

Ten Tiny Taiko Dances
Artist Biographies
June 19-20, 2010 Portland Center for The Performing Arts

Michelle Fujii, Portland Taiko Artistic Director

Michelle joined Portland Taiko leadership in 2005 after touring nationally with PT for several years. Known for her innovative fusion of taiko and dance, Michelle is a member of the North American Taiko Conference Advisory Board. She started her taiko training as a performing member of San Jose Taiko and went on to become artistic director of UCLA Kyodo Taiko, the first collegiate taiko group of its kind. After graduating with a degree in Ethnomusicology, Michelle rejoined San Jose Taiko as artistic staff.

In 2001 she was awarded the prestigious Bunka-cho fellowship from the Japanese government to study with Japan's foremost traditional folk dance troupe, Warabiza, where she studied under the tutelage of master dancer/choreographer Shohei Kikuchi.

Mike Barber, Founder & Producer of Ten Tiny Dances

Mike Barber has performed in Seattle, San Francisco, New York and Portland over the past three decades. He performed on Broadway with Bill Irwin, was co-director of Portland's aero/betty aerial dance theater, was a member of the Gregg Bielemeier Dance Project, Oslund+Co. Dance, and Minh Tran and Dancers, and has performed the work of many other choreographers including a recent duet with Cydney Wilkes, *Found Music*, commissioned from Deborah Hay. He has also worked with Portland-based Sojourn Theater, having performed in, and won a Drammy award for choreographing, their hit show *Good* in 2007.

He has presented his own work locally and has produced and appeared in 19 iterations of the performance series *Ten Tiny Dances* since 2002. Mike is a recipient of residencies at Djerassi Resident Artists Program and Marfa Live Arts. He is also a teacher at Portland Public Schools' Metropolitan Learning Center.

Byron Au Yong

Byron Au Yong composes songs of dislocation scored for Asian, European, and handmade instruments. His musical events have been performed in concert halls and site-specific locations that include the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg, Meany Hall for the Performing Arts, On the Boards, the Seattle Aquarium, and the Tokyo Art Museum.

Au Yong has worked with the top taiko ensembles in North America including On Ensemble, Portland Taiko, and TAIKOPROJECT. He has received support from Aldeburgh Music in the UK, Creative Capital in the USA, the Darmstadt Institute in Germany, and Foundation Gaudeamus in Holland. Au Yong was a 2006 delegate for the Dragon Foundation in China and is the 2009-2010 A/P/A Institute Artist-in-Residence at New York University. Recordings of Au Yong's music are available on CRI/New World Records, Periplum, and other independent labels. He teaches at Cornish College of the Arts and lives in Seattle in an internet-free vegetable-patch home with two writing tables, 11 Chinese drums, and three chickens.

Christine Calfas

Christine Calfas is an actor, movement artist, and singer. As a stage actor, she has worked on the east and west coast for twenty years. Locally she was seen most recently as a spy, a lass, and a blonde in Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* at Portland Center Stage, as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* for Anonymous Theater, and as Matilde in *The Clean House* at ACT Seattle.

Christine Calfas Continued

She spent three seasons at Shakespeare & Co. in Lenox, Mass., two winters developing new work with Holderness in New York City, and one summer painted blue in Orlando, Florida.

A Fulbright Scholar in Indian Classical Dance, Christine is a disciple of the late Guru Surendra Nath Jena of New Delhi, a remarkable master of the Odissi form. In 2000, influenced by core principles of her Guru's work, she began creating full-length solo performance of her own: *Sappho's Arrow*, *Sounding Hekate*, as well as three solos for the tiny stage: *Kore*, *pericardium 8*, and *Rare Birds*. She has been additionally influenced by Grotowski-based performance work with Khalid Tyabji in India, and by twelve years with voice teacher Richard Armstrong of the Roy Hart Theater.

She has developed much of her solo work and sensibility alongside Richard and the other artists at the Banff Centre in Alberta. Christine traveled to London last fall to study choreographic transmission with Deborah Hay, and acted in her first independent film this winter. You can look for her as a not very nice doctor in the upcoming short *I'm Your Man* by Brian Padian, watch for her appearances with the Jenny Finn Orchestra, or keep track of upcoming projects at christinecalfas dot com.

Subashini Ganesan

Natya Leela Academy was born out of a passion to teach and dance Bharathanatyam. The intention of our dance school is to teach, train, and inspire young children, youth, and adults to discover grace and empowerment through movement. The founder and principal teacher of Natya Leela Academy is Subashini Ganesan. She has studied the classical Indian dance style, Bharathanatyam, under Sreemathi Shantha Bhaskar, principal choreographer of Nrityalaya Aesthetic Society of Singapore. Subashini's experience in the study and performance of this art form extends over a period of 30 years.

Subashini Ganesan has performed in national and international events in Singapore, Washington DC, Rochester, NY, Eugene, Oregon, Sacramento, CA, and Maui, HI. For the last 12 years she has been teaching students of all ages in Singapore and in the US. Her background and interests in the world traditional and sacred arts lend a unique ability to her teaching methods, that help students to discover the dancer within, while executing the movements and routines of this ancient style. Her studio is in Zoomtopia, a creative arts community in Southeast Portland.

