

MUGENKYO newsletter

taiko taiko

www.mugenkyo.com Summer/Autumn 2002 issue No. 21

Football, festies & fireworks...

Welcome to the Mugenkyo summer taiko season. Here we see them return to many old venues, playing a lot of good mid-season friendlies with undaunted support, as well as a variety of away fixtures at new and exciting places and venues. The team played well, although the odd own goal did slip through!

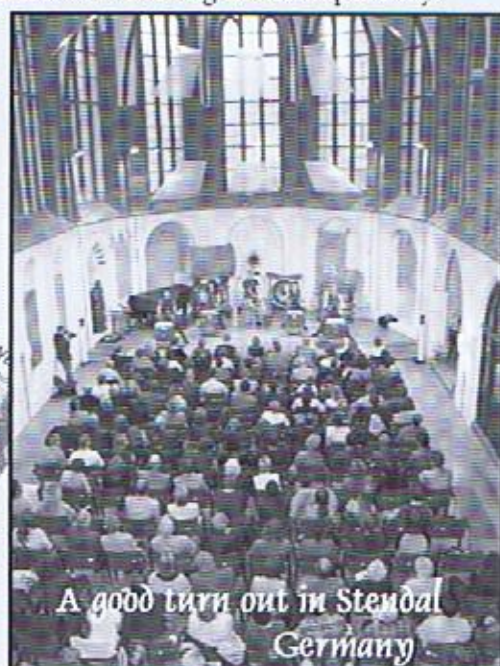
Although there are too many to mention individually, here are some of the highlights of this seasons activities:



As well as the drawing of the group sweepstake for the World Cup, the middle of April brought us a well needed stop at base camp. The group set to work in the office, the Dojo and the practice room. It also gave us the opportunity to strike a pose or two for some new photos. Watch out for our stunning new look publicity. SMILE Please!!!



Then came our longest tour of the year. Almost 5 weeks. First stop Braunschweig Classics Festival, Germany. After a long drive from Holland, we arrived at our luxury hotel in the town of Braunschweig (we knew it had to happen one day). Our first ports of call were two school shows in and around the town. We were lucky that the kids all spoke fluent English, as our grasp of the German language is minimal. They even laughed at our jokes. (Maybe their English wasn't so good after all!)



A good turn out in Stendal Germany

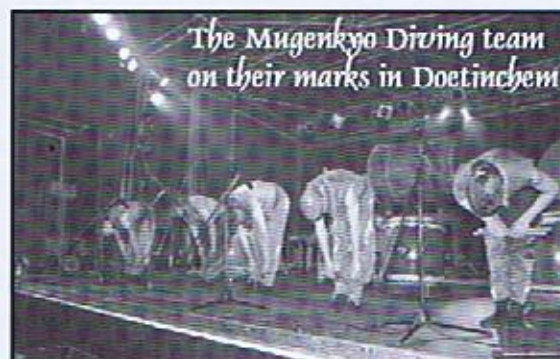
Our first theatre gig was received with rapturous applause by an overcapacity sell out house. This gave us good heart for the next days show in the east of Germany. And we weren't to be disappointed. The Stendal community turned out in all shapes, sizes and ages to pack the church we were playing in to its fullest. Unbeknown to us, one of the festival sponsors had arranged a reception for us after the show. We walked into a room full of people clapping and wearing smart frocks and suits. We were surprised and felt slightly underdressed in our scruffy touring rags. After recovering our composure, we gratefully tucked into an array of sushi, smoked salmon, fresh fruits and other such delights.

The journey back from Germany meant the group could grab a few days stop-over in Amsterdam before coming back to Britain, a good opportunity for Adam to celebrate his 20th birthday, thus turning the required age to join Mugenkyo. Sneaky huh!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ADAM!

Mid June brought a run of guest slots in our theatre shows. The first was 'TechnoTaiko' - a community group taught by James Barrow of Taiko Wales. They put on a great performance, mixing computerised rhythms with a taiko style. Our next guests were through the 'Music For You' programme. Our mission was to reach a group of children (who were complete beginners) a Taiko piece in three hours, that they would then perform later that evening during the Mugenkyo show. Three groups of kids bravely took up the challenge and came through with flying colours. Well done to all involved!

Due to the fact that we're not playing at the Edinburgh Festival this year, we were beginning to feel the absence of a home gig. But wait! Is that Perth I hear calling? Our first show north of the border this year turned out to be a stormer, with the enthusiasm of the crowd bowling us over



The Mugenkyo Diving team on their marks in Doetinchem

MUGENKYO

Established in 1994, MUGENKYO is Europe's first professional Taiko drum group. We perform over 100 concerts a year at theatres, arts centres, festivals and schools. Mugenkyo's goal is to develop Taiko as a European art form, both through our performances and our educational programme.

