

TOKARA NEWS



Can you believe it?? We're almost 15 years young!!



Azumaza Kabuki Theater - before the show



INADANI Taiko Course - Performance day

2019 will see TOKARA going on its 15th year of international tours throughout the world. That seems like a relatively very young age for a taiko performance group, but so much has happened that it almost seems like 30 years. Truthfully, we could not have had such an eventful 15 years without each and every person who has attended our concerts, workshops and intensives. And we certainly cannot forget all of the people who send kind messages and feedback to us after each event. We hope to continue to grow stronger in the coming years...just taking it day-by-day.

BUT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE LATELY??

Ah, well I'm glad you asked.

This past year has been a very important milestone for me personally, as it is my 25th Anniversary as a voyager on the high Taiko Seas (I know...just go with it). There have been a lot of ups and downs over the years (less rolling hills and fish ponds, more mountain peaks and ocean trenches), yet I've always felt the need to press through. So the title for this year's tour, "Gouki Kadan" was so extremely appropriate.

"Gouki Kadan" roughly translates as "dauntless and decisive; with fortitude and resolution." This is the theme with which we held the full Japan Tour from February - August. The process of making this tour almost rivaled that of creating a whole new group again. Part of this process was the composition of nine fully new pieces...five performance and four instructional. Three of the instructional pieces have become semi-open-source...one is fully open source.

I'm very excited in looking forward to see other groups around the world performing these pieces after having learned them this year.

We toured throughout Japan in many different venues, but I have to say that one of my favorites was the Azumaza Kabuki Theater in Kurokawa. We have performed at this theater before and it is really a rare gem among theaters in Japan. Although it has been updated from time to time, the theater still retains all of the original characteristics of a 17th century Kabuki theater. All of the components of Kabuki are still done by hand here...including the actors flying above the audience, and the stage circulated from underneath. The audience still eats lunch together before and after the show, and they had a big surprise prepared...a large cake for my 25th Anniversary.

We also enjoyed performing at all of the events which weren't connect to the "Gouki Kadan" Tour, including the Takayama "Nihon no Taiko" Festival, Saiwai Shimoine Wadaiko Festival, which is produced by Tokara, and fun performances with the kids at Chiyo Kindergarten. Every year, the teachers and children at this kindergarten learn the piece called "Chiyo Hounen Bayashi" which was written by Tokara member, Yukari Ichise. It's always good fun when we have the chance to play this together at the local summer festival and the city taiko festival.

UPCOMING!!

Our 2018 touring in Japan is now finished and we are now preparing for our Europe Tour starting in September. In addition to our Europe Intensive Workshop (Tokara Bootcamp in Mortsels), we are looking forward to teaching workshops at Kobuyanagi Dojo and at Kichigai Taiko Dojo (our first workshop in France). All of our Europe Tour information for performances and workshops are in the touring box on the right.

In 2019, we are looking forward to continuing our tour of Japan...though with quite a twist. Instead of creating the usual style of tour, we've decided to begin with a new project that aims to create artistic appreciation in the smallest members of our society, called the SeaScape Project.

The SeaScape Project is so called because it captures the image of one looking out as far as possible across the surface of the ocean. No matter how far the human eyes can see, there is no barrier within view. A young child has no barriers in their mind. They can see wonder in even the simplest facets of nature. They do not have the need to create superficial human stereotypes. The SeaScape Project is created with the idea of bringing all children in the INADANI area to see a concert for free, to try to play the taiko for free, and to feel the wonder of music and sound. Also, often parents who have more than one or two children may not have the available finances to bring the whole family to a world-class concert. This project also focuses on these families who will be able to see these concerts for free with their children.

We look forward to seeing our friends in Europe soon, and our other friends in the near future...out there!!!

Europe Tour and Beyond

October 12

Kadan

Groene Engel
Oss, Netherlands

October 13, 14

Triple T

Kobuyanagi Dojo
Oss, Netherlands

October 27 - 30

Tokara Bootcamp

Araumi Taiko Dojo
Mortsels, Belgium

November 3

Kadan

Aula Einhard Gymnasium
Aachen, Germany

November 11

TaikoPeace Project

Gin no Piyoko
Duffel, Belgium

November 16 - 18

Taiko Movement Belfort

Kichigai Taiko Dojo
Belfort, France

February 4 - 9

SeaScape Project

Iida Community Center Theater
Iida, Japan

June 17 - 29

INADANI Taiko Course

GRAND TOUR

Iida Community Center Theater
Iida, Japan