

OUT & ABOUT

» PORTLAND TAIKO CELEBRATES ITS 15TH SEASON

THE BEAT GOES ON

The power of the drum should not be underestimated. I remember, sitting in a gym, huddled with my fellow students in the mid-'90s, the excitement that accompanied our visit from **Portland Taiko**. And as the beat of one drum began, that anticipation swelled. By the time the rest of the troupe's drums rumbled, it was a visceral and awe-inspiring moment.

That moment has been happening for 15 years. Established in 1994, Portland Taiko is an award-winning Asian-American ensemble. The performers weave together rhythm, melody, humor and movement into an exhilarating musical event. The group combines traditional and contemporary compositions and choreography in a way that is both innovative and engaging. It's unexplored territory, with deep roots in the Asian-American experience.

This year, Portland Taiko brings together performers from the past including contemporary Native American artist Rick Bartow and the entire performance troupe for a scenic ride through Taiko territory, concluding with an autumn gala.

The anniversary kicks off April 22 with a benefit banquet at Wong's King Seafood Restaurant (8733 SE Division). Wednesday's partially tax-deductible dinner is a fun and exclusive way to enjoy Taiko. You'll get close enough to really feel the music surround you, so that you're no longer audience but part of the sound.

- ALLEY HECTOR



RICH IWASAKI

A culturally eclectic array of items will be up for auction throughout the belly-popping eight-course meal. There seems to be plenty of excitement over choosing your own mystery origami (as opposed to the previous mystery balloons and their pesky petro-based pollutants), but unless you've attended a prior benefit dinner, you most likely have no idea what this mystery entails. That only makes the surprise bigger and more enticing!

Party people after my own heart, Taiko continues the fun all summer and into the fall with CD release parties, show-and-tells, soirees, and big, banging bashes sure to fill the body with the wonder of that grand sound—the beating drum.

The April 22 banquet begins at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$50. Details on Portland Taiko's season are available at 503-288-2456 and at portlandtaiko.org.



(left) The Reign of Rain Emperor XXXIV Brandon and Tree Empress XXIV Shelia DuPont, along with their appointed (right) Imperial Prince and Imperial Princess, Clyde S. Dale and Ivory Cox

Cascade AIDS Project 20th Annual Art Evening and Auction @ Oregon Convention Center. Proceeds benefit Cascade AIDS Project. Premiere art, finest food and outstanding entertainment. 6pm, www.cascadeaids.org.

Grab your women, it's Roller Derby Night. No one is safe. This bout features Heartless Heathers vs. Guns 'N Rollers. Doors open at 5pm, bout begins at 6pm. The Hangar at Oaks Park, 7805 Oaks Park Way. Only 400 seats available. Tickets \$12 through Brown Paper Tickets.

The Adventure Group joins an all-day USFS-led trail work party on the hiking trails of the Western Columbia River Gorge. RSVP required. Meet at Multnomah Falls Lodge, 9 am, 503-327-4674.

Record store day at Music Millennium, 3158 East Burnside. Hundreds of independently owned music stores celebrate second annual record store day. Live music, giveaways and prizes. 503-231-8926 for info.

Youth movie night at Q Center. 4115 N. Mississippi, tonight, The Laramie Project, 7-10 pm.

PFLAG wants your help in building a Portland Black/African-American chapter. Needs assessment, work-plan development, PFLAG overview, video and refreshments. 10 am-noon, Ainsworth United Church, 2941 NE Ainsworth. For questions or to RSVP contact Geri Washington, washington.geri@yahoo.com.

» SUN • APRIL 19

Minerva opens up Sinferno at Dante's. 11 pm, 1 SW 3rd & Burnside.

Hook up with Against the Wall Productions for a coffee social at Wired on Burnside. Come find out what this new theater group has planned for Portland. 7 pm, 2190 W. Burnside.

The Adventure Group takes a moderate hike alongside the Salmon River, the only

river in the lower 48 states to be classified as "Wild and Scenic" from start to finish. Meet outside Starbucks, Hollywood Fred Meyer, 9 am, 3030 NE Weidler St., 503-284-3345.

Opening Day for Rose City Softball Association, Oregon's largest gay sports organization. Slow-pitch softball for all persons, with special emphasis on the gay and lesbian communities. Visit www.rosecitysoftball.com for schedule and rain alerts.

Civil Rites Symposium on Same Sex Marriage and the First Amendment. 2-5 pm, Hoffmann Hall at PSU.