"TAIKO TAIKO" is Mugenkyo's quarterly newsletter. Its aim is to spread information about the art form of Taiko and publicise Taiko events in the UK.

MUGENKYO
P.O. BOX 5124
LANARK
ML11 OWA

web: www.mugenkyo.com
or: www.taiko.co.uk
email: mail@mugenkyo.com

tel/fax: 01357 522 008

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

Bertie & Rex Angel, A. Jeeves, Alex Weeks, S. Collins, Mrs S. Sharman, Mrs H. Williams, Christine & George Hallas, John & Jane Hill, Evelyn Brookes.

Please remember, it costs money to put out a newsletter. Please help us to continue, by sending donations - a book of stamps, postal orders or cheques (made payable to Mugenkyo), all gratefully accepted.

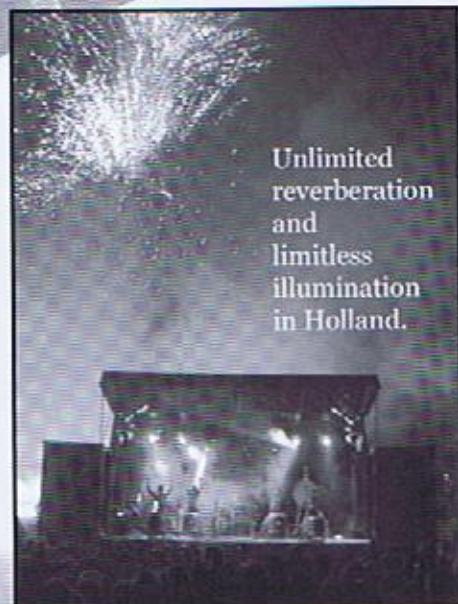
.....The fireworks theme followed us to the Hampton Court Flower Show, where again our late night performance in front of Hampton Court Palace was brought to a close by huge pyrotechnics blooming in the night sky.

The middle of July was spent with some familiar faces. The Ustinov Theatre in Bath; a three night sell out run, and the Marlborough Jazz Festival, where the audience kept up their tradition of clapping, stamping and dancing all the way through both Phoenix and Matsuri.



Japans slagwerk

The Doetinchem Fire Monster!



Unlimited reverberation and limitless illumination in Holland.

The world cup kicks off!

Summer madness had started to set in now. Playing at events ranging from the opening of a Japanese clothes shop to an assortment of Jubilee celebration events to the birthday party of a bigwig in the motor racing world. All this coupled with World Cup fever contributed to the madness, which ended up with Neil and Adam celebrating the occasional win by dribbling footballs round the stage during Matsuri.

Opening game
Senegal V France

1-0 Pulses race over
lunch in Harrogate
England V Argentina

Miyuki felt
confident, but
Bye Bye the champs
France V Denmark

0-2 Neil sheds a tear
Portugal V Korea

Goodye the
co-hosts
Turkey V Japan

1-0 Teresa beats Adam
to hold the Cup
aloft.

Brazil V Germany
2-0



The Koreans drum up some support.



Teresa wins the day!!

It was now time for our next international fixture. The Doetinchem, Buitengewoon Festival in Holland.

This was an amazing event with fireworks going off left, right and centre. A pyromusical performance group from Spain rolled a huge metal frame through the streets. As people on the ground danced and waved fireworks inches above the heads of the gathering audience, two members rode the metal frame. As it was moving, ablaze with fireworks, they pounded two drum kits, leading the crowd towards our stage.

At midnight, we started our set. Our last piece, Ikkyo, was to be played in perfect time to a preplanned fireworks display. Would we be able to play it in exact synchrony with the display? There was only one way to find out. With fireworks exploding in thunderous showers behind us, we played with all our hearts and strained to hear each other over the noise.

With the last flash of the fireworks and an eruption of applause, we finished. Only one tenth of a second out. Nice one!!!!.....

Well, thats a roundup of our summer madness, both Taiko related and otherwise. Now we are all looking forward to a battery recharge in August. After that we will be ready to throw ourselves headlong into our Autumn season.

MUGEN TAIKO DOJO

Centre for
Taiko Drumming
in the UK.

After lengthy building work and preparation, we are finally ready to welcome the very first participants for weekend workshops at **THE DOJO**.

