



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Photos available

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What: *The Way Back Home*

Who: Portland Taiko, Asian American Drum Performance

When: March 27, 2pm and 8pm

Where: Dolores Winningstad Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts,
1111 SW Broadway, Portland

Tickets: \$18 - \$20 + service charges. Tickets are on sale online at
www.portlandtaiko.org, in person at the PCPA Box Office, or by phone
(800) 745-3000. For group tickets call (503) 288-2456

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Portland Taiko Brings it Home

Asian American drum ensemble Portland Taiko opens their 2010 season this spring with a Portland concert debut, showcasing their unique fusion of taiko, dance, and music. On March 27 at 2pm and 8pm, PT brings their successful national touring concert home, for the first time, to the Winningstad Theatre in *The Way Back Home*.

"From the innocence of a child's crayon drawing, to the shattered destruction displaced refugees once knew, home is a sacred place that we all search for," says Portland Taiko's Artistic Director, Michelle Fujii.

The Way Back Home was inspired by Portland Taiko's own personal experiences and stories from the local Vietnamese community that were woven into their 2007 production, *The Way Home*. With its core ensemble of performers, *The Way Back Home* has been refined to its essence, exploring the theme of home, while showing the full range of Portland Taiko's artistic expression.

The 2007 concert, *The Way Home*, featured spoken word by Oregon poet, Lawson Inada. In *The Way Back Home*, Inada's poetry is woven into the music. Fujii explains, "Lawson's poetry was taken by us, and translated into what we do." Inada's words are expressed through taiko rhythms, melodic music, dance movement, and song.

Over

Asian American
Drum Performance

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*The Way **Back Home*** has been performed throughout the country, including New York, New Hampshire, Idaho, Massachusetts, and Washington, and this year it seemed the right time to bring it home. Fujii explains, “Home can be a place to express and to be yourself. Right now people are losing that space.”

Audiences, who have experienced the touring program, have responded with their own written reflections on, “What makes a home?” for them. Drawings of trees, houses, and keepsakes; poetry; lists; and stories written in many languages and formats have been shared by those inspired by Portland Taiko’s performance. One audience member from New York responded with, home is “a place where your spirit flies.”

Producing Director, Teresa Enrico is struck by the reaction to *The Way **Back Home***, “I have been touched by how much our audience members have been moved and shared so openly with us. It struck a cord wherever we toured, small town, big city, every type of person. Our performances reminded people of things they hadn’t thought about for years, bringing tears to their eyes.”

*The Way **Back Home***’s program reflects the wide variety of collaborators and composers that gave voice to the program. Masato Baba, currently performing with California taiko group On Ensemble, composed “Changing Landscapes.” This song juxtaposes modern taiko rhythms and melodies from the classical Japanese flute (fue). It is inspired by the variety of landscapes on the still forming, youngest island in Hawaii, the Big Island. The song evokes volcanoes, jungle, mountains, grassland, and oceans.

Seattle composer and performer Byron Au Yong composed the performance piece, “News.” The piece begins with the flutter of paper and builds with the rhythms of taiko, bamboo poles, and voice to create a dialogue of sound. “News” asks, “How do we navigate through life’s layers of passports, journals, notices, newspapers, maps, and walls to find each other and ourselves?”

Au Yong also co-composed “Home” with Artistic Director Michelle Fujii. “Home” opens with *a capella* lyrics in Japanese, “Ie Nii Ru To. Honto No Ji Bun. Itsumo kae re tai.” Translated this means, “When at home. The ‘real’ me (I can be myself). Always want to go back.” The song is inspired by the freedom that a home provides, which Fujii describes as, “A sacred space for your self.”

*The Way **Back Home*** shows March 27 at 2pm and 8pm at the Portland Center for the Performing Arts, Winningstad Theatre. Tickets are on sale now online at www.portlandtaiko.org, in person at the PCPA Box Office, or by phone (800) 745-3000. For more information and for group tickets, call 503.288.2456 or email info@portlandtaiko.org.

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