Red Dress Bingo by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. 4-7 pm, PPAA Hall (618 SE Alder). \$15 buys you a bushel of bingo.

Justoutpersonals.com presents Bunco for Women Seeking Women. All single women seeking women encouraged to attend. 6-8 pm, Q Center (4115 N. Mississippi). \$5 plus canned food donation for Esther's Pantry. Prizes, laughter and fun.

Tease Time Burlesque Revue. 5-8 pm, Crush (SE 14th and Morrison).

» MON • APRIL 20

Manifest Men's Wellness Community presents Wanderlust Cycling: Spring flowers and public gardens, followed by dinner and optional hot tub. 6:30 pm, 4906 NE 22nd Ave. \$5-\$15 sliding scale.

It's health movie night at the Men's Wellness Center. Tonight's film, *The Insider*, followed by discussion of tobacco use in populations. 7-9 pm, 928 SW Stark.

It's Gay Skate Night at Oaks Park Roller Rink. Presented by Just Out. Doors open at 7 pm. \$6 gets you in and skating. Canned food donations for Esther's Pantry requested. 7805 SE Oaks Park Way. All ages. Arcade games and snack bar available.

If Gay Skate's not your thing, how about a nice Polyamory Circle? Group discusses

alternatives to monogamy, inclusive relationships, extended families and intentional communities. Everyone welcome. Call for time and location 503-285-4848.

» TUES • APRIL 21

Elder Resource Alliance presents Auto-graphical Writing Group for gay men 18 and older. 6-7:30 pm, Friendly House, 1737 NW 26th Ave.

Crush presents *That's So Gay*, trivia night. Every Tuesday, 7 pm, 1400 SE Morrison.

Fred Meyer Broadway Across America presents *Grease*, opens tonight and runs through April 26. Show features *American Idol* winner Taylor Hicks. Tickets \$23.50-\$68.50 from Ticketmaster.

CHARGED+, a club night for POZ men, hosts a fundraiser for Wolf Creek Sanctuary. Host Zora Phoenix, DJ Pony. Prizes from Simpatico Massage. 7-10 pm, Casey's, 27 NW 6th.

The Adventure Group meets for a Third Tuesday Reading by William Sullivan on Oregon's greatest natural disasters. Optional social hour follows. Lake Oswego Public Library, 7 pm, 706 4th St. 503-225-6462.

QT, a gay, lesbian, bi and trans social mixer. 6 pm to close. Vault Martini Lounge, 226 NW 12th. No cover, drink proceeds benefit Portland's Q Center.

» WED • APRIL 22

The Adventure Group takes a moderate hike on East Seven-Mile Hill, in the east Columbia River Gorge, RSVP required. 9 am, meet at Hollywood Fred Meyer Starbucks, 3030 NE Weidler St. 503-830-0187.

Getting Bi PDX hosts a monthly dinner meeting at Old Wives Tale Restaurant. For women who are bisexual or questioning. 1300 E. Burnside St. www.gettingbipdx.com, 6 pm.

Sit around and watch *American Idol* eliminations and discuss, "Is Adam Lambert Gay?" 9 pm, Fox.

The Heather Masse & Anofe O'Donovan Band (Self-identified folk goddesses) takes the stage at Mississippi Studios. 3939 N. Mississippi. 8 pm. Tickets at Mississippistudios.com.

White Bird presents *Compania Nacional De Danza 2*. This final performance of the season contains three works by acclaimed Artistic Director Nacho Duato, whose lyrical choreography is set to the music of Debussy, Schubert, and the African Maghreb. His talented junior company is made up of some of the best young dancers in Europe. 7:30 pm, Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, tickets \$20-\$50, Ticketmaster, www.whitebird.org.

» THUR • APRIL 23

Join Basic Rights Oregon at the 16th Annual Oregonians Against Discrimination Business Leaders Luncheon. This year's theme: From the Classroom to the Boardroom: A Community Conversation. Reg. 11:30-noon, noon-1:00 pm luncheon and program. Portland Ballroom, Oregon Convention Center, 777 NE MLK, Jr. Blvd. Tickets at basicrights.org.

Light in the Ropers, a queer live band country dance night. Emily Herring and Henpecked host a monthly live band country dance night. Dance to all the classics from the 60s to the present. Shine the boots, polish the belt buckle, swing the cute girl. *The Egyptian Club*, 3701 SE Division St. 8:30 pm, \$5 cover.

Look, another Red Dress event. Who knew? Tonight it's Red Dress happy hour at Bernie's Southern Bistro. Happy Hour from 4-6 pm, Cordial dinner hour follows. 15% of all proceeds benefit Red Dress Party. 2904 NE Alberta. Call 503-282-9864 for dinner reservations.

