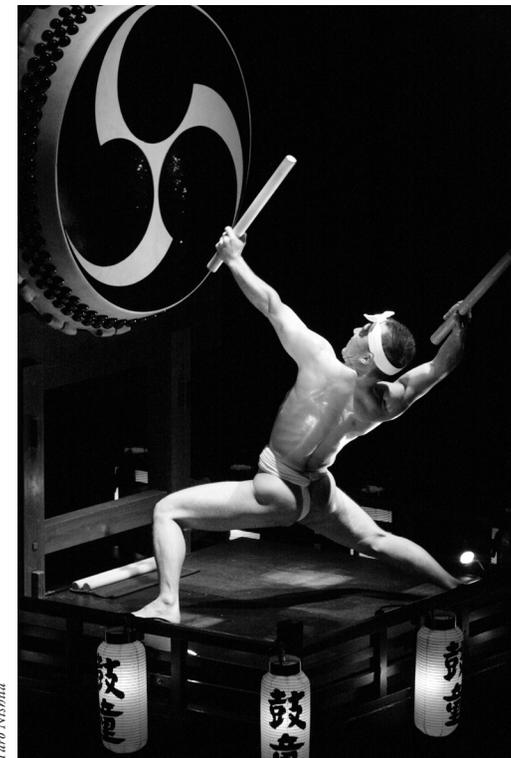


Thursday, February 3, 2011, 8pm
Friday, February 4, 2011, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Kodo



Taro Nishitani

Kodo in *O-daiko*

*30th Anniversary—One Earth Tour 2011
North America*

Cal Performances' 2010–2011 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

*Kodo 30th Anniversary—One Earth Tour 2011
North America*



Kodo in *Miyake*

Shizuka Minami

PROGRAM

- Sakaki Masaru Tsuji (2011)
Choreography by Kenzo Abe
- Stride Mitsuru Ishizuka (2010)
- Chonlima Roetsu Tosha (1983)
- Miyake Traditional, *arr.* Kodo
- Monochrome Maki Ishii (1976)

INTERMISSION

- Jang-Gwara Ryutaro Kaneko (1992)
- Sora Shogo Yoshii (2010)
- Kumo no Namiji Shogo Yoshii (2008)
- O-daiko Traditional, *arr.* Kodo
- Yatai-bayashi Traditional, *arr.* Kodo

Kodo

Performers

Kazuki Imagai
Masaru Tsuji
Masami Miyazaki
Mitsuru Ishizuka
Kenzo Abe
Shogo Yoshii
Kenta Nakagome
Tokio Takahashi
Tsuyoshi Maeda
Eri Uchida
Mariko Omi
Yosuke Kusa
Akira Takahashi

Staff

Artistic Director Mitsuru Ishizuka
Lighting Designer Katsuhiro Kumada
Technical Director Martin Lechner
Stage Manager Tatsuya Dobashi
Company Managers Jun Akimoto, Nobuyuki Nishimura
Tour Trucking Donnie Keeton

North American Management

IMG Artists
152 West 57th Street, 5th Floor
New York, New York 10019
www.imgartists.com

*Kikkoman is the official sponsor for the Kodo 30th Anniversary—
One Earth Tour 2011 North America.*

BASED ON SADO ISLAND in Niigata Prefecture, Kodo is known for elevating Japanese folk arts to a contemporary expression that captivates audiences around the world. Their performances, numbering in the thousands, have graced stages in every corner of the globe, leaving an indelible mark on the international music scene. From the time of the group's inception to the present day, the eyes of the world have been on this intrepid ensemble. Their style is revered and emulated by artists in multiple genres worldwide. Now in 2011, 30 years after the group first took the stage at the Berlin Festival in 1981, Kodo embarks on a momentous journey, traveling first to America, then across their native Japan, and finally to Europe for a year that promises to be a crowning jewel on their 30-year odyssey.

Artistic Director Mitsuru Ishizuka found his inspiration for this touchstone tour in the Kodo Rehearsal Hall, a pivotal part of Kodo Village. The Rehearsal Hall is the bedrock of creation for Kodo performances and the starting point for the group's vigorous training program. Mr. Ishizuka designed this show to capture the atmosphere of this very special place—the enthusiasm, tension, stillness, breath and fellowship felt between *taiko* and humans in this hallowed hall.

“The *taiko* clustered together on the stage, although based on the layout of the Rehearsal Hall, also conjures the scene of a Japanese shrine surrounded by large sacred trees,” explains Mr. Ishizuka. “People gather at a shrine to sing, dance and drum so that their prayers may reach the heavens. In this same way, all of us at Kodo gather in our rehearsal hall and on stage day after day, singing, dancing and playing the drum, in hopes that the sound of the *taiko* will reach as many people as possible.”

