If you weren't among the fortunate ones attending Kennedy Theatre this weekend, hurry on over next Friday, Saturday (both 7:30 performances) or Sunday at 2pm to catch the dynamic and entertaining "Hana Hou," an evening of Taiko Drum (provided by Kenny Endo's excellent Taiko Center of the Pacific Ensemble) and Dance (UH faculty choreographers and student dancers).

The original collaboration occurred in 2013 under the guidance of Peggy Gaither Adams. This year's version, directed by Betsy Fisher, contains new material provided by Fisher, Yukie Shiroma, Peiling Kao, Kirstin Pauka, Amy Lynn Schiffner, Chizuko Endo, Noenelani Zuttermeister Lewis, Sai
Bhatawadekar, Onoe Kikunobu and Onoe Kikunobukazu. While Kenny Endo's dramatic taiko drum compositions prevail, additional scores by Chizuko Endo, Seiho Kineya, Kirstin Pauka and Johnny Nash are heard. Whether in the lilting rhythms accompanying hula (Zuttermeister Lewis' "Pacifica") or the biting percussion of Endo's "Rites of Thundering," the theatre resounds with multiple drums and other instruments while the stage comes alive with dancers in a wide variety of works ranging from serene kimono-clad dancers waving long silk streamers (Kikunobu's "Water Spirits") to a penguin wobbling mob heading off in many directions (Kao's "Capricious"). A quartet of drummers moving as gracefully as dancers as they turn, run, and exchange instruments comprises "Symmetrical Soundscapes" choreographed by Betsy Fisher to some traditional taiko patterns with additional improvisation by the dancer/drummers. Especially striking is Shiroma's "Steel Rain," a work which incorporates some classical Okinawan dance movements in a dramatic way while countering the music's increases and decreases in tempo.

Throughout the evening, the student dancers do a remarkable job displaying not only their own skills as performers but their admirable musicality. They are obviously enjoying this collaboration as much as we are. For an evening (or matinee) of pure entertainment head to Kennedy Theatre next weekend.

UH: Kennedy Theatre, Taiko Drum and Dance Hana Hou