



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*For immediate release*

*Photos available*

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***What:*** *Spinning the Narrative Thread*

***Who:*** Lawson Inada with Portland Taiko, Asian American Drum Performance

***When:*** Wednesday, June 13, 2007, 6:30pm

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

***Tickets:*** \$7. Advance tickets available now through Brown Paper Tickets at (800) 838-

3006 or online at [www.portlandtaiko.org](http://www.portlandtaiko.org). Also available at the door.

***For further information:*** Call (503) 288-2456 or visit [www.portlandtaiko.org](http://www.portlandtaiko.org)

***Sponsors:*** The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, The Kinsman Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission, and Oregon Cultural Trust.

### **LAWSON INADA JOINS PORTLAND TAIKO FOR EVENING OF TAIKO AND POETRY**

Portland Taiko (PT), Portland's own Asian American drum performance group, welcomes Oregon's Poet Laureate Lawson Inada for an evening of taiko and poetry at 6:30pm Wednesday, June 13 in Portland State University's Lincoln Hall, Room 75, 1620 SW Park Avenue. The special event is a preview of their collaboration in the upcoming fall concert, *The Way Home*, September 21 – 23, 2007.

*Spinning the Narrative Thread* will give audience members a chance to share Mr. Inada and PT's creative processes as they create a narrative framework for the upcoming fall show. Inada and Portland Taiko are working with the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center and the Oregon Vietnamese Cultural Association to engage community members in helping to create the stories that are inspiring new compositions and form the narrative thread that ties together the theme of the meaning of home in the immigrant experience.

The program includes readings and story telling by Inada and previews of some of the taiko compositions being prepared for the concert, including combinations of poetry and taiko. The evening concludes with a Q & A session with the audience.

Lawson Inada is a widely published poet and an emeritus professor of writing at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, where he has taught since 1966. He cur-

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rently serves as Oregon's Poet Laureate – the first poet in that role since it was reestablished after a 15-year hiatus. Inada is a Sansei (a U.S.-born grandchild of Japanese immigrants). In 1942, his family joined over a hundred thousand other Japanese-Americans in camps in California, Arkansas and Colorado -- an event that profoundly shaped his subsequent work. He was one of the co-editors of the landmark anthology, *Aiiieeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*, and has participated in efforts to recover writing by earlier Japanese American authors. He has published several collections of poetry, including *Before the War* and *Legends from Camp*. He has received two National Endowment of the Arts Poetry Fellowships (1972 and 1985), the American Book Award (1984), the Oregon Governor's Arts Award (1997), the Oregon Book Award (1997), and the Pushcart Prize (1996) for Poetry. Calling live performance his favorite form of "publishing," Inada has collaborated with Portland Taiko for past performances.

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. In recent years, Portland Taiko's unique performances and music have placed it onto a national stage with tours that have taken the group all over the country, from Hawaii to the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

*Spinning the Narrative Thread* is the second in a series of Behind-the-Scenes Events that are part of PT's 2007 home season. The popular Behind-the-Scenes events are designed to give audiences a chance to learn more about taiko and its cultural background, to meet guest artists and PT performers in an informal atmosphere, and to get sneak previews of upcoming concerts. Light refreshments are served following each Behind-the-Scenes program.

Tickets are \$7 or free for season subscribers. They are available through Brown Paper Tickets at (800) 838-3006, online at [www.portlandtaiko.org](http://www.portlandtaiko.org), or at the door. Call (503) 288-2456 or visit [www.portlandtaiko.org](http://www.portlandtaiko.org) for further information.

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