



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Announcing Portland Taiko's 2001 Fall Performance
SONIC BOOM: The Big Drum Concert

**Featuring Portland's new Okedo-Daiko,
the largest drum in the Pacific Northwest**

Asian American
Drum Performance

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(Portland, OR) – Portland Taiko's fall concert, *SONIC BOOM*, featuring Portland's new Okedo-Daiko, will take place September 7 & 8, 2001 at 8:00 p.m. at the Newmark Theater (Portland Center for the Performing Arts). Tickets (\$16.50 - \$24.00) are available at all FASTIXX outlets or by calling 503-224-8499. Portland Taiko's public Concert Hotline is 503-299-0129.

SONIC BOOM features Portland Taiko's newest compositions - including *seven* world premieres – as well as the group's newest instruments. Measuring nearly five feet across and six feet long, the 350-pound new okedo drum will share its breathtaking sound with audiences for the first time at *SONIC BOOM*. The dynamic range of the massive drumheads on the Okedo-Daiko offers a wide palette of sounds for the taiko drummer to express. Portland Taiko performers have been in training all year to prepare for the debut performance of this massive instrument, the largest drum in the Pacific Northwest.

The concert also showcases Portland Taiko's unique mix of thunder, melody, humor and drama. The show will include a collaborative work with guest flamenco guitarist, Toshi Onizuka, a Japanese musician who spent five years studying and performing with traditional flamenco groups in Spain. The dramatic "Questions of Loyalty" explores the unconstitutional internment of Japanese Americans through spoken word, multimedia, and taiko. Other new works meld taiko performance with bamboo flute, violin, oboe, folk songs, and dance. "Amaterasu", one of Portland Taiko's signature pieces, tells the humorous folktale of the sun goddess' conflict with her brother, the storm god. "Taikokinesis" features whirling, athletic movement and dynamic drumming.

SONIC BOOM caps an intense year of performance and artistic expression for Portland Taiko. The company's touring ensemble recently completed a six-state tour of 22 cities – from Anchorage to Palo Alto – to standing ovations and rave reviews. *SONIC BOOM*, the culmination of the group's annual season, presents the leading edge of Portland Taiko's creative work. Featuring the full home

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company of 16 performers playing the group's latest works on its full contingent of taiko instruments, Portland Taiko's **SONIC BOOM** is not to be missed! The public should not wait to buy tickets – last year's Portland Taiko concert at the Newmark Theater (*CROSSINGS*) sold out both nights, prior to the doors opening.

About Portland Taiko

Established in 1994, **Portland Taiko** is an Asian American drumming group dedicated to creating, sharing and preserving culture through performance. The only professional taiko company in the Northwestern United States, the ensemble is widely recognized as a leading group in the North American taiko community. For thousands of years, the booming voice of the taiko, or Japanese drum, has called the community together in ceremony and celebration. Portland Taiko echoes that tradition while taking Asian American music into unexplored territory with its innovative and provocative creations. “*Portland Taiko is emerging as an innovator in taiko music.*” – **Bob Edwards, National Public Radio.**

About the Guest Artist

Toshi Onizuka folds Jazz, Rock, New Age, Classical, Middle Eastern, and Asian influences into the complex rhythms of Flamenco to create a sound that is uniquely his. Born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1965, his first musical inspirations were Al Di Meola and Django Reinhardt, but it wasn't until he discovered the art of Paco de Lucia that Toshi devoted himself to studying the music of the great Spanish guitarists. His distinctive sound combines flat picking with dynamic percussive sounds made on the surface of his guitar. Toshi took a five-year pilgrimage to Spain, honing his technique and performing professionally, most notably with the renowned groups **Coral de Los Reyes** and **Pata Negra**.

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