Speed dating for the fellas. Tired of dating woes, meeting all the wrong guys? Then try this, an intimate round-robin style buffet of three-minute dates. 7:30-9 pm, Men's Wellness Center, 928 SW Stark.

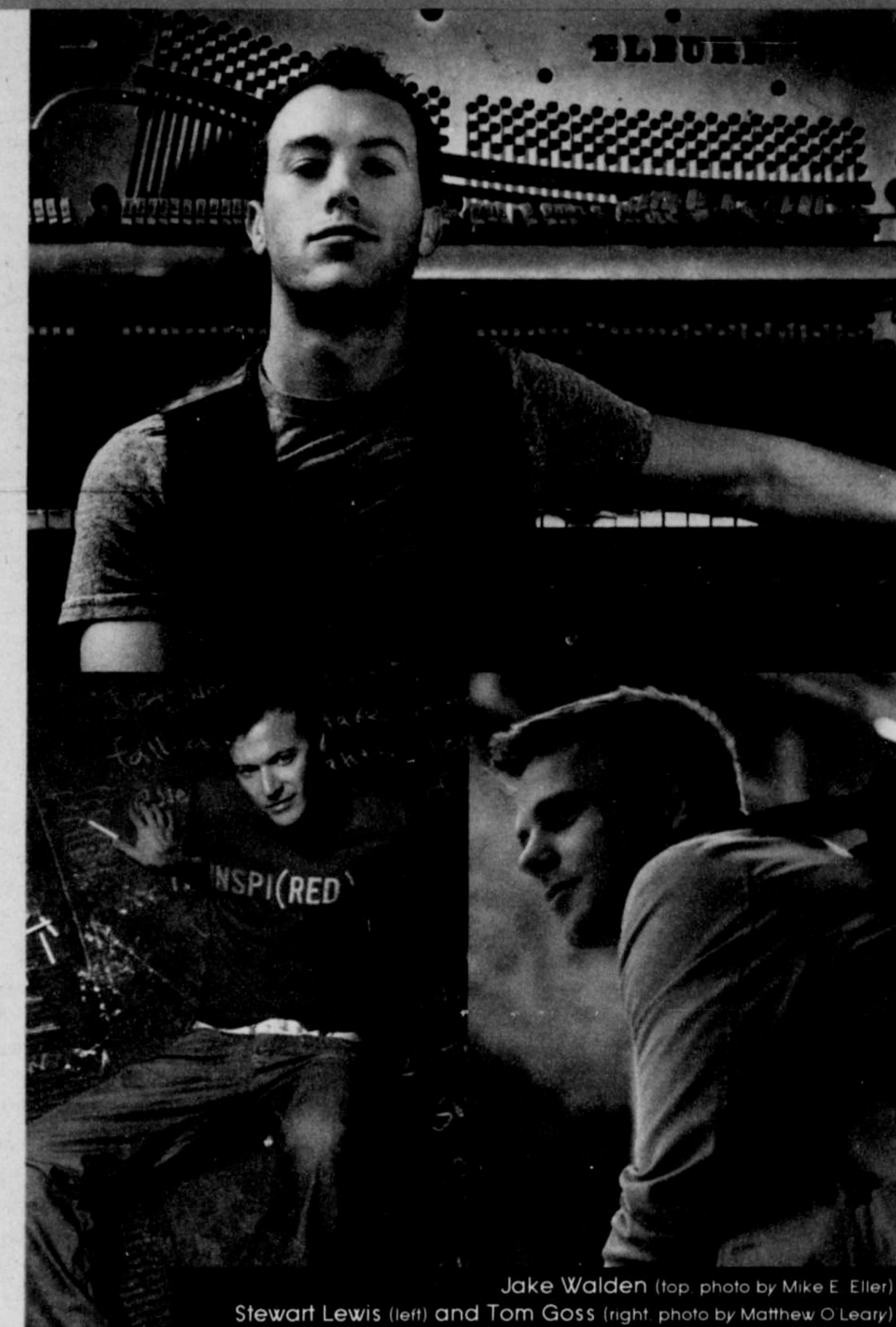
Stop by Red Cap Garage for the next round of contests in RuPaul's Drag Races Portland Version. 9 pm, 1035 SW Stark.

