

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 21, 2009

Contact person: Ellen Bepp

Calendar Listing: Music

Event: Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center presents
Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble in Concert
"TEN"

Where: Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

When: May 22 and 23, 2009 at 8:00 PM

Tickets: \$26 Adults
\$20 seniors, students, children (12 & under), groups of 10 or more
Available at the ticket office, 500 Castro Street, Mountain View
By phone: 650-903-6000 or online: www.mvcpa.com

From the very first strike of the taiko, Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble dazzles their audiences with theatrical flair that brings wonder, laughter, drama and thrills. The ensemble captivates with an intriguing array of drums, percussion, rare stringed and woodwind instruments, unique costumes and movement motifs that step outside the mainstream.

Since their founding, SYTE has received rave reviews for their work:

“ . . . the musicians sliced space and made it tingle . . . The drummers channeled energy with adventurous vigor, they sent it out, welcomed it back, built on it and made a moving art form in the process.”

- Los Angeles Times

“Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble has never been afraid to push the boundaries...SYTE brings all of this to life with a delicacy of touch and a deliberate exploration of dynamics. They allow the music to breathe when needed, yet don't forget the thundering power of taiko at their command.”

-David Leong, Rolling Thunder

Artist History

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble (SYTE), founded in 1999, goes beyond the beat of the taiko drum to use music, theater and dance as a medium to express the human condition as it relates to its environment, community and its future. While the four artists that make up SYTE have a concern for classicism in the structure of their compositions, their direction is a head-on challenge to the predominating conventional treatment of taiko by using their interdisciplinary imagination and their revolutionary approach to taiko choreography.

Since its founding, SYTE has worked in collaboration with choreographers, composers, designers and musicians from all genres. The name of the company, Somei Yoshino, represents one of the most beautiful cherry blossom trees in Japan. The brief blooming time and the fragility of its blossoms signifies the transient beauty of humanity. Like the cherry blossom, SYTE's work is inspired to explore the sensitive, elegant and ephemeral aspects of humanity within the strong and powerful expression of taiko.

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble presents an annual home season concert in San Francisco premiering several new works every year. They have over twenty pieces and three full-length choreographed collaborative productions in their repertoire. In 2004 they premiered a full-length interdisciplinary production with the award-winning dance company, Robert Moses' Kin. SYTE's work ranges from comedic performance art to surrealistic musical drama to powerful synchronous drumming and everything in between. The ensemble has collaborated with jazz musician/composer Marcus Shelby, shakuhachi artist Masayuki Koga, Native American vocalist and percussionist Jane DeCuir, traditional Vietnamese multi-instrumentalist Vanessa Vo and renowned taiko artist Kenny Endo. In addition, they have collaborated with choreographers Robert Moses, Sara Shelton Mann, Robert Henry Johnson, Krissy Keefer, Sue-Li Jue and Alleluia Panis.

SYTE has toured throughout California and nationally and has performed at many major music festivals and performing arts venues including Popejoy Hall in Albuquerque, Kingsbury Hall in Salt Lake City and the noted Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts. Since 2003, Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble has performed for packed audiences in the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico.

The ensemble has been the recipient of funding from the San Francisco Arts Commission, Zellerbach Family Foundation, the Puffin Foundation and the American Composers Forum. As a company that has a strong presence in the local community, Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble currently teaches taiko under a program that serves the general public in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Artist Statement

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble (SYTE) was founded in 1999 to explore and develop works that incorporate taiko (Japanese drumming) with other types of performance art. Named after one of the most beautiful cherry blossom trees in Japan, Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble is inspired to balance the sensitive and elegant aspects of taiko playing with the strong and powerful. SYTE is comprised of four multi-faceted and classically trained artists who blend a unique mixing of rhythms, world inspired melodic woodwinds and strings, original costumes, theatrical sets and lighting, and a modern movement/dance vocabulary. Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble brings a new perspective to the art of taiko by focusing on modern compositions and visual motifs that step outside of the mainstream.

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble – Company Performance History

December 13, 2008	Japantown Merchants Event San Francisco Japantown San Francisco, CA
October 19, 2008	Target Family Day – Yerba Buena Gardens Festival Yerba Buena Gardens San Francisco, CA
September 18, 2008	Laney College World Music Series Laney College Oakland, CA
August 19/ 21, 2008	WestWave Dance Festival Yerba Buena Center for the Performing Arts San Francisco, CA
May 18, 2008	Satsuki Arts Festival Berkeley Buddhist Temple Berkeley, CA
April 26, 2008	American Heart Association Gala Celebration Alameda Navel Air Hanger Alameda, CA
March 16, 2008	Oakland Museum Family Explorations Event Oakland Museum of CA Oakland, CA
February 23, 2008	Humboldt State University International Cultural Festival Arcata, CA
February 3, 2008	Lunar New Year Celebration Oakland Museum of CA Oakland, CA
May 23, 2007	4th Annual Older Americans Month Celebration Frank H. Ogawa Plaza Oakland, CA
March 2, 2007	Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts Taiko X2 SYTE and On Ensemble Cerritos, CA
December 9, 2006	Eastside Arts Alliance Cultural Center Grand Opening Gala Oakland, CA
November 17-19, 2006	SomArts Cultural Center "Runaway Moon" Annual Home Season Concert San Francisco, CA
October 22, 2006	La Pena Cultural Center Chiori Santiago Benefit Berkeley, CA
October 21, 2006	Blackhawk Museum VNHelp - "Wheel and Grace" Benefit Danville, CA
*Southwest Tour	
*May 1, 2006	Tucumcari High School Auditorium Tucumcari, NM
*April 28 , 2006	Macey Center Socorro, NM

