Media Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 14, 2017

A New Take on a Popular Performance

*Taiko Dance & Drum: Hana Hou!* opens at Kennedy Theatre

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Department of Theatre and Dance is proud to bring back *Taiko Drum & Dance as Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou!,* directed by Betsy Fisher with live music by Kenny Endo and the Taiko Center of the Pacific. In this exciting performance, the art of traditional and contemporary Japanese drumming performed by these world-renowned taiko artists join forces with an astounding variety of dance genres. This showcase of new, reprised, and exciting collaborations comes to the Kennedy Theatre Mainstage November 3, 4, 10, and 11 at 7:30 p.m., and November 12 at 2:00 p.m.; free pre-show chats will be held on November 4 and 11 at 6:45 p.m. Saturday, November 4 is “Throwback Saturday” with tickets only $5.00-$15.00. Regular ticket prices are $8.00-$25.00.

In 2013, when *Taiko Drum & Dance* was first conceived, it was so popular that patrons had to be turned away. Now, after the year-long closing of the Kennedy Theatre for repairs and maintenance, *Taiko Drum & Dance* is returning for a *hana hou* production inviting back Kenny Endo and the Taiko Center of the Pacific Ensemble in collaboration with UHM faculty choreographers of dance forms including Hula, Okinawan, Japanese, Bollywood, Hip-Hop, and Contemporary. Peggy Gaither Adams, a former Professor of dance at UHM, teamed up with Endo for the first *Taiko Drum & Dance* production. Fisher says, “The spirit of Peggy is in the air.”
Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou! includes two encore performances from the original production, and many new collaborations between Endo and artists who have “deep knowledge of their specific dance genre” says Fisher. Fisher is the choreographer for these two pieces: “Araumi,” composed by UHM Professor of Asian Theatre, Kirstin Pauka, and “Yamamba,” composed by Chizuko Endo. “Yamamba” is performed with a traditional Noh mask created by Chizuko Endo.

The pairing of a classical Japanese dance with music played by Endo’s ensemble is unique. This piece will be choreographed by Howard Asao, a long-time instructor in Japanese dance at UHM. A piece choreographed by Sai Bhatawadekar, Professor of Hindi-Urdu at UHM, will combine Endo’s taiko with Bollywood dance. Also in the production is “Rain Tree,” choreographed by Yukie Shiroma, UHM Okinawan dance sensei; it combines Okinawan and contemporary dance with taiko drumming. A high energy pairing of contemporary and hip-hop dance draws inspiration from one of Endo’s favorite styles of music—funk. This piece, “Spirit of Rice,” is choreographed by UHM dance faculty member Amy Schiffner and UHM dance alumni and Hip Hop teacher Kent Shinomae.

Funding for this production was gratefully received from the Cooke Foundation. Two new works, commissioned with funding from the Mayor’s Office of Culture and the Arts, will premiere in this production. One of these pieces is choreographed by UHM’s newest dance faculty member, Peiling Kao. The other is a collaboration between Kenny Endo and kumu hula Noenoelani Zuttermeister. Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou! will also feature outreach presentations on O‘ahu and two neighbor islands. In addition to these presentations, students from local schools will have the opportunity to see performances at the Kennedy Theatre.
Tickets for *Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou!* are available 24/7 online at etickethawaii.com, by phone at (808) 944-2697, and at official outlets. Cash sales at the Kennedy Theatre Box Office begin on October 30th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday with extended sales hours on show days.

**EVENT:**

*Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou!*

**PRESENTED BY:**
UHM Department of Theatre + Dance

**WHEN:**
November 3, 4*, 10 and 11* at 7:30 p.m.
Matinee November 12 at 2:00 p.m.
* 6:45 pm - free pre-show chat

**WHERE:**
Kennedy Theatre Mainstage
1770 East-West Road, 96822

**REGULAR TICKET PRICES:**
$25 Adult
$22 Senior, Military, UH Faculty/Staff
$20 UHAA
$15 Students/Youth
$8 UHM Students with Valid ID
Ticket prices include all service fees.

**PURCHASE INFO:**
Tickets are available online at etickethawaii.com, by phone at (808) 944-2697, at participating outlets and at the Kennedy Theatre box office. The box office is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday during show weeks, with extended hours on performance dates.

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