

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Portland Taiko Unplugged!
A “Live House” performance of innovative taiko

April 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 2002
7:30pm Wed.-Sat. and 2pm Sat. & Sun. matinee
1300 NW Northrup, Portland
Tickets available at Fastixx, 503-224-8499

(Portland, OR) – Portland Taiko presents an intimate performance of innovative taiko at *Portland Taiko Unplugged*, April 24 - 28 (7:30 p.m. Wed-Sat and 2:00 p.m. Sat & Sun matinee) at 1300 NW Northrup, Portland. Tickets (\$15.00 - \$17.00) are available at all FASTIXX outlets or by calling 503-224-8499 (additional phone charges apply).

It’s intimate. It’s personal. It’s Portland Taiko’s touring ensemble performing at home in a new spring show: a heart-pounding evening of innovative, small-ensemble taiko works! During PT’s recent pilgrimage to Japan, the group encountered some of the most innovative and exciting taiko performances in intimate, non-theater settings where the audience was able to get up-close-and-personal with the performers. They call these “live houses” or just “live” (pronounced “lie-boo”). Inspired by those innovations in Japan, PT decided to let its hair down and try out a “live house” format for the spring show: *Portland Taiko Unplugged!*

Imagine experiencing the boom of taiko in an intimate space while sipping from a glass of red wine, then chatting with performers about their new creations after the show. This very opportunity will come **April 24- 28, 2002**. PT’s “live” will be at a hip pad in the Pearl District, above the Bridgeport Brewhouse at 1300 NW Northrup, Portland.

The program will feature the group’s smaller core ensemble in a dynamic range of pieces, a few of which are collaborations with artists from last spring’s dynamic *ArtExplosion!* event. PT is thrilled to have renowned composer and Persian lute performer Dariush Dolat-shahi as special guest artist this spring. Lauded for his ethereal lute improvisation at *ArtExplosion*, this rare appearance is not to be missed. He has composed a new work especially for Portland Taiko that will premiere at *Portland Taiko Unplugged*. Also from *ArtExplosion* is the talented choreographer Minh Tran. As a guest choreographer for this special show, his solo *Optimum* will be set to original music by PT and danced by PT’s own Naoko Amemiya.

Throughout the concert, the audience will see and hear the influences from PT’s time in Japan. Inspired by the creativity and rich disciplines nestled within the busy city of Tokyo, Ann Ishimaru’s *To Fly* honors the strength of Asian American women and fuses Edo-bayashi-inspired rhythms, wu shu movements, bamboo flute and violin. And an exciting new work for voice, taiko, and movement will share the inspiration and exuberance experienced by PT ensemble

members during their visit to rural Sado Island, cultural sanctuary and home of the world-famous taiko company *Kodo* and its voice and dance ensemble, *Hanayui*. The performance will also feature the ensemble's explorations in improvisation.

Portland Taiko Unplugged is made possible in part by the generous support of the Regional Arts and Culture Council, the Oregon Arts Commission, and the Allen Foundation for the Arts. Special thanks also to BodyVox Dance. **Due to the nontraditional venue, audience members for whom stairs are difficult should please contact us prior to the show so we can make special arrangements ((503) 288-2456).** Tickets are available at all Safeway Fastixx ticket centers, by calling 503-224-8499, or on the website at www.fastixx.com.

About Portland Taiko

Established in 1994, **Portland Taiko** is an Asian American drumming group that, through artistic excellence and innovation in taiko, inspires audiences, affirms Asian pride, builds community, and educates about our heritage and culture. 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 Performer and Composer

Dariush Dolat-shahi began his study of traditional Persian music at age 10 at the Tehran Conservatory of Music. After earning his bachelor degree from Tehran University, the Dutch government awarded him with a four-year fellowship to study at the Amsterdam Conservatory of Music and at The Institute of Sonology in Utrecht. He continued his studies in electronic music at Columbia University where he received his doctorate degree. Dariush twice won the Gaudeamus International Music Competition for composers in Holland and has been nominated for the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His commissions and performances include those of Tehran Symphony Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Utrecht Symphony Orchestra and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. Dariush's performances have received critical acclaim nationally as well as internationally. The New York Times has heralded him as a "*masterful performer*".

About the Guest Choreographer

Minh Tran has been working throughout the West Coast as a choreographer, performer, and educator for over a decade. Trained as a Vietnamese opera performer at the National School of Fine and Performing Arts in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam, Minh later received his MFA in Dance from the University of Washington. He is a recipient of numerous regional grants, fellowships, and commissions in support of his work and is currently a recipient of New York's Dance Theater Workshop Suitcase Fund supported by the Rockefeller Foundation to conduct research of dances in mainland Southeast Asia. Last year Minh traveled to Bali, Indonesia as part of his touring with the UCLA Center for Intercultural Performance Program.