

Sunday, February 3, 2013, 7pm
Zellerbach Hall

Kodo

Tamasaburo Bando, *Artistic Director*



Takashi Okamoto

One Earth Tour 2013: Legend

Cal Performances' 2012–2013 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend

PROGRAM

PART ONE

Kaden Tamasaburo Bando (2012)

Tamasaburo Bando has been working with Kodo since 2001, and “Kaden” reflects his desire to make something “timeless to be handed on to the future generations.” The title refers to a soloist freely creating an image amongst other sounds, taken from the musical term cadenza. It also alludes to *Fushikaden* (“The Flowering Spirit”), the 15th-century classic text by Zeami, the founder of Noh theater.

Monochrome Maki Ishii (1977)

Weaving constant rhythmic patterns together with highly irregular ones, *Monochrome* develops spirally to an exciting climax by blending the sounds of the roped *shime-daiko*, *miya-daiko*, *hirado daiko*, and gong. The listener might even interpret the sounds as colors. Kodo has performed this piece for over three decades, but for this program the ensemble presents it in a new arrangement.

Ibuki Motofumi Yamaguchi (1996)

“*Ibuki*” literally means “to release breath,” and not only refers to the breathing of animals but also to the stirrings of life itself. Using bamboo flutes, *hirado-daiko*, and cymbals, this piece was composed as an homage to all living things.

INTERMISSION

PART TWO

Onidaiko Traditional (arr. Kodo)

Onidaiko (“demon drumming”) is a tradition upheld in numerous locales around Sado Island, and this particular piece is based on the style native to the village of Iwakubi. *Onidaiko* was traditionally performed as an integral part of festivals, performed as an offering in hopes of abundant crops and good health. Through the course of their tireless dancing, the young demon dancers transcend their human form and become almost deities. It is this boundless energy and essence of the divine that we try to express on stage.

Tsukimachi Tamasaburo Bando & Shogo Yoshii

Tsukimachi literally means “waiting for the moon.” Since the days of the lunar calendar, people have looked to the night sky in anticipation of the moon, and what better way to pass the time waiting than playing *taiko*? Surrender your dancing soul to the *taiko*, and the beat will echo out like the roaring sea or the wind on a moonlit night.

O-daiko Traditional (arr. Kodo)

Measuring four feet across, the tree used to make the *O-daiko* lived for centuries, and the powerful sounds that emanate from within possess a deep tranquility yet tremendous intensity. Feel the vibrations throughout your entire body when three drummers, each with their own distinct character, pour every ounce of body and soul into the mighty drum.

Yatai-bayashi Traditional (arr. Kodo)

Every winter in Chichibu, Saitama Prefecture, an all-night festival is held featuring richly decorated two story *yatai* (carts) pulled from village to village. The people hauling the *yatai* are urged on by the powerful beating of the *taiko*, concealed in the cramped first story of the carts. This gave rise to a technique of drumming while seated. Based on this festival piece, Kodo’s *Yatai-bayashi* serves as a splendid finale to today’s program.

Performers

Masaru Tsuji
Masami Miyazaki
Mitsuru Ishizuka
Kenzo Abe
Masayuki Sakamoto
Shogo Yoshii
Tsuyoshi Maeda
Rai Tateishi
Shogo Komatsuzaki
Yuta Sumiyoshi
Yosuke Inoue
Tetsumi Hanaoka
Akiko Ando

Staff

Artistic Director Tamasaburo Bando
Lighting Designer Katsuhiro Kumada
Technical Director/Lighting Operator Martin Lechner
Stage Manager Tatsuya Dobashi
Assistant Stage Managers Kazuki Imagai, Satoshi Nakano
Company Manager Jun Akimoto
Assistant Company Managers Yuki Kosuge, Chie Akimoto

Kodo Management Kitamaesen Co., Ltd.

IN THIS PRODUCTION, I wanted to create a performance that pays homage to the profound expressions of Kodo to date, adds splendor and levity, and harmonizes all elements into a single flow that undulates throughout the program. I have also composed new pieces in the hope that they will be passed on to future generations. In these days of tremendous challenge and difficulty, my aim is simply to create a performance that will transport the audience into an inspiring alternate reality, even if just for a brief spell.

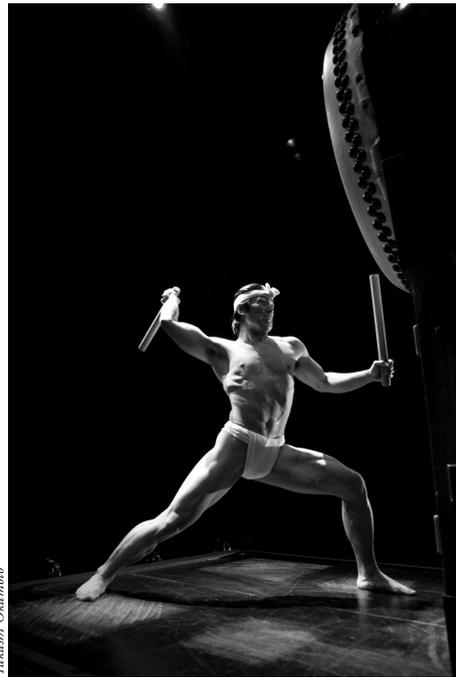
For this performance, in addition to Kodo's standard *hanten* (traditional Japanese coat), I have also introduced some original costumes with additional fun and flair. I hope that both seasoned fans and first-time audience members will enjoy the entirety of this program.

