



## Taiko Master **Kenny Endo**

35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour: Gateway



For booking, contact:  
**Pasifika Artists Network LLC**  
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# KENNY ENDO

**"Jazzy...earthy...sassy"** (*Nadir Magazine, Tokyo*)

Taiko artist Kenny Endo celebrates his 35th year of taiko (Japanese drum) drumming in 2010 with a performance tour featuring an exciting group of musicians from both Japan and the US.

One of the leading personas in contemporary percussion and rhythm, Endo is the vanguard of the taiko genre, continuing to pave new paths in this Japanese style of drumming. A performer, composer, and teacher of taiko, he has received numerous awards and accolades.

He was the first foreigner to be honored with a "natori," stage name, in Japanese classical drumming. Kenny Endo is a consummate artist, blending Japanese taiko with rhythms influenced from his jazz background and collaborations around the world into original melodies and improvisation. For more information, audio, and photos, please visit [www.kennyendo.com](http://www.kennyendo.com).

### GATEWAY -- 'MA' vs GROOVE -- 35th Anniversary Tour

For his 35th anniversary as a taiko artist, Kenny Endo has assembled an all-star cast of musicians to premiere his newest work *Gateway—Ma vs Groove*, as well as share traditional Japanese music and the excitement of Endo's dynamic original compositions. Four master musicians will join Endo for the tour which is scheduled to cross the USA from Hawai'i to the east coast.

*Gateway--Ma vs Groove* will explore the Japanese concept of 'ma' (room, interval) juxtaposed with the Western musical concept of groove (playing with swing, 'in the pocket', in Japanese- 'nori'). In Western music when no sounds are made, it is called a rest while in Japanese music as much energy is put into the 'ma' as the sounds. Although seemingly at odds, these two concepts are like yin and yang. It is that space in rhythm that creates the feeling of propulsion and energy in the music. Concepts of stillness and movement, left and right, old and new, in and out, and entrance and inaccessibility—all are interrelated, indispensable, and shape the rhythms of our lives.

**The 2010-11 tour offers concerts, lecture-demonstrations, workshops, and master classes.**

### About the Guest Artists

- ❖ **Hitoshi Hamada** (vibraphones, percussion): Playful and virtuosic, Hitoshi Hamada is one of Japan's top jazz vibraphonists.
- ❖ **Kaoru Watanabe** (shinobue, Nohkan, flute, taiko): Raised by classical musician parents, Kaoru Watanabe is the #1 transverse bamboo flutist in the United States, and is a former artistic director and principal flutist of the world famous KODO.
- ❖ **Shoko Matsumoto** (*koto, dance*): Shoko Hikage is a creative and daring koto (Japanese zither) player (started playing koto at age 3) and an experimental dancer.
- ❖ **Tadayoshi Yasuda** (*shamisen*): A shamisen (3-stringed Japanese lute) artist in kabuki theatre style, he has performed for some of the greatest kabuki actors of this time, as well as Japanese National Living Treasures and rock, jazz, and blues artists.

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## PHOTOS – 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour



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(vibraphones, percussion)



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**KENNY ENDO is one of the leading personas in contemporary percussion and rhythm. He is the vanguard of the taiko genre, continuing to pave new paths in this Japanese style drumming after over thirty years as a career taiko player. A performer, composer, and teacher of taiko with numerous awards and accolades, Kenny Endo is a consummate artist, blending Japanese taiko with rhythms influenced from around the world into original melodies and improvisation.**

Originally trained as a jazz musician in the Asian American cultural renaissance of 1970s California, Endo began his taiko career first with L.A.'s groundbreaking Kinnara Taiko, and then with the renowned San Francisco Taiko Dojo, the first kumi daiko group outside of Japan. In 1980, he embarked on a decade-long odyssey in his ancestral Japan, studying and performing with the masters of ancient classical drumming, traditional Tokyo festival music, and ensemble drumming. Endo has the honor of being the first non-Japanese national to have received a natori (stage name and masters degree) in hogaku hayashi (classical drumming). In the hogaku world, Endo is known as Mochizuki Tajiro.

