

Press Release

Internationally renowned taiko drumming group, 'Wadaiko Tokara' from Japan introduces an all new concert called "Kazakoshi (Mountain Wind)", 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.

What does it take to become a professional taiko performer with Wadaiko Tokara? Artistic Director Art Lee explains the type of training taken on by performers as a prerequisite to the stage.

"Daily routines usually require us to run 10 kilometers, do 200 sit-ups, 200 push-ups, and other exercises before breakfast; clean the office and practice drumming for three hours before lunch. Then practice pounding on big drums with big, wooden sticks for another three hours before dinner".

With such a training schedule, it is little wonder that Art Lee is considered to be one of the top taiko artists and performers in the world. He is the first and still the only person in the world to be awarded an unsponsored artist visa by the Japanese government to live in Japan as a professional taiko performer, teacher and composer. He is also the only non-Japanese person in history to ever win Odaiko Grand Champion at the most renowned taiko competition in the world - the Tokyo International Taiko Competition.

His group, Wadaiko Tokara is one of the most unique to come out of Japan. The group tours internationally four to five times each year to audiences in their native Japan, as well as throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Taiwan, and India.

Tour highlights include a two week run Off Broadway in New York, the 2005 Japan Expo, the Taipei City 150th Anniversary, and the Asano Taiko 400th Anniversary.

Concert Details:

Title: "Kazakoshi" (Mountain Wind)

Date: Saturday, May 25, 2013

Place: The Barnfield Theatre

Time: 7:30pm

Tickets: Theatre Box Office - 01392 270891

Quotes from previous performances:

They communicated such joy...that I was absolutely enchanted...I felt pure primal joy as the beat reverberated through my body... - *NipponDaze*

"Catch them while you can. If you don't, you'll probably either live to regret it or probably never know what you missed" - *Edinburgh Fringe Review*

Wadaiko Tokara Office

3598 Misajiro, Matsuo, Iida City, Nagano Prefecture 395-0826 **Japan**

TEL: +81(0)265-59-8768 **Email:** tour@tokara.net **Website:** www.tokara.net