

Wadaiko Tokara News

March 2013

Upcoming Performances and Workshops

- April 28th:** Kazakoshi performance at the Kelowna Community Centre, Kelowna BC, Canada
- May 10th, 11th:** Kazakoshi performance at the Heron Theatre, Milnthrope, Cumbria, UK
- May 18th:** Kazakoshi performance at the Minack Theatre, Cornwall, UK
- May 25th:** Kazakoshi performance at the Barnfield Theatre, Exeter, UK
- May 27th - 29th :** [Kenshu Core Taiko Training Course](#), Rua Red Arts Centre - Dublin, Ireland
- June 17th - 28th:** [Inadani Taiko Drumming Course GRAND TOUR](#), Achi Village, Nagano-ken, Japan.
- June 29th:** [Saiwai Shimoina Wadaiko Festival](#), Iida City Kouminkan, Iida City, Nagano-ken, Japan
- August 1st - 26th:** Kazakoshi performances at Edinburgh Fringe Festival in C too main house, Edinburgh, Scotland

1001 Buddhas walk into a Dance Theatre..

Written by Dean Havixbeck.

Hello all, It is time for another Tokara Newsletter from on the road. I believe we last left as our heroes were on route to the city of Winnipeg, where they hunkered down in the frigid temperatures awaiting the start of Rehearsals for "1001 Buddhas (Journey of the gods)". We had a little bit of travel complications with our drive to Minneapolis, but once that was ironed out, we made it



Fun times at the Mall of America



Beginning rehearsals at Ragamala Dance Studio

(Ranee Ramaswamy, Aparna Ramaswamy, Ashwini Ramaswamy, Tamara Nadel, Amanda Dlouhy and Jessica Fiala), Indian ensemble: Rajna Swaminathan (Mrudangam), Anjna Swaminathan (violin), [Lalit Subramanian](#) (Sanskrit Vocals), Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan (Chenda Drum) and Tokara. A full cast of 8 musicians and 6 Dancers. Also, there was Maury Jensen, the “007” of sound engineers and Jeff Bartlett our “Jedi” lighting master. The dancers had been working in preparation for our arrival and with the preview performances we did with Ragamala and Mr. Unnikrishnan of 1001 Buddhas in January of last year, everyone was excited to begin the

safe and sound to our home for the month in St. Paul. And with a day off before rehearsals on a brand new production, what better place to go than to the Mall of America. I am sure some of you have heard of it or even been there before but still, to say that mall is huge is an understatement. I have been there more than once, and still haven’t seen everything that place has inside. So a day of shopping, carousel riding and stocking up on provisions for the house commenced.

The next day rehearsals began with South Indian dance group [Ragamala Dance](#)



Rajna, Lalit and Anjna warming up before practice



Ragamala dancers hard at work

collaborative process. The idea for 1001 Buddhas came when Art and Yukari brought Ranee, Aparna and the rest of the Ragamala dancers to the Sanjuusangendo Temple in Kyoto, which houses statues of 1001 Buddhist statues, guarded by 28 Hindu deities. (<http://www.ragamala.net/booking/works-available/1001-buddhas>) That visit sparked their imagination, and 5 years later, we began 4 weeks of intensive, detailed, educational rehearsals leading up to the premiere performances at the [The Cowles Center for Dance and Performing Arts](#) in Minneapolis, and one performance at

Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter MN. At this point, I must highlight the challenge we faced in fusing all of these elements into production. Most people who know about Japanese taiko know about the difficulties this type of drumming has when joining with other musical styles. Our drums are big, loud and we take up a lot of stage space. I highlight this because it is a testament to the talent and professionalism of everyone involved in this project. Rane, Aparna, Mr. Unnikrishnan, Rajna and Art worked in detail to successfully meld Japanese taiko with



Rehearsing in the Cowles Center

Indian percussion, voice, dance and violin.

It has truly been one of the best projects we have ever been a part of. And we are hoping to tour it around the world. If all of this doesn't convince you however, you can see some reviews of the show [here](#).