» FRI • APRIL 24

CC Slaughters presents the Oregon Bears' monthly Double XX Dance, featuring music by DJ Peter Calandra of Studio '54 fame. Every fourth Friday, 9 pm to 1 am, 219 NW Davis. \$2 cover.

Ever visited the Oregon Garden? Maybe this is the weekend. It's the 5th annual Oregon Garden Brewfest. A mini-vacation to the lovely Oregon will net you music, beer and pretty growing things. www.OregonGarden.org.

The Imperial Sovereign Court of the Raintree Empire's Coronation Weekend. Today, The Out of Town Show. Fraternal Order of Eagles, 107 E 7th St. Vancouver, Wa. \$10 door, 7 pm door, 9 pm show. 503-314-1929.



Jake Walden (top photo by Mike E. Eller) Stewart Lewis (left) and Tom Goss (right photo by Matthew O'Leary)

» "ROCK THE FOLK OUT" SHOWCASES TROUBADOUR TALENTS

QUEER AS FOLK

The "singer-songwriter" label has conjured up images of a girl and her guitar since the '60s. But this time around, the ladies are on the dance floor, the gents picking the strings and putting their poetry to music. After last winter's successful east coast tour, the men of "Rock the Folk OUT"—Stewart Lewis, Jake Walden and Tom Goss—are at it again. The left coast takes center stage, and Portland finds the folksters at Mississippi Pizza April 28, in a bill that Eric Sosa of NYC's Zipper Factory has hailed "...a truly important showcase of the country's up-and-coming male voices."

The intimate setting is a prime spot to enjoy the bittersweet ballads of Jake Walden. You'll want to curl up in a soulful stupor as you hear his piano-driven chords and a raspy voice that's drawn comparisons to Tom Waits.

Another Tom's lively strumming should brighten any dour moods. Goss' easygoing but complex chops are

reminiscent of They Might Be Giants, with a more nuanced approach. And Mississippi Pizza has enough frenetic NoPo energy to bring your thoughts back to the good side of folk.

Your emotions already toyed with, you'll want to come down with the soothing sounds of Stewart Lewis. The nestled tables will also comfort as you thoughtfully sip your microbrew while Lewis sings what he assures you is not a love song.

The crooning may run the gamut from melancholy to joyful throughout the evening, tugging your heartstrings all the while, but it's sure to be an interesting ride. Besides, who better to lead you on such a journey than queer folk rockers?

- ALLEY HECTOR

8:30 p.m., Tues., April 28, Mississippi Pizza, 3552 N Mississippi Ave., cover charge TBA, 503-288-3231, www.myspace.com/rockthefolkout.

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» THE IMPERIAL SOVEREIGN COURT OF THE RAINTREE EMPIRE (ISCRE) CROWNS ITS ROYALTY

HIS LADY SOVEREIGN

My drag king roots have often entwined with the drag queens, but not enough to know one Imperial Sovereign Court from another. So my first conversation with Jane Arends, Tree Empress XV, started out on a confusing note.

"The Imperial Sovereign Court of Raintree Empire - the ISCRE - is in Vancouver. The ISRC is in Portland," she patiently explains. "They are different Courts in the same International Court System."

The International Court System started in 1965 as camp fun and has morphed into camp funding, with these Courts donating hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to charity. Tree Empress XV (the "XV" indicating that she has been with ISCRE's Court since their 25th year, 9 years ago) says it's the charity connection

that's kept her passionately involved for the past two-and-a-half decades.

"What's kept me going is raising money for local charities," she says. "Not only do we support local charities, we support each other by reaching out to help other Courts with their local charities. And at our Coronation this year, there will probably be 25 representatives from other Courts who have come to Vancouver for the celebration."

ISCRE expects between 200-300 people in all for the festivities, themed the "Closing Night at the Sunburst Lounge: A '40s Affair." Crowds will celebrate the Reign of Rain Emperor XXXIV Brandon and Tree Empress XXIV Shelia DuPont, along with their appointed Imperial Prince and Imperial Princess, Clyde

S. Dale and Ivory Cox, before welcoming the new Monarchs. There will also be introductions of visiting Courts, command performances and award presentations.

The Coronation will be held Saturday, April 25 in the Centennial Center of the Red Lion at the Quay (100 Columbia St.) in Vancouver, Washington. Proceeds go to Martha's Pantry (Vancouver's food bank for people with HIV and AIDS), the Audria M. Edwards Scholarship Fund and the Special Olympics of Clark County.

- TAMMY STONER

Tickets, available at the door, are \$35 and include admission to the Victory Brunch the following morning. www.impcourt.org. 503-314-1929.