Carla Mann

Carla Mann (choreographer, dancer) has been creating, teaching and performing contemporary dance since 1983. Based in Portland, her choreography has also been presented on the East and West US coasts, the Czech Republic and China. Her recent choreographic work includes site-specific work, dance video installations and commissions for the Northwest Dance Project and for theater productions. Currently a member of Minh Tran & Company, Carla has also performed with tEEth, Oslund+Co/Dance, Collage Dance Theatre, Bonnie Merrill, the Navigators and Dance Gatherer among others. Carla currently serves as Chair of the Dance Department at Reed College, where she has taught since 1995. This is Carla's seventh tiny dance.

Eric Skinner

Originally from Muncie, Indiana, Eric Skinner (dancer) has been working on the West Coast as both a performer and choreographer for the past twenty years. Eric received his B.A. in Dance from Butler University's Jordan School of Fine Arts in Indianapolis. He has danced professionally with the Milwaukee Ballet, Ballet Oregon, Pacific Ballet Theatre, Los Angeles Chamber Ballet and was a founding member of Oregon Ballet Theatre. Following his departure from OBT, Eric danced with contemporary choreographer Gregg Bielemeier and was a founder of aero/betty aerial dance theater before joining artistic directors Jamey Hampton and Ashley Roland in their innovative dance company, Bodyvox, in which he performs and serves as Artistic Associate.

Eric is also Co-Artistic Director of the Skinner/Kirk Dance Ensemble with his partner Daniel Kirk. Skinner/Kirk was presented as part of the White Bird '08-'09 'uncaged' series, for which Eric choreographed the world premiere "Here and There, Now and Then." Other companies Eric has choreographed and/or performed with include the Portland Opera, Portland Center Stage, Polaris Dance Theatre, and Inland Pacific Ballet.

Heather Perkins

Heather Perkins is composer, sound designer and Mad Scientist at WaterDog Studio in Portland, where she makes music and sound for love, and for a living. She creates for dance, animation, video games, film, theater, installation, and live performance. Her CD *Little Humans* is out now on Land-O-Newts Records, and *Telekinesis Nanette* is due out this summer.

On June 27th, Heather will present *Electrogals 2010*, an evening of new original works composed for an all-star roster of female electronic artists, at Disjecta in Portland. She is also working on a concert of original music about Mel Blanc and Bugs Bunny, as the Oregon Cartoon Institute's Artist in Residence.

Artur Sultanov

Artur Sultanov was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia. He trained at Vaganova Academy, and at age 17, joined the Kirov Ballet, where he danced a classical repertoire. Mr. Sultanov has performed with Eifman Ballet as a Soloist and in 2000, moved to San Francisco to join Alonzo King's Lines Ballet. There, he worked closely with Mr. King on creating original contemporary ballets.

Mr. Sultanov joined Oregon Ballet Theatre in 2003, and was named a principal dancer in 2007. He has performed works by a wide range of choreographers including Trey McIntyre, Lar Lubovitch, Christopher Wheeldon and William Forsythe. Mr. Sultanov has also appeared as a guest artist with California Ballet, Trey McIntyre Project and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. In addition to dancing, Mr. Sultanov teaches ballet workshops in the Portland Metro Area.

tEEth

tEEth, a Contemporary Dance/Performance Art Company, is dedicated to sustaining a professional dance company in the Pacific Northwest through the support of artistic virtuosity and unique voice in choreography and performance. Based on the vision of its Co-Artistic Directors, Angelle Hebert and Phillip Kraft, tEEth aims to engage and enrich audiences

tEEth Continued

regionally and beyond with an innovative approach to performance through the integration of contemporary dance, new media, original sound, costumes, and sculptural design elements.

tEEth's work is generated through a deeply collaborative process exploring the body's limitless expression through motion and sound. Approaching the body with a singular eye for life's beauty and, often, grotesque absurdity, tEEth serves a poignant and uncompromising glimpse of humanity through sensory-rich movement, performance art and original music.

The collaborative team of Hebert and Kraft began in 1999 in Salt Lake City, Utah, moved to Portland in 2002 and evolved into tEEth in 2006. Described as "the most intellectually challenging and forward-thinking dance troupe around," tEEth continues to explore work that defies convention and comfort. Their latest project, *Grub*, premiered at On the Boards (Seattle) February 2009 as part of the Northwest Series, toured nationally to Joyce SoHo (New York City) March 2009 and the Fuse Box Festival (Austin) April 2009, and received a National Performance Network Creation Fund. Their previous work, *Normal and Happy*, was presented as part of Portland Institute for Contemporary Art's Time Based Art Festival (Portland) in September 2007, Reed College's Reed Arts Week Festival (Portland) in March 2008, and at On the Boards as part of the Northwest New Works Festival in June 2007.

In addition to performing in Portland and Seattle, tEEth has toured to New Orleans, LA and Austin, TX as participating artists in the Fuse Box Festival 2008. Hebert and Kraft have created works for Portland Center Stage's JAW Festival, Ten Tiny Dances 6, 7, 12, & 15, Linda Austin's Richard Foreman Festival and Cabaret, 2Gyrlz Interactive Language Festival, Water in the Desert Festival and Conduit's BamBam Festival. Additionally, they have self produced two full evenings: *Abracadaver* in March 2005 and *benumbed* in April 2006.

Toru Watanabe

Toru is a renowned folk dance artist and performer from Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Prefecture Japan. He began performing and choreographing in college for Yassokoi Team. In 2001, Toru became a member of Warabiza, one of Japan's foremost folk dance performing groups based in the northern prefecture of Akita. He appeared in three original musical productions and has taught within Warabiza' in-house residency program for youth. Toru joined Portland Taiko Artistic Staff in 2008.