

STICKS AND TONES

At its first full-length concert, Portland Taiko will bang the drum slowly and quickly, all with breathtaking energy

by Will O'Bryan

As Jackie Chan dazzles American audiences, Japanese baseball players run the bases while thousands cheer. The cultural links between Asia and the United States are both subtle and glaring. Portland Taiko makes them loud.

Taiko is a booming Japanese drum, and Portland Taiko is the Asian American group that plays it, and other drums, locally. As with most cultural exchanges, the original form has taken on a local flavor.

Music

"A lot of our members are activist," explains Ann Ishimaru, one of the group's 17 members and its co-director. "That's something we've tried to hold on to."

Traditionally, a Taiko group in Japan would fall into set roles and disciplines and a "sensei," or teacher, would have final decision-making power. That's not the case in Portland. Portland Taiko members don't check their activist personalities at the door. They incorporate them into the drumming.

Beating the drums creates an energy that members use to empower themselves and give to audiences. "It's hard to explain to people who haven't seen it before," says Ishimaru, pointing to Taiko's use of movement, culture, sound and energy. "It's all these things at once.... That's what makes it so powerful."

Aside from creating energy, Portland Taiko acts to destroy stereotypes.

United States, others in the group have roots here that run generations deep.

Ishimaru says that despite the group's cultural richness, it's not uncommon for Portland Taiko to be greeted with, "Here come the Japanese drummers." Part of a Portland Taiko performance is usually dedicated to audience outreach and trying to dismantle stereotypes that shadow Asian Americans.

Such a performance is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 10, at the Scottish Rite Center. The performance, presented by Portland Taiko's five-member ensemble, is titled "Making Waves." For the group, which was founded in 1994, "Making Waves" will be its first full-length concert.

Ishimaru shares ensemble membership with Janice Choy, Rachel Ebor, Howard Nakanishi and Zack Semke.

In further contrast from traditional Taiko groups, "Making Waves" will present some original compositions by group members. Choy, who also has classical piano training, wrote "Spring Mourning," which incorporates classical violin. Conveniently, Ishimaru and Semke have a total of



30 years of violin study between them.

Another piece, "Lima," was written by Rachel Ebor, a Filipina who also identifies as a bi-dyke. "Lima" is the Tagalog word for "five." Choy, a Chinese and Korean American, and Ebor co-authored "Arashi."

More traditional favorites to be presented Oct. 10 are "Shake No Keari" ("Return of the Salmon") and "Amaterasu" ("Japanese Sun Goddess"). Dancers, led by special guest Chisao Hata, will help to tell the story of the Sun Goddess through a choreographed piece entitled "Uzume."

Portland Taiko will be "Making Waves" Friday, Oct. 10, at 7:30 pm at the Scottish Rite Center, 709 SW 15th Ave. The venue is wheelchair accessible. Tickets, which cost \$10.50 and \$12.50, are available through Anzen Importers (no service charge) and Fred Meyer Fastix outlets (charge by phone at 224-8499). For more information, call Portland Taiko at 295-9709.

ROSENBAUM & ASSOCIATES Auto Brokers

**Buy or Lease all Vehicles
at Fleet Prices**

New & Used
No Hassle, Personal Service
All Rebates & Warranties Apply
Trades & Factory Orders Welcome



Jean Rosenbaum Ed McMahon 503-297-5250

Licensed & Bonded Motor Vehicle Dealer



TRINITY EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL Presents
AIDS AWARENESS WEEK
Lamentation/CELEBRATION
OCTOBER 11-19, 1997

Saturday - October 11

10am - 2pm Labyrinth: Special Labyrinth
Healing Workshop

Sunday - October 12

8am Lay Sermon: Bill Countryman - Theologian
& Recognized Authority on AIDS/HIV
9am Forum: Bill Countryman
10am Lay Sermon: Bill Countryman
11:30am Program: Medical Update - Status of
Research & Range of Options

Monday - October 13

7:30pm Arts Commission Evening: Presentation
by Trinity Arts Commission

Tuesday - October 14

7:30pm Youth and AIDS: Joint Performance by
Trinity Upper School/OES Upper School Arts Dept.

Wednesday - October 15

7:30pm Choral Vespers: Joint Trinity/Portland
Metro Diocesan Performance, Bishop Ladehoff
to speak

Thursday - October 16

9am - 3pm Clergy & Pastoral Care Workshop:
AIDS Workshop for Christian Clergy/Pastoral
Care Workers
7:30pm Interfaith Panel Discussion of Attitudes
Towards AIDS

Saturday thru Sunday - October 18/19

7:30pm - 7:30 am Vigil: Diocesan - Wide Vigil
at Trinity

Sunday - October 19

9am Forum: The Faces of HIV, Panel of People
Who Are Living With HIV/AIDS

CORNER OF NW 19TH AVENUE & EVERETT - FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 222-9811

The SOPHIE TUCKER Songbook

starring

**SHARON
McNIGHT**
AS SOPHIE TUCKER

JAMES FOLLOWELL
MUSICAL DIRECTOR

OCTOBER

16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25

Echo Theater

1515 S.E. 37th at Hawthorne

Call 503.224.8499

"A musical theatre tour de force... Knockout
entertainment... you'll be seeing a world class
performance up close and personal."

Drama-Logue, New York

"...she entertains, banters, teases, and most
of all sings. It's a terrific evening, and
McNight is radiant, funny, and heartbreaking
as this fabulous show business personality..."

SF Weekly

For information call 503.615.1040



HALFIN/CAPYLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Made in U.S.A.