Moving forward, I will continue to devote myself to the role of Kodo artistic director. I hope that many people will take this opportunity to see the performance, and that the audience will become even more fond of the ensemble.

Tamasaburo Bando, Artistic Director

Kodo, the *taiko* drumming pioneers from Japan's remote and inspiring Sado Island, have powerful mastery over their instruments. It is a power that can be tender or explosive, delicate or thunderous. Since they burst onto the world scene in 1981, the group has roused and moved audiences around the globe, touring for months out of the year and playing thousands of concerts, performing in nearly every venue of note—from Amsterdam's Concertgebouw to Carnegie Hall, from Disney Hall to Lincoln Center, from Paris's Palais Garnier to the Berlin Philharmonie. Though steeped in tradition, Kodo turns traditional Japanese music into a stunning spectacle and a vibrant expression of artistic excellence.

Under the artistic direction of Japanese Living National Treasure and revered *kabuki* icon Tamasaburo Bando, the *taiko* performing arts ensemble is further refining its carefully considered stagecraft, combining the centuries-old techniques that Tamasaburo has absorbed



Takashi Okamoto

from a lifetime on stage with the vigorous, joyful vision of *taiko* Kodo has developed over the decades, a vision that extends beyond music into movement and costume.

Kodo has thoughtfully transformed the percussive music of Japan's rural festivals and rituals of harvest and renewal. The ensemble evokes the age-old celebrations of the agricultural cycle, yet pairs ancient pieces with new compositions by respected Japanese composers—from jazz pianists to *kabuki* masters—and by Kodo members. Their vision has inspired performing arts ensembles worldwide, including Blue Man Group, with whom Kodo recently collaborated on a piece that garnered an International Emmy Nomination. Founders of Cirque du Soleil traveled to Sado to learn from Kodo, incorporating elements into their classic piece, *Mystère*. Kodo have worked with musical lights from respected Chinese composer Tan Dun to Corsican vocal ensemble A Filetta, from the Tokyo Philharmonic to the Paris Opera. Whatever the

source or inspiration, Kodo devotes long hours of intense rehearsal to each piece, demanding total commitment and profound creative drive.

The group unites this sharp focus with a dedication to a way of life; alongside rigorous rehearsing, members run long distances to train for the physical challenges of drumming. They raise rice using old hand methods, practice traditional arts like the tea ceremony, and build eco-conscious furniture. It is part and parcel of Kodo's mission: To promote and develop Japan's vibrant yet sometimes neglected traditions, roots inextricable entwined with an older way of life.

This way of life still persists on Sado. Lying many miles off of Japan's western coast, the large island was once the destination for exiles, outspoken thinkers and artists deemed politically dangerous to Japan's rulers. It became a quiet artistic, isolated hub where tradition met the forefront of Japanese culture. Today, it retains many practices of an age lost in modern, urban Japan, from the old ways of brewing much sought-after sake, to celebrations of the harvest with masked dances and stirring drums.

When Kodo's founders came to Sado in the late 1960s, they were searching for a place to make a new kind of community, a new haven for art. They were swayed by its beauty and by the strength of these roots. They lived communally, worked and played music together, turning *taiko* from a musical form played at festivals into high and highly athletic art. After the group debuted in Berlin and spent most of the 1980s on tour, its founding members returned to their island home to establish Kodo Village. Now a vibrant arts hub, the village houses the ensemble and its apprentices and plays host each year to an annual Earth Celebration, a music and arts festival that brings together the many sounds and cultures Kodo encounters during its months on the road.

This urge to embrace the world's art influences Kodo's compositions and has helped them hone their presentation of their home country's distinctive roots. It has won them acclaim worldwide, and demonstrated the great flexibility and power of Japanese music and art.

Tamasaburo Bando (*Artistic Director*) is a leading *kabuki* actor and the most popular and celebrated *onnagata* (an actor specializing in female roles) currently on stage. He has demonstrated his profound aesthetic sense across numerous platforms as he received high acclaim for his many artistic endeavors. His stage direction of productions such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Kaijin Besso* garnered accolades, while as a movie director he demonstrated his artistic prowess in the films *Gekashitsu*, *Yume no Onna*, and *Tenshu Monogatari*.

In November 2003, the first Kodo performance directed by Tamasaburo Bando, *Kodo One Earth Tour Special*, was held. The production was created over the course of two years, with Mr. Bando making five visits to Sado Island for rehearsals. In 2006, the first onstage collaboration between Mr. Bando and Kodo was realized in *Amaterasu*, a musical dance-play based on a Japanese myth. It featured Mr. Bando as the sun goddess Amaterasu and Kodo as the gods of the story who express themselves through music and dance. This performance was a catalyst for Kodo to break new ground in *taiko* expression. In August 2007, encore performances were held at Kabukiza Theater in Tokyo. *Dadan*, a production which boldly portrays the essence of drumming, debuted in 2009. In February 2012, four days of sold-out *Dadan* performances took place at Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. In April 2012, Mr. Bando became Kodo's artistic director. In September 2012, he was recognized as an Important Intangible Cultural Property Holder ("Living National Treasure"). His first new work as Artistic Director, *Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend*, will tour throughout Japan and United States until June 2013.

Kodo is managed in North America by IMG Artists, 152 West 57th Street, 5th Floor, New York, New York 10019: www.imgartists.com.