

The definitive source of information on Taiko events in the U.K. from Mugenkyo, Europe's foremost Taiko drum group

TAIKO TAIKO

Autumn Issue 1999

Issue No.11

www.mugenkyo-taiko.co.uk

Another action-packed summer

Concerts all over the UK and in Germany & Ireland... the arrival of huge new drums from the Miyamoto Taiko Factory in Tokyo, and a troublesome trailer to carry them... and... the most exciting new development for the group is finding our new base in rural Lanarkshire (big barn & no neighbours!) where the group can expand and grow, and over time we plan to build a centre - a haven - a magnet for all who seek enlightenment in the way of the taiko...! In May we were off to Dusseldorf, Germany, for a concert specially arranged by Monika from Tentekko (Europe's first Taiko drum group - based in Dusseldorf)... but first we had to survive the hair-raising speedy drive to Harwich, where we literally arrived just before the ramp of the ferry rose... Despite the hard journey, the gigs were fantastic, both the full concert, and the joint spot with Tentekko at a film opening. It was great to make contact again with our fellow Taiko players in Germany, especially Monika and Peter who opened their warm home to us... On the way back we managed to squeeze in a well-deserved few days holiday in Amsterdam. Another May highlight was the St. Barnabas Church in Oxford - a beautiful venue with excellent acoustics, packed to the brim. At the end of May we set off for the Highland Festival - eight concerts in the wilds of the highlands, mostly in tiny village halls - the first night we even had a power cut and performed in the twilight of the highland summer's evening. Here we had



Our holiday schnapps with Tentekko from Dusseldorf.

COULD YOU BE A TAIKO DRUMMER?

This autumn & winter... We are looking for possible future members of Mugenkyo (female & male - aged 20-30). Are you energetic, positive, creative, self-disciplined, rhythmic and able to be committed to a new lifestyle? Personality, talent, dedication and commitment is more important than drumming experience.

Interested? Send for details & an application form from:
Mugenkyo, P.O. Box 5124, Lanark, ML11 0WA

NEW ADDRESS: Mugenkyo P.O. Box 5124 Lanark ML11 0WA

the great pleasure of working with Tim Upton on lights - who later joined us again at the Edinburgh Festival. In Inverness we performed a steamy joint concert with Shakti, the Indo-Japanese dancer, and the packed-out hall was stunned by the sensa-

tional sensual dancing to pulsating taiko rhythms!

In June we were honoured to receive for the second time a Japan Festival Award for "outstanding achievements in further-

ing the understanding of Japanese culture in the UK." We performed in a circus big top in London, and at The Gate in Goole, although the smallest venue we performed at this year, will certainly be one of our favourites. We unveiled our brand new "odaiko" (see feature on the "okedo") at our home-town gig - an outdoor festival in George Square Glasgow, where 3,000 people watched our first performance with the huge two new drums, set off by magnificent stands made by Ayrshire taiko stand expert Dave Samuels.

In July the trailer saga begins... To transport the new drums, we bought a second-hand trailer. First of all we had to learn how to drive with it - reversing is no easy task, and let's not even talk about parallel parking! Every evening it takes all five of us huffing and heaving to push and position the trailer in the b&b car park. Then in mid-month the wheels started to buckle, so we had new wheels put on. Then we had about six punctures - including tyres that completely disintegrated. Oh the trials & tribulations of the trailer! We've finally come to realise that the drums were simply too heavy for the trailer, and have laid it to rest, replaced by a heavy duty hired trailer hopefully to be replaced very soon by a new (very big) van!



Taiko classes in the south

South-West

This autumn, Jonathon Kirby is running courses for both Juniors and Adults at the Phoenix Arts Centre in Exeter.