**In the greater musical world, “Kenny Endo” has become synonymous with “taiko.” He is arguably one of the most versatile musicians in the genre, crossing easily between the classical Japanese style and his own neo-classical, globally-inspired variety.** Among his many distinctions are an M.A. in Ethnomusicology from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, an artist residency at the Lincoln Center Institute in New York, his own “Kenny Endo Day” proclaimed by the Mayor of Honolulu, and certificates of honor from the House and Senate of the State of Hawaii and Honolulu City Council.

Endo has recorded five CDs of original taiko compositions, and was a featured artist on the PBS special “Spirit of Taiko.” He has performed for musicians Michael Jackson and Prince as well as Princess Diana and Prince Charles. He opened for The Who, performed a duet with singer Bobby McFerrin, and is featured on the soundtracks for Kayo Hatta’s film “Picture Bride” and Francis Ford Coppola’s “Apocalypse Now.” Endo’s taiko skills have taken him to the Microsoft Global Meeting in Atlanta, the Smithsonian, the National Museum of American History, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the Theatre de Champs-Elysee in Paris, the Kabukiza and National Theater in Japan, **He has performed with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Honolulu Symphony, and the Tokyo Symphony**, traveling across Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania, the former Soviet Union, and the Americas in his effort to share taiko with the world.

Endo has received commissions to create and tour new work from the American Composers Forum, the McKnight Foundation, Continental Harmony, The Children’s Theater Company, the Rockefeller Foundation (MAPP), the Japan Foundation, the Freeman Foundation, Hawai’i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, Stanford Lively Arts, and the Honolulu Mayor’s Office of Culture and the Arts.

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## DISCOGRAPHY



### **On The Way [Michi Yuki] (2007)**

Featuring Joji Hirota, John Kaizan Neptune, and Kenny Endo  
A new collaborative project featuring all original compositions  
Taiko, bamboo flutes, temple bells, voice, Japanese and world percussion, and Japanese classical drums



### **Essence (2001)**

Featuring Kenny Endo, Masayuki Koga, Michiyo Koga  
Pure improvisation with three fine musicians on taiko, shakuhachi, and koto



### **Jugoya (2000)**

Featuring the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensembles of Tokyo and Honolulu  
Includes "Jugoya," "Winds of Change," "Forest Festival" and more  
Taiko, bamboo flutes, vibraphones, east Indian bansuri flute, Latin, Japanese, and world percussion, Japanese classical drums and voice patterns



### **Hibiki (1998)**

Featuring the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble of Tokyo  
Includes "Swing, Soul, and Sincerity," "Sunflower," "Spirit of Rice" and more  
Taiko, bamboo flutes, 17-string bass koto, east Indian bansuri flute, Latin, Japanese, and world percussion, Japanese classical drums and voice patterns



### **Eternal Energy (1994)**

Featuring the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble of Tokyo  
Includes "Spirit Sounds," "Umi" and more  
Taiko, bamboo flutes, 17-string bass koto, Latin, Japanese, and world percussion, Japanese classical drums and voice patterns



### **The Spirit of Taiko (2006) DVD**

Traces the development of taiko through the eyes of three generations of artists, bringing this bold and dramatic music alive: Seiichi Tanaka, the grand master credited with establishing the first kumi-daiko (taiko group) in the US; his protégé, Kenny Endo who went on to become the first non-Japanese national to receive a natori (stage name) in Japanese classical drumming, and Masato Baba, a promising taiko drummer raised on the art form. *The Spirit of Taiko* chronicles the history of taiko in the U.S. from its roots in Japan to its expanding popularity in the U.S. Includes interviews with Seiichi Tanaka, Kenny Endo, Masato Baba, PJ Hirabayashi, members of Kinnara Taiko, Tiffany Tamaribuchi, Russel Baba and Jeanne Aiko Mercer, Mark Miyoshi and many others. Bonus material includes interviews and performances not seen on the TV broadcast.