



NEWS RELEASE

February 27, 2008

For immediate release

Photos available

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What: Portland Taiko's 2008 Season, *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors*

Who: Portland Taiko, Asian American Drum Performance

When: March 14 – September 21, 2008:

From the Village, Spring Concert, March 14, 8pm; March 15, 2pm & 8pm

Post-show Talk Back with Portland Taiko & Hanayui, March 15, ~ 10:15pm

Shohei Kikuchi: A Studio Performance, June 18, 6:30pm

Guest Artist Spotlight with Shohei Kikuchi and Portland Taiko, August 27, 6:30pm

In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors, Fall Concert, September 19 & 20, 8pm;

September 21, 2pm

Little Feet, Big Drums! Children's Matinee, September 20, 2pm

Where: *From the Village*, Spring Concert, Winningstad Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, 1111 SW Broadway, Portland

Post-show Talk Back with Portland Taiko & Hanayui, Winningstad Theatre,

Portland Center for the Performing Arts, 1111 SW Broadway, Portland

Shohei Kikuchi: A Studio Performance, Moriarty Arts & Humanities Auditorium, PCC Cascade Campus, 705 N Killingsworth, Portland

Guest Artist Spotlight with Shohei Kikuchi and Portland Taiko, Echo Theatre, 1515 SE 37th Avenue, Portland

In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors, Newmark Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, 1111 SW Broadway, Portland

Little Feet, Big Drums! Children's Matinee, Newmark Theatre, PCPA

Tickets: Season tickets on sale now, \$70; Patron Season tickets \$145 at (503) 288-2456 or www.portlandtaiko.org. Advance tickets for *From the Village* available at PCPA Box Office, 1111 SW Broadway, TicketMaster, 503-790-ARTS, or online at www.portlandtaiko.org.com. Call (503) 288-2456 for further information.

Season Sponsors: Paul G. Allen Family Foundation; The Autzen Foundation; Japan Foundation, Performing Arts Japan; Japan Foundation, Los Angeles; Japan-United States Friendship Commission; Kinsman Foundation; MultiArts Production Fund; National Endowment for the Arts; Oregon Arts Commission; and Oregon Cultural Trust. Portland Taiko receives general operating support from the Black United Fund of Oregon, National Endowment for the Arts, Oregon Arts Commission, Regional Arts & Culture Council, and Work for Art.

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2008 PORTLAND TAIKO SEASON FEATURES GUEST ARTISTS FROM JAPAN

Portland Taiko's 2008 Season, *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors*, officially opens March 14, featuring celebrated international guest artists from Japan. PT's 14th annual season integrates dance and song with the dynamic rhythms of the big drums.

(over)

Asian American
Drum Performance

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The season features two full concerts plus three Behind-the-Scenes events. Portland Taiko's Artistic Co-Directors Michelle Fujii and Teresa Enrico have planned a season that brings acclaimed international dance, music and taiko ensemble Hanayui with Kaoru Watanabe for the spring concert *From the Village*, March 14 and 15 at PCPA's Winningstad Theatre. Then the season comes to an exciting conclusion in a collaboration with Shohei Kikuchi, who is creating a new suite of dance and taiko for the fall concert, *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors* debuting at the Newmark Theatre September 19-21. Portland Taiko will present their annual children's matinee, *Little Feet, Big Drums!*, September 20.

Hanayui hails from one of the cradles of Japanese taiko, Sado Island, also home to Kodo, the world famous taiko ensemble. Kodo's spectacular sister company -- principal dancer Chieko Kojima, breathtaking singer Yoko Fujimoto, and Okinawan dance master Mitsue Kinjo—team up with fue player and former artistic director of Kodo's Earth Celebration, Kaoru Watanabe for this rare appearance in Portland. Portland Taiko's portion of the program includes the title work, *From the Village*, inspired by the local group's study tour to Japan in 2001, when PT members visited and studied with members of Hanayui. Hanayui will join Portland Taiko to perform the piece together.

The traditional Japanese holiday Obon is celebrated in America in late July and August to honor ancestors, repay debts of gratitude, connect with community, celebrate the riches of Japanese American heritage, and reawaken the spirits of the living. Inspired by that spirit, PT and guest artist Shohei Kikuchi, master folk dance choreographer and dancer, premiere a new suite of drumming and dance, *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors*. After 35 years with Warabi-za, the world-renowned performing arts company in Akita, Shohei Kikuchi is one of the most respected practitioners of Japanese folk dance today. He brings with him Japan's centuries-old connection between traditional folk dance and taiko, re-interpreting classical folk dance with the expression of contemporary taiko.

Speaking on the season's theme, Artistic Co-Director Michelle Fujii says, "In both Japan and Japanese American culture, the heartbeat of the drum calls the community together, reawakens the spirits of the living, and echoes the heartbeat of our ancestors. In the traditions of Bon Odori, everyone is welcome to join the folk dances in the annual celebration of Obon, a holiday honoring our ancestors. We invite you to join our celebration—come as you are and dance with us!"

PT's popular Behind-the-Scenes events return to give audiences a chance to learn more about taiko and its cultural background, meet guest artists and PT performers in an informal atmosphere, and get sneak previews of upcoming concerts. The *Post-show Talk Back with Portland Taiko and Hanayui*, the first of the three events scheduled, follows the performance on Saturday, March 15, and gives audience members a chance to meet the performers and ask questions. Shohei Kikuchi, Japan's leading folk dance teacher and choreographer, presents an informal concert of regional folk dances at PCC Cascade on June 18 at 6:30pm. Michelle Fujii, who has studied extensively in Japan with Mr. Kikuchi, accompanies him. On August 27 at 6:30pm, Kikuchi will join PT performers for a preview of the the fall concert with excerpts, demonstration and discussion in a *Guest Artist Spotlight*.

Season tickets are on sale now at \$70. Patron Season tickets, which include special recognition, a backstage tour of the Newmark Theatre, and a special reception at the fall concert are \$145. Advance tickets for *From the Village* available at PCPA Box Office, 1111 SW Broadway, TicketMaster, 503-790-ARTS, or online at www.portlandtaiko.org.com. Call (503) 288-2456 for further information.

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