



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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***A Place Called Home***  
**Portland Taiko's Spring Concert of New Works**

May 19, 20, 21, 22, 2005  
8pm Thurs.-Sat. and 2pm Sat. & Sun. matinee  
Tribe Theater & Gallery, 510 NW Glisan, Portland  
Tickets available at TicketsWest, 800-992-8499

Asian American  
Drum Performance

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**(Portland, OR) – Portland Taiko presents an intimate performance of innovative taiko at *A Place Called Home*, May 19-22 (8 p.m. Thurs.-Sat and 2:00 p.m. Sat & Sun matinee) at the Tribe Theater & Gallery, 510 NW Glisan, Portland. Tickets (\$19/17 plus service charges) are available at all TicketsWest outlets or by calling 800-992-8499 (additional phone charges apply). Season subscriptions (\$65) available from Portland Taiko.**

Ever wonder what it might be like to invite Portland Taiko into your living room? Get up-close-and-personal with PT in an evening of exciting new works exploring the varied moods and voices of the *taiko* (Japanese drum) in an intimate theater in Portland's own historic *Nihonmachi*, or Japantown.

Through pieces featuring rhythm, movement, folksong, melody, and the undeniable heartbeat of taiko, the group's smaller core ensemble will discover what happens when the traditions of Japan combine with American influences like ragtime, jazz and latin music to create new American culture. Drawing inspiration from the history and stories of Portland's pre-World War II Japantown, the ensemble will present new and restaged works as a journey from the past to the future. As we become increasingly part of a larger world, as our community changes, and American taiko evolves in the future, who knows what uncharted artistic realms we will someday call home? Take a peek at the dynamic possibilities!

Audience members can also look forward to collaborations with talented multi-instrumentalist *Mitch Imori* (oboe, shamisen, guitar) and award-winning poet *Lawson Inada*. A new collaboration for shamisen (traditional Japanese lute) and taiko will "play" with the notion of tradition and innovation, finding new expression for ancient instruments with blues and funk explorations. *From the Village*, a restaged work for voice, taiko, and movement, will share the inspiration and exuberance experienced by PT ensemble members during their visit to Japan and create new possibilities for taiko choreography. Poet *Lawson Inada*'s powerful spoken word performance will weave the works together, from traditions carried across the Pacific to the future unbound.

A special neighborhood walking tour will be provided on Sunday, May 22, prior to the 2:00pm concert. The public is invited to join the Arts, Culture and History Group of the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood to learn more about Japantown and other historical points of interest, current neighborhood cultural and arts organizations, and the different ethnic groups that had businesses in the earlier days of the neighborhood. Meet at 12:30pm at the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center(121 NW 2nd Ave). The tour will conclude near Tribe Theater in time for the Sunday concert. For more information, contact June Arima Schumann at ONLC (503-224-1458), Rosario Aglialoro at NW China Council (503-973-5451), or Amy Fryer at the Chinese Classical Garden (503-228-8131).

*A Place Called Home* is made possible in part by the generous support of the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the Miller Foundation, the Regional Arts and Culture Council, and the Oregon Arts Commission. **Seating is very limited due to the intimate, nontraditional venue.** Season subscriptions are available from Portland Taiko for \$65 and include the *Trading Thunder* fall concert at the Newmark Theater, featuring a joint performance by Obo Addy's *Okropong* and Portland Taiko (503-288-2456, [www.portlandtaiko.org](http://www.portlandtaiko.org)). Individual tickets are available at all Safeway TicketsWest ticket centers, by calling 800-992-8499, or on the website at [www.TicketsWest.com](http://www.TicketsWest.com).

### **About Portland Taiko**

*Established in 1994, Portland Taiko is an award-winning Asian American drum performance ensemble. Through artistic excellence and innovation in taiko, Portland Taiko inspires audiences, affirms Asian American pride, builds community, and educates about our heritage and culture. The first professional taiko company in the Northwestern United States, the ensemble is widely recognized as a leading group in the North American taiko community, with tours across the country, awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Composers Forum, and a year-round fulltime professional artistic core. During its East Coast tour last year, it made its Kennedy Center debut in Washington, DC before a standing-room-only crowd at the Millennium Stage.*

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. The group is currently working on its first DVD, to be released this summer. **Discography:** Making Waves (2000), Big Bang (2003). “‘Big Bang’ represents both an engineering and musical triumph. This album delivers a wholly engaging mix of bone-rattling drumming interspersed by Japanese singing and chanting and occasional coloristic touches on two violins and flute.”

– Norm Weinstein, *The Beat*.

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