JUNIOR CLASSES:

Six week courses for ages 12 - 16: on Mondays, starting 1st Nov.
Half-term course: 26th - 28th Oct, for ages 9-12 & 12-16

ADULT COURSES:

Six week course: on Mondays, starting 1st Nov
Three week course: on Tuesdays, starting 5th Oct, 2nd Nov or 23rd Nov

Contact: Jonathan Kirby (tel/fax 01392 494486) or visit www.kagemusha.com

South-East

One day Taiko workshops with James Barrow:

Saturday, 25th September
Intensive Course
£14 or £25
Sunday, 26th September
Intermediate £25
Sunday, 10th October
Beginners £25

The venue is the Berkshire Young Musician's Trust in Reading. To book a place on the course, contact

**James Barrow at: 34
Scott Close, Emmer
Green, Reading, Berks
RG4 8NY tel/fax: 0118
946 3317**

**e-mail:
taikojb@globalnet.co.uk**

We returned to the highlands again in July for three concerts, including a magical evening at Glenuig, returning to the venue of the dancing midges after three years. We had an excellent run in the West Country: Hereford, Trowbridge, Truro & Tavistock and Gloucester Cathedral, a stunningly magnificent venue for a concert to a sold-out crowd of 500. The sound was big - in fact too big, but the setting was awe-inspiring, and it was an honour to be able to perform in such a grand and holy house. We also performed a short afternoon slot outdoors for those who couldn't get in for the evening show. Then it was off to Eire for the Waterford Sporai (pronounced "spree") Festival - a three day festival of excellent acts on stages throughout the city, where we had a crazy time & made many new friends... At a festival in Belfast, Gerry Adams was in the crowd, clapping along to "matsuri"! No sign of Ian Paisley though!

In August we had just one day off to recover before the start of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival - with our heavy schedule of a workshop and concert every single day for 23 days! The fringe is the largest arts festival in the world with over 2,000 shows... so we were very excited to have been listed as one of the "top ten shows" in the Scotsman. Thanks to good reviews in several papers (including a full page spread in the Sunday Mail Magazine), we sold out just about every day! Friends and family from UK, Japan & USA arrived by the busload. It was great just hanging out at the festival... the whole city just buzzes with excitement throughout the whole month. Highly recommended!

OKEDO (barrel body)

The okedo is the oldest type of drum in Japan, with a history of over a thousand years. Although cowhide or horsehide is now used, in ancient Japan, the indigenous animals of Japan, such as deer or fox, were used for the drum skins, and as a result the drums were much smaller.

On the west coast of Japan, okedo three feet in diameter were used in the tradition of mushiokuri, playing the

barrel drum with bamboo sticks in a procession from the village centre to its outskirts, in order to symbolically escort the crop-eating insects out of the village. In the north of Japan, a smaller type of okedo was used to carry and play in folk dances such as the deer dance.

The body of the okedo is a barrel, slats of wood stuck together — made from Japanese cedar. Long time ago,

emptied soy sauce or sake barrels were used for making the okedo drums. In the modern okedo's, the cowhide skin is sewn over a thin iron ring the diameter of the drum. The two skins are tied together on either side of the barrel using a natural fibre rope. In the older type of okedo, the skin is tied directly onto the body, with no metal ring used.



The proud new owners of an okedo-style odaiko

September is here, and the month started with a packed out lovely old theatre in Bury St. Edmunds, and "secretaries night" at the Swallow Hotel Rotherham (say no more!). We've just returned from performing at the Stroud Fringe Festival - our last outdoor festival of the year where we were honoured to be on the same bill as Rolf Harris (although Sensei couldn't understand our excitement). And we're now just off to Aberdeenshire. This taiko train never stops! This year has been the busiest one for the group so far in its 5 year history, with about 120 performances in the year - wow! The next newsletter will be out in January. See you next year, if not earlier at one of our autumn concerts!



MUGENKYO CLASSES

Due to our busy performing schedule this year, Mugenkyo will not be running any classes before Christmas. Please see our next issue (out in January) for details of our classes early next year.

