



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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What: Composer Spotlight

Who: Portland Taiko, Asian American Drum Performance, with Masato Baba, composer

When: Wednesday, May 24, 2006, 6:30pm

Where: PSU Lincoln Hall, Room 75, 1620 SW Park Avenue, Portland

Tickets: \$7. Advance tickets available now through Brown Paper Tickets at 1-800-838-3006 or online at www.portlandtaiko.org. Also available at the door.

For further information: Call (503) 288-2456 or visit www.portlandtaiko.org

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RISING TAIKO STAR MASATO BABA HEADLINES COMPOSER SPOTLIGHT

Portland Taiko, the Asian American drum performance group, presents a Composer Spotlight featuring Masato Baba, an exciting, emerging artist as a player and composer on the international taiko scene, May 24, 2006 at 6:30pm in PSU's Lincoln Hall, Room 75.

Portland Taiko has commissioned Baba to create a new piece to be debuted at Crossing Bridges by Portland Taiko, One World Taiko from Seattle, and Uzume Taiko of Vancouver, BC. Baba recently returned from a 2 year journey studying kumi-daiko (ensemble drumming) and shinobue (Japanese bamboo flute) in Japan, and his composition is influenced by that experience. The piece, which has a working title of *Changing Landscapes*, has five sections depicting different landscapes.

At the Composer Spotlight Baba will play excerpts from the new work with members of Portland Taiko, talk about his sources of inspiration and creative process, and answer audience questions. Light refreshments will be served following the program.

According to Baba, "This song was inspired from a tour I did on the Big Island of Hawaii with Kenny Endo and Shoji Kameda. The Big Island has a vast array of landscapes due to being the youngest island in the Hawaiian island chain. Parts of it is still being formed. The song expresses the feelings I had when I passed through each of

Asian American
Drum Performance

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these environments starting with the volcanoes, jungle, mountains, grasslands, and ending with the ocean.”

Masato Baba started playing taiko at age 6 under the tutelage of his parents and founding members of Shasta Taiko, Russel Baba and Jeanne Mercer. In 1996 he moved to Hawaii to study and perform with the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble. He taught at Endo's school, the Taiko Center of the Pacific, and directed the center's youth group. In Tokyo, he studied taiko with the Nihon Taiko Dojo and bamboo flutes with Kyosuke Suzuki of the Wakayama school. Baba has become one of the most respected taiko players in North America. Currently living in Los Angeles, he maintains an active performance schedule with On Ensemble and as a performing member of TAIKOPROJECT: (re)generation.

Tickets are \$7, or free to Portland Taiko season subscribers. Advance tickets are available now through Brown Paper Tickets at 1-800-838-3006 or online at www.portlandtaiko.org. Tickets are also available at the door the evening of the event.

For further information and to purchase season tickets, call Portland Taiko directly at (503) 288-2456 or visit www.portlandtaiko.org.

The Composer Spotlight series and Masato Baba's commission are partly supported by contributions from The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, The Autzen Foundation, and The Mark Spencer Hotel.

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