

World-famous Japanese drumming troupe visits the UK this February celebrating its 40th Anniversary with One Earth Tour 2022: Tsuzumi

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The renowned Japanese drumming troupe **Kodo** is set to embark on its 40th anniversary visit to Europe in February this year, stopping off in the UK at Basingstoke (9 Feb), Manchester (11 Feb), Birmingham (13 Feb), Sunderland (16 Feb) and Saffron Walden (18 Feb) with its **One Earth Tour 2022: Tsuzumi**.

This new anniversary production features some pieces composed in the 80's when the group first formed, but also features some of the newer recently composed work of the younger Kodo members. Explains Kodo performer, Leo Ikenaga:

"You could say that the newer compositions of Kodo are merging with the older traditional pieces of Kodo, so you actually get to see the whole history of Kodo in this performance!"

Kodo is one of Japan's most successful musical exports having performed over 6,500 live shows across five continents. Since its inception in 1981, the group has performed at a Nobel Peace Prize Concert, numerous World Cup shows and taken the stage at countless concert halls around the world.

Central to Kodo's acclaimed performances is the Taiko; a traditional Japanese drum that is embedded in the country's ancient culture. The rhythmic sounds of the Taiko can be heard at community festivals and religious ceremonies across the country, but since 1980 Kodo reinvented the Taiko as a performance instrument and kick-started a global obsession with the instrument.

Kodo's stage performance incorporates the use of numerous Taiko drums of varying sizes from small, hand-held instruments to the centre-piece 'Odaiko' drum which measures 1.45 metres. Other traditional instruments including cymbals and bamboo flutes are also featured to produce the group's traditional yet forward-thinking sound.

According to Kodo, the possibilities of Taiko are endless. The troupe is constantly innovating with sound, texture and rhythm, incorporating elements from other cultures such as Indonesian and Korean music to push the boundaries of the instrument.

Kodo is infamous for its rigorous training regime. As a group of professional musicians, Kodo have certain things in common with Olympic athletes! The troupe is based on the remote Island of Sado off the west coast of Japan and new recruits must undergo a two-year apprenticeship without phones, TV or internet access. Those that make it through the demanding apprenticeship become a member of the troupe that tours the world for around two-thirds of the year.

Kodo's boundless skill and discipline is put on full display in the troupe's live shows that have earned global acclaim for its intensity, virtuosity and beauty.

Says Leo:

"We hope as many people as possible will take this opportunity to come and see us on this special tour. You really have to see us to understand Kodo (which means heartbeat) – as we literally put everything – including our hearts – into each and every performance to make a connection with the audience. The venue will actually shake!"

Kodo's mission is to bring Taiko to all corners of the world and spread the message of its community; to find a peaceful and harmonious balance between humanity and the natural world.

Kodo will begin its tour of England on the 9th February 2022 with performances at:

9 Feb: Basingstoke, Anvil Arts

11 Feb: Manchester, Bridgewater Hall

13 Feb: Birmingham, Symphony Hall

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