



Gocoo

GOCOO are seven female and four male drummers who capture their audience with original grooves woven with Japanese drums, Taikos. On stage the 11 musicians from Tokyo create with almost 40 drums a music-spectacle beyond imagination. Music-wise GOCOO are one of the most sophisticated percussion groups of the present. The cosmic beats and uniquely sophisticated poly-rhythms are of such primal nature that they reflect all known music styles and consequently unite people of all ages, ethnic and social origins and of any taste in music. No matter where GOCOO performs, on major Blues&Roots, Rock&Pop or alternative Rock festivals, in live clubs, classic theatres and concert halls or at techno events, GOCOO takes all audiences on a mesmerizing trip between trance and ecstasy. For many performances GOCOO is supported by guest musician GoRo, a didgeridoo virtuoso who adds spherical sound flows to GOCOO's goose-bumps music.

While many Taiko groups stoically pursue a traditional style, and while others seek new interpretations of traditional Japanese music, GOCOO's beat exhibits free-spirited Taiko music, rising freely between the East and the West, tradition and pop, rite and party and hence appealing directly to the heart of a broad range of audiences. Although GOCOO's music is often referred to as crossover or world music, or even new terms such as Techno- and Trance-Taiko are created to pay tribute to their unique rhythms, GOCOO successfully overcame any stereotyped concepts not only of Japanese drum music and reached their own, independent cult status. Free of ritual obligations, women, for example, have the majority among GOCOO's members. Above all the charismatic female lead drummer Kaoly Asano. "The drummers show strengths of young Japanese musicians that are usually indicative of techno pioneers such as Ken Ichi: It's a mix of Western culture and own cultural customs, moulded into new acoustic forms" says Michael Wenzel of *Triggerfish*. The sound of GOCOO's music is so uniquely catchy that not only the makers of the *Matrix* movies discovered GOCOO's tunes for their soundtracks. Major Japanese companies such as Hitachi or Toyo Tires also use GOCOO's beats for their TV spots.

GOCOO was founded 1997 in Tokyo. They debuted the same year, completely untypical for a Taiko group, at the Techno Festival *Rainbow 2000*. Since then, GOCOO's frequent live performances at Tokyo's cult locations, such as *Aoyama CAY* and *Shibuya On Air*, are packed with young followers who usually tend to shy away from traditional music.

But for them, GOCOO's trance-like, danceable sound is simply excellent rock- or pop music. GOCOO also appear side by side with other bands and DJs at rave parties or open air festivals such as the *Fuji Rock Festival*, *Asagiri Jam*, or the *Hotaka Mountain Festival*.

Yet, GOCOO are highly recognized among the circles of traditional Taiko: for instance GOCOO performed at the *35th Nihon no Taiko: Taiko ha Koeru* (Japanese Taiko Drums Transcend) at the Japanese National Theatre in 2001 and they appeared together with the legendary, traditional Taiko ensemble Kodo at Tokyo's *Earthbeat Festival* in June 2005. Furthermore, GOCOO took the chance to perform with several highly achieved artists such as Korea's Kim Duk-soo of SamulNori, West-Africa's djembe player Mamady Keita, and Seiichi Tanaka of the *San Francisco Taiko Ensemble*. GOCOO's music reflects all these different aspects of musical diversity and interaction.

In 2000 GOCOO's first solo album *Healing Asia Vol.2* was released. It was sound engineered by Shinichi Tanaka and recorded with no over-dubbing. The result was a brilliant album of intricate rhythm overlays and powerful grooves rivalling GOCOO's live performances. November of the same year marked another milestone for GOCOO with their first US tour.

At the beginning of 2002, GOCOO joined Juno Reactor (UK) for a recording session which resulted that same fall in the release of the maxi single *Hotaka*. In June 2002, Universal Music published GOCOO's first live album *Live'01*.

In January 2003 GOCOO performed for the first time in Europe: at the opening party *The Cutting Edge of Japanese Underground* of Graz as the Culture Capital of Europe 2003 they entertained a five-thousand strong audience. Shortly before, GOCOO performed on television during a European-wide live-broadcast of the show *Graz fliegt*. They followed up with a tour throughout Germany. Whether in northern or southern Germany, wherever GOCOO appeared, people were enthralled by their enticing rhythms repeatedly asking the band for several encores. Another highlight during that

year marked the joined recordings *Tea House* and *Tetsujin* with Juno Reactor as they produced the soundtrack of the Hollywood blockbusters *Matrix Reloaded* and *Matrix Revolutions*. Successively, GOCOO released their first DVD *Live'02*. In December two new CDs with tracks performed by GOCOO were released: Juno Reactor's CD *Zwara EP* and the CD *Best of Healing Asia. Amatsuchi No Aida*.

The following year GOCOO was already destined to return to Europe. Prior to the summer tour 2004 including appearances in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands, German television 3sat broadcasted a feature on GOCOO produced in Tokyo. Additionally, GOCOO's second live album *Lovebeat* was released. Particular highlights of the tour were GOCOO's performances at the Zeltmusikfestival (Freiburg, Germany) in front of 2.500 people and their appearance entertaining 15.000 people at the Swiss Gurtenfestival, broadcasted by Swiss television. While being on tour, GOCOO briefly eloped to a recording studio in Hamburg (Germany) to contribute to the soundtrack of the sequel of one of the most successful role-play computer games to be finally released in October 2006: *Gothic III*.

In autumn 2005 GOCOO performed 34 concerts during a two months long tour through Europe and Mexico. And in April 2006 GOCOO conquered for the first time Australia where they performed two memorable concerts at the internationally acclaimed East Coast International Blues & Roots Music Festival before the band returned in June to Europe for their fourth time. They performed in Germany, Czech, Serbia and Greece. The concert in Belgrade was recorded by Serbia's national TV and later broadcasted.

Lead drummer, Kaoly Asano, attracts much attention as a female Taiko artist. Whenever not performing with GOCOO on stage, she teaches the art of playing the Taiko at her famous Taiko school in Tokyo.