

WADAIKO TOKARA NEWS

February 2012

Upcoming Performances

- **June 3rd:** *Tenchi Shinmei - Nagoya concert, Kita Bunka Shogekijyo*
- **June 17th:** *Takayama City Taiko Festival*
- **July 21st:** [Saiwai Shimoina Wadaiko Festival](#)
 - *Fringe festival - 10:00am*
 - *Super show - 6:30pm*
- **August 1st - 30th:** *Hirugami no Hibiki - Tokara one month performances, Achi village, Nagano Prefecture*
- **August 19th:** *Art Lee Odaiko Performance - Aoyama Gekijyo, Tokyo*
- **November, December:** *Tokara Europe Tour*

Workshops:

- **June 25th - 29th, 2012:** [Inadani Taiko Drumming Course](#)
- **August 13th - 17th, 2012:** [Wadaiko Tokara Bootcamp](#)

Around the World and Back

written by Dean Havixbeck

First off, our apologies. It has been a while since our first update. We have been quite busy over the past year, and only now have we had time to sit down and take a breath. I will try to keep things as short as possible, but I can't make any promises.

Let's start where we left off, the office. January 2011 saw us move into a new office that has become quite full over the past year. It has been a great place for us to work on our preparations for upcoming tours.

After the move to the new office, we immediately started on the 2011 tour schedule. First it was off to the United States in April/May where we began



"Tenchi Shinmei" Japan Tour 2011 in Ina City

creating a new show with the talented Bharatanatyam Indian dance group, Ragamala, with whom we have been working with for six years. Rehearsals went very well and were followed by a performance at the Mayo Clinic in the city of Rochester. In between rehearsals and the Mayo performance, we travelled up to Fergus Falls for a show at the Center for Performing Arts. It was nearly a full house and the audience was fantastic.

The end of May found us back in Japan beginning our Tenchi Shinmei tour with our special guests performers, Ensemble Rivelta. We started with performances in Nagoya city, then to Ishikawa prefecture and finally throughout southern Nagano prefecture until the end of June, finishing with the 6th annual Saiwai Shimoina Wadaiko Festival. Yet after that, there was no time to rest. We had to prepare for Europe!

Our first stop on our European tour was the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Our venue was in St. Johns church, a 193 year old church situated right in the middle of Edinburgh. We performed 2 shows a day, 6 days a week for the entire month of August, a very exhausting, yet extremely amazing time.

This part of the tour was also the first time we traveled with such a large group: 2 groups (Ensemble Rivelta came as our guest group to perform during the afternoon shows), 2 staff members, and two children for a total of 11 people. From traveling on the double decker buses to the church, to passing out flyers in the royal mile, we were all able to become quite aquatinted with this city full of history. One of our staff members even made a [video](#) summing up the whole experience.

Sadly, the end of the Fringe Festival came and Ensemble Rivelta returned to Japan. So it was time to pack our bags and head for mainland Europe. The schedule was tight, thanks mainly to traffic on the M1 to London, yet we managed to store the drums, and race off to Leuven in Belgium to host two weeks of Tokara's Wadaiko Bootcamp.



Havixbeck Silhouette - Japan Tour 2011 in Nagoya City



Art Lee with Seido Kobayashi and Yoshikazu Fujimoto at Oedo Sukeroku Daiko 2011 Anniversary Celebrations



Building new stands for our drums before the start of the North America Tour



Nagisa Monogatari - Japan Tour 2011

This was the first time Tokara Wadaiko Bootcamp was hosted outside of Japan, and with lots of help from Grete, the leader of Feniks Taiko, it was a great success. A couple of side notes: Belgium has great beer, and hundreds of different micro breweries. Also, if you find yourself traveling through Belgium, make sure you visit Bruges (Brugge). This city has a number of historical sites to see and is practically made out of chocolate and waffles. Oh so yummy!!!

