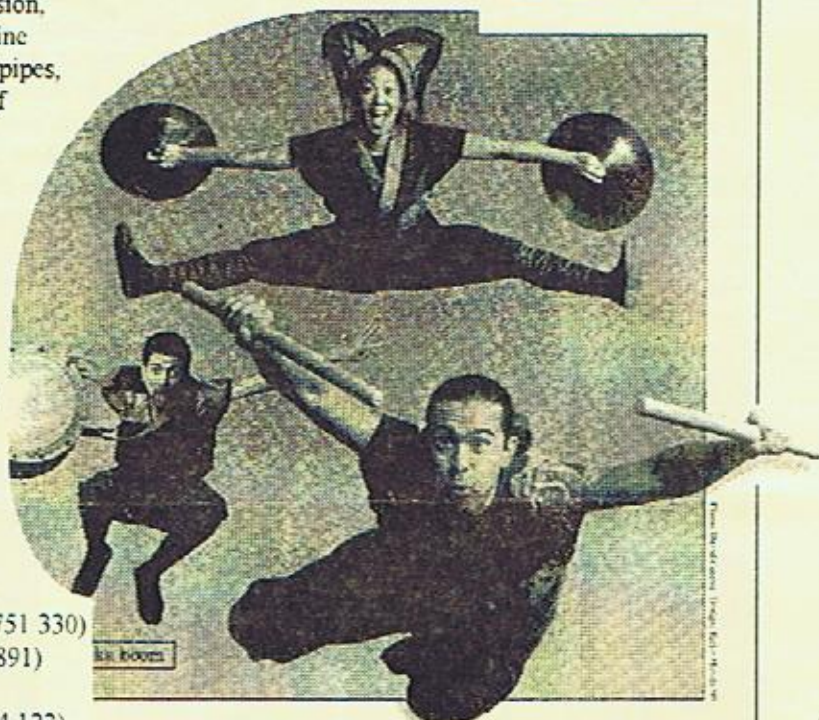
UZUME TAIKO

ENSEMBLE

We'd like to welcome Uzume Taiko Ensemble, who are currently on tour in the UK. Using a wide array of drums and percussion, including Taiko drums made from wine barrels, they combine exciting Taiko rhythms with African drumming, Highland pipes, using masks and storytelling, to create their unique blend of percussion and theatre.

"UZUME" DATES:

- 3 June Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff (01222 399 656)
- 4 June Hazelwood House, Loddiswell (01548 821 232)
- 5 June Mill Arts Centre, Banbury (01295 279 002)
- 6 June Forest Arts Centre, New Milton (01425 612 393)
- 7 June The Met, Bury (0161 761 2216)
- 20 June New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth (01705 649 000)
- 21 June Swan Theatre, Worcester (01905 27322)
- 22 June Morecambe Festival (free)
- 26 June Theatr Mwldan, Cardigan (01239 621 200)
- 27 June Ucheldre Centre, Holyhead (01407 763 361)
- 28 June The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen (01224 624 230)
- 29 June The Universal Hall, Findhorn (01309 691 170)
- 1 July St. Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney (01856 751 330)
- 3 July The Old Spitalfields Market, London (0171 638 8891)
- 5 July The Northcott Theatre, Exeter (01392 421 111)
- 6 July South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell (01344 484 123)



HYOTTOKO

Summertime is the season to see Mr. Hyottoko, a popular Japanese festival character. Often drunk, and always a nuisance, this village idiot stumbles around the festival, interrupting the Taiko players with his humorous antics. Mr. Hyottoko first appeared in Japanese folk-tales from over 1,000 years ago, and has been a favourite at the "Kagura" Shinto shrine pantomimes. If you happen to see Mugenkyo performing at a festival this summer, you just might see Mr. Hyottoko stumbling about. If you do, don't worry, just shake his hand, give him a drink & say hello!

MORE INFO ON TAIKO:

For anyone interested in the growing Taiko scene in the UK, see Peter Lockett's article in "Rhythm" magazine (May 1997 issue).

For those of you who "surf" the internet, there is a page entitled "Rolling Thunder", coming out of California, with lots of information on the US scene, as well as some tips on how to make your own Taiko drums out of wine barrels!

A BIG THANK YOU to those of you who sent in donations towards the cost of this newsletter:

David & Rowan Douglas-Mort, J. Gorasia, John & Jane Hill, Leon Stracy & Heather Ferguson, Godfrey King, Louis Page Webster, Lorraine Leigh, Tessa Cook & John Clark, Richard Chamberlin, Matt Cox, Debbie Allen, Jacqueline Grant, Martin Gerrish, Junko Kasai and Jenny Gray.

Please remember, it costs money to put out a newsletter - about £300 per issue for photocopying and postage! Please help us to continue by sending donations - any amount however large or small is appreciated (first/second class stamps or cheques made payable to: Mugenkyo). Thank you!

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Know anyone else interested in receiving our newsletter? Drop us a line or give us a call to be included on our mailing list!