



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Photos available

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PORTLAND TAIKO WOWS STANDING ROOM CROWDS AT DC'S KENNEDY CENTER

Asian American
Drum Performance

Portland Taiko, the Asian American drum performance ensemble, played to standing room-only crowds in two performances at Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center this past weekend, drawing enthusiastic responses for its touring concert on Sunday, September 9, and family show, Saturday, September 8. Both shows were at the center's Millennium Stage.

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The family show was part of the Open House Arts Festival on Saturday, a free, all-day festival that is part of the Kennedy Center's prelude to its 2007-2008 season. Portland Taiko also performed as part of the circus-themed Festival's opening, which also included a parade and stilt walkers, a lariat trick roper, and acrobats. Sunday evening's concert was part of the center's 365-day a year series on the Millennium Stage. To see video of that performance and for more information on Portland Taiko's appearance at the Kennedy Center, visit http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/millennium/artist_detail.cfm?artist_id=PORTLTAIKO.

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This was Portland Taiko's second appearance at the prestigious venue in the nation's capital. The group was invited to return after an earlier standing-room only appearance in 2004. PT tours nationally, and this year has also performed in Washington State, Hawaii, and New York, as well as in other parts of Oregon.

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The group returned this week to continue preparations for its annual fall concert at the Newmark Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, September 21-23. In a new theatrical production, *The Way Home*, Portland Taiko weaves spoken word, movement, sets, costumes and lighting with the dynamic rhythms of the big drums to bring to life the search for home and all that comes with it. Inspired by a creative process with local community members, Portland Taiko's drum performance group will be joined onstage by Lawson Inada, Oregon's Poet Laureate, and feature sets by visual artist Valerie Otani and transitional staging and music by composer Byron Au Yong. Portland Taiko's Artistic Co-Directors, Teresa Enrico and Michelle Fujii, are directing the production, which also features new costumes, and lighting by Mark LaPierre.

As the first professional taiko ensemble in the Pacific Northwest and one of a handful of professional groups in North America, Portland Taiko bridges innovative Asian American artistic expression and ancient folk traditions. Since it was formed in 1994, Portland Taiko has reached over 695,000 people through more than 900 community performances, home concerts, school programs, classes and tours and residencies.

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