



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Portland Taiko to Trade Rhythmic Thunder with Obo Addy!
Trading Thunder – the Concert

September 23 – 25, 2005, at the Newmark Theater

Featuring: Guest Artist and Composer **Obo Addy**, Guest Group **Okropong**,
and Guest Dancer/Choreographer **Shohei Kikuchi**

Tickets: PCPA Box Office, www.ticketmaster.com or 503-790-ARTS

(Portland, OR) –

Join **Portland Taiko (PT)** as we trade thunder with African drum master **Obo Addy** and his traditional ensemble, **Okropong**, at Portland Taiko's 2005 season finale concert, **Trading Thunder**. Featuring Portland Taiko's ensemble of over 20 *taiko* drummers performing on the largest drums in the Pacific Northwest, *Trading Thunder* will culminate with the world premiere of Obo's new composition for taiko and African drums. This new work is the result of months of artistic sharing and joint rehearsal with Obo and Portland Taiko made possible by support from the Rockefeller Foundation's Multi-Arts Program the National Endowment for the Arts.

Trading Thunder will also showcase Portland Taiko's newest compositions, including the contemplative melodies of *Sublimity* by Ann Ishimaru, the celebratory rhythms and dance of *Korekara* by incoming Artistic Co-Director Michelle Fujii, a nature-inspired work for the group's largest drums by Zack Semke, a brand new version of the funk-inspired *Fusion* by incoming Artistic Co-Director Teresa Enrico, and more. The group will also be joined by guest artist Shohei Kikuchi of Japan, who has choreographed a solo dance to Zack's *Salmon Ghost Song* for taiko and violin. *Trading Thunder* will share the thrill of whirling movement, pounding rhythm and exhilarating taiko music in the beautiful Newmark Theater in downtown Portland.

Trading Thunder (\$20-26.25, some fees may apply, TicketMaster):

Friday	Sept. 23	8 pm	<i>Trading Thunder</i> Evening Concert
Saturday	Sept. 24	8 pm	<i>Trading Thunder</i> Evening Concert
Sunday	Sept. 25	2 pm	<i>Trading Thunder</i> Matinee Concert

Little Thunder (\$10-14, some fees may apply, TicketMaster):

Saturday	Sept. 24	2 pm	<i>Little Thunder</i> Matinee, a special show for kids
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Portland Taiko's Saturday matinee, **Little Thunder**, will share the dynamism of Japanese and African drumming with kids through a special show of music and stories designed specifically for young audiences. Also, back by popular demand, we've included the Sunday adult matinee (full concert) again this year to offer one

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more opportunity to see the full show. Last year's concert run sold out, so don't hesitate to purchase tickets early.

Passing the Baton (or Bachi!)

Trading Thunder will also be the farewell concert for founders and Co-Directors **Ann Ishimaru** and **Zack Semke**. After eleven rewarding years at the helm of Portland Taiko, Ann and Zack are going back to school at Harvard University. Thanks to careful succession planning by Portland Taiko's staff and board, the group's leadership transition process has met tremendous success, with a dynamic new leadership team coming on board; incoming Executive Director **Michael Griggs**, and incoming Artistic Co-Directors **Teresa Enrico** and **Michelle Fujii** will take up the baton, or *bachi* (drumstick), upon Ann's and Zack's departure after the *Trading Thunder* concert.

Michael brings decades of dynamic leadership of arts organizations to his Executive Directorship of Portland Taiko, most recently as founder and director of the Portland International Performance Festival at Portland State University. Teresa brings over nine years of performance, composition and outreach experience with Portland Taiko to her work as Artistic Co-Director. Michelle, most recently of the LA-based *On Ensemble*, is recognized as a top emerging artist in the North American taiko scene and brings extensive study of Japanese folk traditions to her Artistic Co-Directorship.



About Obo Addy, Artistic Director, Homowo African Arts & Cultures

An original and respected composer whose music reaches far beyond the boundaries of his land of birth, Ghana, Addy has a twenty-year presence on the international performing arts scene and has become known for his ability to celebrate past traditions while expanding to embrace new ideas and foreign influences. His musical background is a combination of the rigorous standards of ritual music he learned from his father, a Wonche Priest, with the flashy international pop music he performed as a young professional with big bands in Accra, Ghana. In 1992, Obo Addy was commissioned by the innovative classical music rebels, the Kronos Quartet to compose "Wawshishijay" for their chart-topping album Pieces of Africa. Addy has been awarded the Oregon Arts Commission and Regional Arts & Culture Council Master's Fellowships, the Governors Award for the Arts and recognition from the Oregon Multicultural Education Association. In 1996, he was awarded the National Heritage Fellowship Award by the National Endowment for the Arts.



About Obo Addy's Okropong

Okropong meaning "eagle" in Addy's native Ga language, performs traditional Ghanaian dance and music chosen from the various ethnic cultures in Ghana, including Ga, Ewe, Ashanti, Dagomba and Dagarti. Using a variety of hand and stick drums, talking drums, bells and shakers,

the musicians build layers of driving rhythms while the dancers, clad in colorful West African garments, engage in an energetic physical "conversation" with the drummers.



About Shohei Kikuchi

Shohei Kikuchi is one of the most respected practitioners of Japanese folk dance today. He served as the principle choreographer for the world-renowned performing arts company, Warabi-za, based in Akita, Japan. After 35 years working with the company, Kikuchi retired to begin his own dance school, Manyoshu, which provides in-depth instruction of Japanese classical and folk dance.



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. 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.

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*.