



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release
Photos available

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What: Shohei Kikuchi Studio Performance

Who: Shohei Kikuchi with Portland Taiko, Asian American Drum Performance

When: June 18, 2008, 6:30pm

Where: Moriarty Arts and Humanities Auditorium, PCC Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth St., Portland

Tickets: \$7. Advance tickets available now through PDX Ticket Network; in person at the Hollywood Theatre Box Office (4122 NE Sandy Blvd.), by phone (503) 205-0715, online at www.portlandtaiko.org, and at the door.

Season Sponsors: Paul G. Allen Family Foundation; The Autzen Foundation; Japan Foundation, Performing Arts Japan; Japan-United States Friendship Commission; Kinsman Foundation; Multi-Arts 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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JAPANESE DANCER AND CHOREOGRAPHER TAKES THE STAGE WITH PORTLAND TAIKO

Portland Taiko (PT), Portland's own Asian American drum performance group, hosts Japan's leading folk dance teacher and choreographer, Shohei Kikuchi, in 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.

This show is one of two Behind-the-Scenes events planned as a part of an exciting collaboration with Kikuchi. The second Behind-the-Scenes event will be held August 27 at 6:30pm at Echo Theatre, when Kikuchi will join PT performers for a preview of the fall concert with excerpts, demonstration and discussion in a *Guest Artist Spotlight*.

The season comes to a breathtaking conclusion with the debut Kikuchi's new suite of dance and taiko for the fall concert, *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors*, at the Newmark Theatre September 19-21.

over

Asian American
Drum Performance

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Portland Taiko members traveled to Japan last month to begin study and rehearsal with Kikuchi. Mr. Kikuchi will travel to Portland three times as part of his residency with Portland Taiko to develop the work and to engage in intensive rehearsals with the ensemble. He will return to Portland to perform in the suite as a guest artist in collaboration with the members of Portland Taiko. The suite will become part of the company's permanent repertoire for future performances and potential touring.

Shohei Kikuchi was born in Kamaishi City in Japan's Iwate Prefecture in 1947. In 1967, he joined the "Gekidan Warabiza" – a performing arts company whose work is based in the folk traditions of regional Japan. Warabiza has five companies, which together stage roughly 1,000 performances a year throughout Japan and on international tours.

As a member of Warabiza, Mr. Kikuchi appeared on numerous stages both nationally and internationally as a performer, in addition to producing, choreographing and directing dozens of production and its first European Tour in 1989. During Warabiza's first American Tour in 1997, Kikuchi first collaborated with San Jose Taiko, and later produced and performed in that company's 25th anniversary piece. It was during this collaboration that he first met Portland Taiko's Artistic Co-Director, Michelle Fujii (then a member of San Jose Taiko), and became her teacher and mentor for two years.

Mr. Kikuchi left Warabiza in 2002 to become a freelance choreographer and performer, with the goal of revitalizing Japanese traditional folk dance. He founded his own school, "Folk Dance School Manyoshu" not only to teach traditional dance, but also to produce and choreograph new works, hoping "to spread the joy of dancing to as many people as possible."

According to Fujii, "The collaboration will be a challenging project for me, with opportunities to further experiment with movement and taiko from many angles, while pushing our group as performers and exploring the reinterpretation of traditional folk dance to reflect contemporary experience."

The international collaboration is partly funded by prestigious grants from The National Endowment for the Arts, Japan Foundation, Multi-Arts Production Fund, Japan-United States Friendship Commission, and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation.

Tickets for the Studio Performance are \$7. Advance tickets are available through the PDX Ticket Network at the Hollywood Theatre Box Office (4122 NE Sandy Blvd.; 1pm-9pm daily), by phone (503) 205-0715 (Mon-Fri 7am-3pm, Sat-Sun 8am-1pm), online at www.portlandtaiko.org, and at the door. Light refreshments will be served following the show.

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