Special Guests, New Works, and More Details: *Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou!*

The back-by-popular demand production of *Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou!* featuring Kenny Endo and the Taiko Center of the Pacific with musical guests Yi-Chieh Lai, Reggie Padilla, and Reid Ishikawa is directed by Betsy Fisher and opens on the Kennedy Theatre Mainstage in one month. As the performances of this concert, which explores interactions between taiko drumming and diverse dance forms, approaches more and more details are becoming available to share. *Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou!* runs November 3, 4, 10, and 11 at 7:30 p.m. and November 12 at 2:00 p.m. on the Kennedy Theatre Mainstage; free pre-show chats begin at 6:45 p.m. on November 4 and 11 in the Earle Ernst Lab Theatre.

Two newly conceived musical compositions by Kenny Endo, commissioned with funding from the Mayor’s Office of Culture and the Arts, premiere in this heart-pounding production. The first accompanies Kumu Hula Noenoeilani Zuttermeister’s choreography in a dance that employs traditional hula movements and a unique intermingling of hula implements and Japanese instrumentation. Although not a traditional hula performed to poetry, this piece includes movements reminiscent of rain, wind, and ocean. Peiling Kao, UHM’s newest dance faculty member, choreographs to Endo’s other recently composed score. Under Kao’s direction, this dance, “Capricious,” incorporates movement created by the ensemble of eighteen dancers and explores the idea of unpredictability.
Howard Asao’s choreography in “Water Spirits” and Sai Bhatawadekar’s, “Vriksha,” investigate themes of nature. Asao, longtime instructor of Japanese dance, uses five dancers; long, rippling streamers; and traditional Japanese dance to evoke the feeling of water spirits. Bhatawadekar, UHM Professor of Hindi-Urdu, touches on themes of sustainability in “Vriksha” (tree in Sanskrit). This Bollywood dance, accompanied by Endo’s composition “Ancient Beginnings,” tells the story of nature’s destruction and rebirth.

Two dances juxtapose contemporary dance and modern dance with taiko drumming. Okinawan dance instructor Yukie Shiroma creates a modern piece that draws inspiration from her background in Okinawan dance in a work called “Steel Rain.” An electric coupling of contemporary dance and hip-hop dance shapes “Spirit of Rice,” choreographed by UHM dance faculty member Amy Schiffner and UHM dance alumnus and Hip Hop teacher, Kent Shinomae.

Although many new collaborations make up the programming for this hana hou production, two pieces are presented as encore performances from the 2013 production of Taiko Drum & Dance. These pieces, “Araumi” and “Yamamba,” are composed by Kirstin Pauka, UHM Professor of Asian Theatre, and Chizuko Endo, respectively. Both pieces are choreographed by Fisher. “Araumi” is a dynamic interplay between the dancers and drummers with choreography inspired by the actions of the taiko ensemble. “Yamamba” is another interactive piece between dancers and musicians. Chizuko Endo created the Noh mask worn by one of the dancers in this powerful duet.

Taiko Drum & Dance: Hana Hou! also features two taiko-only pieces performed by Kenny Endo and the Taiko Center of the Pacific ensemble. “Rites of Thundering” composed by Endo in 2010 features an ojime-daiko, a drum that is 8 feet long and 16 feet in diameter. This resonating piece highlights three main soloists in a rhythmic conversation. The other taiko-only piece is “Symmetrical Soundscapes,” in which drummers play
hand-held and stationary drums as they circle and weave in actions, choreographed by Fisher. A generous grant from the Cooke Foundation helped to make this production possible.

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 1:00p.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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