The ten-piece program features three new works that will make their North American debut, as well as classic compositions from the Kodo repertoire that have earned the group an avid following across the globe. Among the new compositions, *Sakaki* opens the program with a male solo dance inspired by an age-old Shinto ceremony. This somber piece is the proverbial

calm before the *taiko* storm and also acts as a kind of purification ceremony for the theater. Another new addition to the Kodo repertoire is *Stride*, written by Mr. Ishizuka and designed to make use of all of the drums in the group's arsenal. This piece speaks of the “strides” Kodo has taken to date and the journeys that lay ahead as could only be portrayed through the youthful vigor of our next-generation performers. In contrast, Kodo member Shogo Yoshii found his inspiration for *Sora* through the group's recent cross-genre collaborations that include contemporary dance and flamenco. This uplifting, rhythmic composition features the three-stringed *kokyū* and the Japanese flute, at once showcasing the influences of the music Kodo has encountered in their travels and capturing the aspirations of the group as it enters a new era.

Additional highlights include *Monochrome*, written by modern master composer Maki Ishii. Conceived in the 1970s, this timeless masterpiece instantly redefined the boundaries of the *taiko* as an art form, and its influence on the genre continues to be profound. A most unique Kodo composition, *Jang-Gwara* captures the versatility and levity of *jangara* cymbals, as the players weave beautifully choreographed rhythms throughout this vibrant soundscape. Also included are traditional folk arts from around Japan that Kodo has arranged for the stage, such as the universal crowd-pleasers *O-daiko*, *Miyake* and *Yatai-bayashi*. Together, these multifaceted pieces create an enthralling program of *taiko*, song and dance that promises to deliver the complete Kodo experience.

As Kodo celebrates its 30th anniversary, the 2011 One Earth Tour highlights a new generation of young performers who will carry the group's traditions into the future. The seamless changes from piece to piece are a carefully choreographed part of the performance, designed to make the entire show a single experience rather than a collection of separate songs. Audience members are invited to give themselves over to the flow of the program and be fully present as each blissful moment ensues and the sound of the *taiko* reverberates through their very beings.

FORTY YEARS AGO, a small group of young people in Japan yearned for a new way to live. Disappointed with the direction of modern Japanese society and eager to rediscover traditional roots and values, they left their busy urban cultures behind and traveled north to remote Sado Island in the Sea of Japan.

The choice of Sado could not have been more fitting: for centuries, the island had been a place of banishment for politicians, artists, writers and others who found themselves at odds with the established culture of the times. The group also had a vision of creating a school where the traditional Japanese performing arts could be learned by a new generation.

They found a home in an abandoned schoolhouse by the sea and began to play the world's oldest instrument, the drum (*taiko*). Day and night, they thrust their hopes, fears, joy and wonder upon the *taiko*, learning its voices and ancient wisdom. To build endurance, they woke before dawn and ran long distances through the bamboo forests and rice fields. Immersed in Sado's rich performing arts traditions, they began to study other instruments as well—the *shamisen*, *koto* and *shakuhachi*. They explored dance, song and stagecraft along with the *taiko*'s limitless depth and range.

Soon, attracted by rumors of a new, creative lifestyle that drew inspiration from traditions and the natural world, others came to join them, bringing more ideas and energy. The group's numbers grew, years passed, and they practiced and trained body and soul. In time, Sado Island's unique culture, its four powerful seasons and great natural beauty, found expression in their art.

There was not only a primal fierceness and determination to their work, but a playful, childlike curiosity as well, a fundamental openness to the instrument's infinite potential. So they called themselves **Kodo**, which means “heartbeat” and also “children of the drum.” They discovered that in hearing the sounds of the great



Buntaro Tanaka

Kodo in *Yatai-bayashi*

drum (*o-daiko*), carved from a single, massive tree trunk, babies fell fast asleep in their mothers' arms, lulled by the great heartbeat sound. Kodo learned that the sound of *taiko* is felt in the body, as much as heard.

Kodo exploded onto the world stage at the Berlin Festival in 1981 and have since given over 3,300 performances in more than 46 countries, from war-torn Croatia to New York's Carnegie Hall, making the group Japan's most internationally recognized performing ensemble. Through constant collaborations with musicians, dancers, singers and actors in many countries, Kodo tirelessly explores the limits of the *taiko* and its closely related traditional Japanese performing arts. The group's many recordings are available worldwide.

The world is a kaleidoscope of people and cultures. In this age of exploding populations and lightning-fast communication, it is more important than ever that diverse cultures learn to understand and accept each other so that all may share our increasingly shrinking planet in harmony. Since ancient times, the *taiko* has been a symbol of community, serving as a link among peoples, as well as a link between people and the heavens. Through the *One Earth Tour*, Kodo will continue to bring the sound of the Japanese drum around the globe, and with the *taiko*'s unique ability to transcend the barriers of language and custom, remind us all of our membership in that larger community: the world. For more information, please visit www.kodo.or.jp.