THE DOJO is a converted 100 year old barn in the South Lanarkshire countryside. The space is 50ft x 20ft, with beech floor, underfloor heating, skylights and mirrored walls, with disabled toilet and access.

The very first weekend workshops will be held this November, ahead of our official opening. For these workshops, we have a special one-off introductory price.

These introductory workshops are suitable for beginners and will begin with the stance and "bachi" grip, and progress step-by-step through the weekend. By the end of the two days, the participants will be able to play a short piece from the west coast of Japan.

This is your special chance to be the very first participants in the weekend workshops at **THE DOJO!**

DATES: 16 / 17 November
and
23 / 24 November

PRICE: Special introductory offer - £70 non-residential rate (including lunch on Saturday and Sunday)
Residential packages also available

Further workshops will be held early next year (dates tbc).

For an information pack, please write to:

Mugenkyo
P.O. Box 5124
Lanark
ML11 0WA

or
email: mail@mugenkyo.com
with your postal address.

What is the mask worn in the last piece before the interval?

Does it have a meaning?



It is a hand-carved wooden mask of "Hanya", a character from the Noh theatre. Hanya was once a beautiful princess who was turned into an ugly demon by the gods, as a punishment for her jealousy.

The piece we play is called "Kimai", which means Demon Dance, inspired by the legend of Hanya.

Readers Questions

How do you stay so energetic?

Taiko is less about muscle power, and more about energy. The energy is called KI, also known as "Chi" in China (as in Tai Chi) - the life-force that flows through the body. Taiko is all about focusing KI and directing it from the "Hara" (belly), through the arms, through the "Bachi" (drumsticks) into the drum.

This principle is very similar to that used in martial arts, except with a drum skin, rather than, an opponent on the receiving end.

The stance, the arm movements and the shouts we use when playing Taiko are similar to those in the martial arts, because these movements help the flow and focus of KI energy.

DON'T FORGET

Amanojaku at the Edinburgh Fringe...

Amanojaku are playing at the Edinburgh Fringe this year. One of the top professional groups in Japan, their rhythms are intricately layered, their timing immaculate and their style powerful.

They absolutely must be seen.

Garage theatre August 4th-26th.
11.00-11.45 & 18.30-19.30

Order form

See overleaf for goods.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Merchandise

Quantity

CD £12

Tape £8

T-shirts £10

Red Skinny-fit

black writing - orange white
XL

Medium

Kodo Book £23.95

Total enclosed

£

MUGENKYO

P.O. Box 5124

Lanark

ML11 0WA

All prices include VAT, packaging and postage within the UK (please allow 21 days delivery). Please make cheques or postal orders payable to MUGENKYO

MUGEN KYO tour dates

August

23 Ludlow Assembly Rooms 01584 878 141

September

6 Ripon International Festival, Ripon College 01765 605 508
 8 Dundee Food & Flower Show (daytime) 01382 433 815
 11 Perth Theatre 01738 621 031
 14 Bradford, St Georges Concert Hall 01274 752 000
 20 Hexham Abbey 01434 652 477
 21 St. Helens, Citadel Arts Centre 01744 735 436
 28 Linlithgow Academy 01506 844 247

October

2 London, South Bank, Royal Festival Hall 02079 604 242
 4 Warrington, Pyramid Centre 01925 442 345
 5 Dudley, Town Hall 01384 812 812
 6 Bedford, Bowen West Theatre,
 De Montford University 01234 219 333
 8 Oldham Colliseum Theatre 01616 242 829
 10 Loughborough Arts Centre 01509 222 899
 11 Telford, Oakengates Theatre 01952 619 020
 15 Stratford, Civic Hall 01926 496 277
 18 Whitby Musicport World Music Festival 01947 603 475
 23 Bowness on Windermere, Old Laundry Theatre 01539 488 444
 25 Leeds, Royal Armouries Museum 01132 201 999

November

2 Orkney, Arts Theatre, Kirkwall 01856 861 448
 5 Wycombe Swan Town Hall 01494 512 000
 8/9 Halifax, Square Chapel 01422 349 422



bye for now



"Children of the Drum"
 by Mark Coutts-Smith.
 A large format book of
 beautiful photographs
 and text. This is the
 first major
 publication about the
 Kodo Drummers
 in English. £23.95



Skinny-fit t-shirt. One
 size, red w/black trim.
 £10



cd-£12
 tape-£8

Front



Back



Front



Back



Medium/x-lrg t-shirt. Black
 w/white print, or black
 w/orange print. £10