

WADAIKO 遙 TOKARA

September 2013

Upcoming Performances and Workshops

- **September 14th:** OdeGand - Gent Festival *Capitole Theater* Gent, Belgium 14:00 and 17:30
- **September 26th:** Kazakoshi World Tour *Bis Zentrum* Mönchengladbach, Germany 20:00 Uhr
- **October 2nd:** Kazakoshi World Tour *Internationales Theater Frankfurt* Frankfurt, Germany 20:00 Uhr
- **October 19th - 24th:** *Japan week* performances in Poznan, Poland
- **December 31st:** Tokara New Year Mini Concert *Hotel Keizan Hirugami Onsen, Achi Village, Nagano Prefecture, Japan*

The Edinburgh Fringe!!

Written by Dean Havixbeck.

Hello All, Welcome to the September Edition of the Tokara newsletter. This issue is all about our gauntlet of performances from August 1st to the 26th during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Needless to say we had a blast. Whether it was our daily treks to the show, or our excursions to the Royal Mile on High Street to perform on the outdoor stage (literally drumming on the stage because of the noise complaints coming from all the other stages up and down the Mile), or our wanderings around the inner city of Edinburgh, passing out an ever exhausting supply of flyers and putting up posters. What seemed like a gauntlet of performances flew by like a spectacular flash of lightning in the sky.



Daily treks to the performance



Passing out flyers on the Royal Mile



Art sensei conversing with an excited little fan

performances or seen a video of “Hatou no Hibiki”, you will be aware of another one of Art Sensei’s multiple talents: his extraordinary ability to manipulate his eyebrows at will. Well, much to his amazement, there was a boy sitting in the front row in another show who was able to match him twitch for twitch... the first time in Art Sensei’s life that he has met someone with this same ability.

Next, “Wild Child” Yukari Ichise. Her favorite moment... the first day when we found out that we only had five minutes for setup and take down of our set. For those of you who know anything about taiko drum shows, this would seem like an impossible task. However,

There are obviously a number of stories that accumulated along the way, though to keep this from becoming a novel, I will grab one favorite story from each one of us to give you a little more of a sense of what our time at the Fringe was like.

We start off with our leader, teacher and artistic director, Art Lee. His favorite moment from the festival was the little boy from Singapore who was so excited during the show, he could not help but spontaneously express his joy at the top of his lungs while Art Sensei was talking between pieces. This resulted in the two of them having their own little conversations with each other about how the show was progressing, much to the delight of the rest of the audience. Oh, and if you have ever been to one of our



Art Sensei and Yukari-san with Edinburgh Castle in background

after an initial moment of disbelief, all of the members pulled together and raced through the setup and take down of the set with barely a spoken word, speeding from one task to the next, making the allotted time on the first day to the amazement of the stage crew at the venue. For Yukari-san, thinking back on that moment she could feel the harmony of dedication and trust between the performers that appeared as if from instinct.

Takafumi-san's favorite moment occurred a few times during our performances. It came right at the



Starting Silk Road, at the beginning of the show

people max on three sides of a thrust stage. And once all of our equipment is in place, there is a meter and a half at best between the closest drum to the first row. The room itself is a box shape, with no windows and two exits. When that first big "Don" comes, there is not a lot of options for those sound waves to travel except through the members of the audience. So, on occasion this sudden blast of sound would startle some in the audience, resulting in a little jump out of their seats.



"In this era of health and safety awareness, a sign by the booking office tells all... It sure does! And get this, some of it is very loud and very fast. It is also enjoyably infectious." David Kerr reporter for Counter Culture

beginning of the show, on the first big "Don" in fact. If you would like to hear that first moment, you can check out the link [here](#) (Note: for full effect be sure to have your volume set to max, provided your sound system can handle it). Let me paint a little picture if I may, to set the tone. Our venue was at C Venues CToo, venue 4. This is usually a storage area below St. Columba's Church, almost behind Edinburgh Castle. The venue seats 150



Art Sensei with Martin Peacock



Moe-san finds one word to aptly describe our show

item: the rental van keys. And although this event was something that could easily bring down the momentum of the group and the positive energies we were creating for our shows, we all pulled together to cut through the negative emotions that threatened to overwhelm us, dealt with the fallout of the stolen bag and keys and moved right on through the next performances. As the next few days went by, things began to return to the regular routine. Then one morning, five days after the bag was reported stolen, a hostel down the street from where we were performing called the box office to report that they had found my bag, along with most of its contents, including the van keys! That day, August 23rd, was without a doubt the most energizing concert for me. It was like Christmas, looking through my bag to see nearly all the items in it still there, along with the van keys, as well as a few items that I forgot were in there in the first place. What an incredible stroke of good fortune!!

I must admit, the first time I saw it happen, I had to bite a smile from my lips as well.

For our invaluable sitter, Moe Havixbeck, her favorite times were wandering through the Meadows park with Jhendara and Thorven, trekking from one playground to the next enjoying the city landscapes as well as the variety of weather that Scotland has to offer.

As for me, my most memorable moment was both unfortunate and then incredibly lucky. On the 18th day of our show, we finished our set and rushed through the takedown, only to discover that my bag had been stolen. Although unfortunate, everything in the bag was replaceable with the exception of a couple of personal mementos and one extremely important



Tokara flowing through Mizukagami



Grete Moortgat convincing people to come to the show

Also, on the final six days of the show, our good friend Grete Moortgat from [Feniks Taiko](#) joined us for the first piece in our performance. We were honored to have her as a guest performer, and it was a most memorable way to bring in a close to Tokara's fourth visit to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

The next day found us packing up and traveling to our next point on the tour. Two days and six countries later, we ended up in Germany, where we begin the second half of our Kazakoshi tour in Europe. This includes a number

of workshops and concerts, which are listed at the top of our newsletter. So if you find yourself anywhere near us for the next few workshops and/or concert dates, please stop on by and say hello!



*A sketch of Tokara members drawn by Sandy while he watched our show
www.sandysdrawingroom.com*

WADAIKO 遙 TOKARA



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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 2013 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 23 - 28, 2014

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 Nagano Prefecture, Japan. 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>

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