After the performances at the Cowles Center wrapped up, and staying true to Tokara's style, our last week of March was filled with school performances at Weaver and Cowern Elementary (children make such



The 1001 Buddhas performers

great crowds), a lecture/ Tokara performance for the percussion group at Gustavus Adolphus College, followed by a 1001 Buddhas performance the next day in the Schaefer Fine Arts Center and finally two Tokara performances and a workshop at our favorite little theatre in St. Paul, The Dreamland Arts Theatre, a cozy 50 seat theatre that really lets the audience get up close to the taiko performance. And with that our time in the twin cities and surrounding area came to a close.



Workshop participants at Dreamland Arts Theater

Next month you can look forward to reading about our adventures in Marshall, then crossing back into Canada for stops in Edmonton, Calgary, Kelowna and the surrounding area. So stay tuned to the [Tokara website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) page to hear and read about the continuing adventures of Wadaiko Tokara on tour!



KAZAKOSHI

"Kazakoshi" is a new production touring 12 countries throughout the world for two years celebrating Wadaiko Artist Art Lee's 20th Anniversary in 2013, and Wadaiko Tokara's 10th Anniversary in 2014.

"Kazakoshi" is the mountain wind which flows across the mountaintop of Mt. Fuetsu, bringing a billowing mist into the Inadani valley from which we gather our strength and determination to share throughout the world.

Not simply a taiko performance, "Kazakoshi" is an expression of the powerfully flowing, yet jazzy style of performance for which Tokara has become known.

For details on "Kazakoshi" 2013 - 2014 World Tour:

www.tokara.net/kazakoshi

WADAIKO TOKARA

Incorporating arrangements of traditional Taiko pieces into their performance, Tokara has created an all new style of Taiko, where speed and power meet eloquent movements of dance and the circular fluidity of the Chinese martial arts and aikido.

Tokara's new style of Taiko music also brings rhythm signatures from other cultures around the world to create a jazzy and exciting style of taiko music.

Artistic Director Art Lee is considered to be one of the leading Taiko artists of his generation. In November 2001, he received international acclaim for becoming the first person in the world to be awarded an artist visa from the Japanese government to teach Taiko and lead the life of a professional Taiko artist in Japan. He is the only non-Japanese to achieve the status of Grand Champion in the Odaiko section of the most renowned taiko contest in the world, the Tokyo International Taiko Contest.

Season One

(January - August)

Vancouver * Kelowna * Minneapolis * Beetham * Penzance
Dublin * Exeter * Edinburgh

Full Details: www.tokara.net/kazakoshi



Photos by Junko Sasaki and Nedra Cammerts

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Thank you for supporting us for the years up to
2012. We look forward to seeing you again in the many
years to come.

Wadaiko Artist Art Lee 藝李
Wadaiko Ensemble 遙Tokara遙

Wadaiko Tokara has a new CD!!! Please click
on the link below to get your copy today!

www.tokara.net/info/ttuccd.html

To see videos and pictures of the 2012 tour,
follow the links below:

[Performance Schedule](#)

[Tokara on YouTube](#)

[Tokara on Facebook](#)

[Tokara on Twitter](#)

Upcoming Workshops and Classes

INADANI TAIKO DRUMMING COURSE

GRAND TOUR

Beginners/Intermediate Course

June 17 - 22, 2013

June 24 - 29, 2013

This course is designed for the purpose of bringing
the taiko practitioner closer to understanding the art
that is Wadaiko in Japan. For this reason, the
training site, nestled between the mountains of
Shimoina, was specifically chosen to enhance an
experience and atmosphere which cannot be had in
any other country of the world. This course offers a
unique experience as it takes place in the heart of
Japan - Nagano Prefecture. Each participant will be
surrounded by and immersed in the culture from
which comes the heart and spirit of the Wadaiko.

Details can be found on the course website:

www.tokara.net/japantaikocourse.html

Kenshu Core Taiko Training Course

Training Workshop and Seminar for Taiko Teachers

May 27 - 29, 2013

This course is for teachers who already do or are
planning to teach taiko classes and workshops, as
well as for teaching assistants within a group.
Theory and demonstration will accompany drills
and playing technique. Participants will also have a
chance to view teaching principles in action. During
the morning sessions, participants will be taught
movement and technique in various taiko
performance styles. Afternoon sessions will include
details/drills/information for teaching successful
workshops and classes and group interactive
sessions. For more details please visit the course
website:

<http://www.tokara.net/kazakoshi/kenshucore.html>