Name: _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Items Ordered

Mugenkyo CD £12

Mugenkyo Cassette £8

Mugenkyo T-Shirt £10

Kodo Book £23.95

Total Enclosed

All prices include VAT, Packaging and postage within the U.K. (please allow 21 days for delivery) please send cheques or postal orders payable to Mugenkyo, P.O. Box 5124, Lanark, ML11 0WA



mugenkyo tour dates

SEP 1999

- | | | | | | |
|------|---|------|--|------|---|
| 22nd | Danderhall Centre, Edinburgh -
0131 663 9280 | 12th | Queen's Theatre, Barnstaple -
01271 324 242 | | Guildhall, Preston -
01772 258 858 |
| 23rd | Dalkeith Community Centre,
Edinburgh - 0131 663 3445 | 13th | University of Hertfordshire,
Hatfield - 01707 284 004 | 8th | Grand Hall, Dorking
01306 881 717 |
| 24th | Hexham Abbey Festival -
01434 607 272 | 14th | Maddermarket Theatre,
Norwich - 01603 620 017 | 10th | Little Theatre, Sheringham
01263 822 347 |
| 25th | Southport Arts Centre -
01704 540 011 | 15th | Neptune Theatre, Liverpool -
01517 097 844 | 11th | St. George's Theatre, Great
Yarmouth - 01493 858 387 |

OCT 1999

- | | | | | | |
|------|--|-------------|---|------|--|
| 3rd | Arcadian Centre, Birmingham
12 pm free (with Joji Hirota) | 18th | Aberdeen Arts Centre,
Aberdeen Alternative Festival
01224 641 122 | 12th | Blackfriars Arts Centre,
Boston - 01205 363 108 |
| 5th | Opera House, Buxton -
01298 72190 | 20th | Upstarts Festival, Co. Down,
N.I. - 028 4461 5283 | 13th | The Castle, Wellingborough -
01993 270 007 |
| 6th | Darlington Arts Centre -
01325 486 555 | 22nd - 24th | Cork Jazz Festival, IRE | 15th | Theatr Mwldan, Cardigan
01239 621 200 |
| 7th | Oakengates Theatre, Telford -
01952 619 020 | 26th | Friars Gate Theatre, Co.
Limerick, IRE - 063 98727 | 16th | Theatr Ardudwy, Harlech
01766 780 667 |
| 8th | Phoenix Arts Centre, Exeter -
01392 667 080 | 27th | St. John's Arts Centre,
Listowel, IRE - 068 22566 | 17th | Pontardawe Arts Centre
01792 863 722 |
| 9th | Falmouth Arts Centre
Falmouth - 01326 212 300 | | | 18th | Pavilion Theatre, Rhyl
01745 330 000 |
| 10th | Merlin Theatre, Frome -
01373 465 949 | | | 19th | The Mill, Banbury -
01295 279 002 |

NOV 1999

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-------------|---|
| 5th | Strathclyde Suite, Royal
Concert Hall, Glasgow -
0141 287 5511 | 24th | The Playhouse, Alnwick
01665 510 785 |
| 6th | Charter Theatre, The | 26th - 27th | Square Chapel, Halifax
01422 349 422 |

MUGENKYO CD

£12/cassette £8
(includes p& p)

Running time: 48 mins
"brilliant rhythmic precision"
"... the energy and power of Taiko
thundering into your home"

New Design

T-SHIRT £12 (includes p&p)
Available in grey or gold
with black print

LARGE
MUGENKYO
LOGO ON BACK

DESIGN



KODO BOOK

We are pleased to be able to offer
"Children of the Drum" (softback)
£19.85 + £4.10 p&p = £23.95
by Mark Coutts-Smith,
published by Lightworks Press
A must for all serious Taiko fans!

A big



To those of you who sent in
donations towards the cost of
this newsletter!

thank you

Jeffrey Hogg, Sylvi Greenfield, Stuart McCorkingdale,
Mrs. G. Vickery, Susan Beat, Patricia Thompson & Mr.
Thompson, Philomena Beaton, Paterson Family, Mr. &
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Mr. T.A. Leech

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Please help us to continue by sending donations — a book of
stamps, postal orders or cheques (made payable to Mugenkyo),
and even cash gratefully accepted.

Or alternatively, buy our merchandise!