With the success of the bootcamps and September coming to a close, we traveled to the city of Exeter, England for a double performance of Michi no Sekai e (Toward the Undiscovered Country). Performing in Exeter was especially fun because we were joined by one of Tokara's extension members. Kordian Tetov. It had been a while since we all played together, and it was great to have him on stage. Both performances were a joy to play, and I must give a shout out to the audiences. The theater was not very full for the first performance unfortunately, though the audience was enjoying the show so much, you would have thought the theater was full. Thanks again for your energy!

When the Exeter shows had finished, we finally found some time to relax and take in some of the sights around us. We actually had quite a bit of free time ahead of us, since the next performance date did not begin until November. So the group split up to explore different parts of Europe and rejoined in Frankfurt to participate in Japan Week. This festival was a great way to end our European tour. Tokara took part in the opening and closing concerts, as well as outdoor performances and a school workshop. The reception was amazing and we enjoyed the chance to play with two of Frankfurt's taiko groups: Sakura no Ki taiko and Kuri no Ki taiko. Oh, and the food was delicious!

Finally, we returned to Japan for the holidays, the European tour successfully completed, and thousands of photos and memories to sift through. Even though the tour was finished however, it did not mean that we had much time to relax. We had to prepare next for upcoming shows for the New Year's celebrations and another tour to the US in January. The New Year's shows are always fun to play and a great way to bring in the new year. We had four shows to play this season, with the added surprise of NHK TV cameramen filming parts of the shows for an NHK documentary on Tokara's leader and artistic director Art Lee, to be aired on March 15th. After the New Year's shows, we hopped on the plane to Minneapolis to continue work on our new collaboration with Ragamala dance; called 1001 Buddhas, record a cd and perform for two nights at the Dreamland Arts theater in St. Paul Minnesota. A very busy month to say the least. No sooner had we landed in Minneapolis then we were on our way back to Japan, with a newly recorded cd, two successful performances of 1001 Buddhas and a sellouts crowds from the shows at Dreamland.

Finally, we arrive to February, which brings us back to Japan to prepare for our filming of NHK's [Begin Japanology](#), a documentary show covering Japanese culture. NHK had selected Art Lee to be the subject for their show which again, will air on NHK World on March 15th at 9:30pm Japan time and in Japan on March 16th, on NHK BS1 at 2:30pm. So for those of you who are interested in hearing about Art Lee's journey through the world of wadaiko, this is a show you do not want to miss.

And that should bring you up to date on what we have been up to for the last year and a bit. Again, our apologies for the delay since our last update. We will do our best to bring out our newsletter in shorter intervals, to avoid some lengthily readings. However, before you continue your lovely day after taking the time to read about our wanderings, we have a few updates and reminders for the upcoming months. For upcoming performances, see page one, and for other reminders, please see the next page.



Apprentice Takafumi Onozawa tightening a shime daiko before performance.



Yukari in front of the Center for the Performing Arts in Fergus Fall, Minneapolis.



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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 2011
tour, follow the links below to subscribe to
the Tokara podcasts:

- [Europe Tour Video Podcast](#)
- [2011 World Tour Audio Podcast](#)

[Tokara Official Website](#)

[Performance Schedule](#)

[Tokara on YouTube](#)

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Upcoming Workshops and Classes

INADANI TAIKO DRUMMING COURSE

Beginners/Intermediate Course

June 25 - 29, 2012

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

TOKARA WADAIKO BOOTCAMP

Intermediate Course/Advanced Course

August 13 - 17, 2012

The TOKARA Wadaiko Camp (also known as TOKARA Boot Camp) is an intensive course which introduces the participant to the training style of Tokara's full-time performing members. All material taught in this course are drills and performance pieces used by Art Lee and Tokara. 2012 marks the sixth anniversary of the Tokara Wadaiko Bootcamp.

Registration details can be found at:

<http://www.tokara.net/tokarabootcamp.pdf>