*April 24, 2006	Flickinger Center for Performing Arts Alamogordo, NM
*April 22, 2006	Fine Arts Center Theatre Western New Mexico University Silver City, NM
*April 20, 2006	(NMSU) Music Recital Hall New Mexico State University Las Cruces, NM
*April 14, 2006	Kingsbury Hall University of Utah Salt Lake City, UT
*Northwest Tour	
*January 26, 2006	Erb Memorial Union Ballroom University of Oregon Eugene, OR
*January 22, 2006	Becker Auditorium Bonners Ferry, ID
*January 21, 2006	Panida Theater Sandpoint, ID
August 9-20, 2005	Concert Performances & Obon Celebration Havana, Cienfuego, Isla de la Juventud Cuba
July 31, 2005	West America Karate Tournaments Oakland Marriot Civic Center Oakland, CA
July 30, 2005	Hiroshima Stories UC Berkeley International House Berkeley, CA
June 26, 2005	Oakland Museum Living Traditions and Historic Objects Oakland, CA
May 22, 2005	Satsuki Festival Berkeley Buddhist Temple Berkeley, CA
May 20, 2005	3rd Annual Older Americans Month Celebration Frank H. Ogawa Plaza Oakland, CA
May 7, 2005	Percussive Arts Society Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Performing Arts Oakland, CA
March 16, 2005	East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation 30th Anniversary Celebration Oakland, CA
February 24, 2005	Tsunami Relief Event Martin Yan, Joey Altman and Narsi David San Mateo, CA
January 8, 2005	Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern CA 50th Annual New Years Celebration San Francisco, CA
October 2, 2004	Marsee Auditorium El Camino College Center for the Arts Torrance, CA

September 10, 2004	Spokane Opera House Western Arts Alliance - Juried Showcase Spokane, WA
June 23, 2004	Asian Art Museum Opening Gala - "Geisha" San Francisco, CA
May 30, 2004	Sausalito Arts Festival Sausalito, CA
May 20-22, 2004	SomArts Cultural Center "Chains of Color" 4th Annual Home Season Concert San Francisco, CA
May 13, 2004	Spectra Ball at the Mezzanine artSFest 2004 San Francisco, CA
April 30 - May 9, 2004	Kanbar Theater (JCC) guest artist w/Robert Moses' Kin San Francisco, CA
April 24, 2004	Kabuki Theater Cherry Blossom Festival San Francisco, CA
January 24, 2004	California Culinary Academy Sushi Chef Summit - Japan San Francisco, CA
January 17, 2004	Skywalker Studios Lucas Ranch Drum Circle w/Mickey Hart Nicasio, CA
*Southwest Tour	
*November 13, 2003	Disney Lund Theater Cal Arts Valencia, California
*November 11, 2003	Wray Theater Rio Hondo College Whittier, California
*November 7-8, 2003	"Fall Festival of Performing Arts" - Concert Series Taos Community Auditorium - Taos Center for the Arts Taos, New Mexico
*November 5-6, 2003	Shuler Theater Raton, New Mexico
*November 2-3, 2003	"Ovation Series" Popejoy Hall - Center for the Performing Arts University of New Mexico Albuquerque, New Mexico
*October 30-31, 2003	Henderson Fine Arts Performance Center San Juan College Farmington, New Mexico
October 18, 2003	Yerba Buena Gardens 10th Anniversary Celebration Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco
July 2, 2003	"Food for the Soul" - Concert Series World Music Festival

Wingfield Amphitheater, Reno, Nevada

May 17, 2003 Satsuki Arts Festival
Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble
with Special Guest - Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble
Berkeley Jewish Community Center, Berkeley

May 8-9, 2003 APICC - United States of Asian America
"Out of the Box, II"
SomArts Theater, San Francisco

April 27, 2003 Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival
Memorial Park, Cupertino

April 19, 2003 United States/Japan Taiko Festival
Kabuki Theater, San Francisco

April 4-5, 2003 S.P.A.C.E.: 2003 Cultural Performance Project
Ukiah High School, Ukiah

March 11, 2003 Multicultural Center
University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon

March 10, 2003 Seattle Academy
Seattle, Washington

March 8, 2003 Broadway Center for the Performing Arts
Rialto Theater, Tacoma, Washington

October 17, 2002 USF Center for the Pacific Rim Concert
w/guest musician Jane DeCuir
Presentation Theater, San Francisco

October 11-13, 2002 Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble
Home Season Concert - "Take 5"
w/guest musician Masayuki Koga
Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

July 4-6, 2002 Disneyland Performances
Disneyland, Anaheim

June 28, 2002 Asian Improv aRts
"Forces in Motion"
ODC Theater, San Francisco

June 26, 2002 International Music Festival
"Spirit of Music"
Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco

April 27-28, 2002 APICC - United States of Asian America
"Skin to String, Skin to Wind"
w/guests world-class master musicians
Van-Ahn Vo and Unity Nguyen
SOMARTS Theater, San Francisco

April 26, 2002 Asian Pride Day
"Rice Day"
San Leandro, CA

April 20, 2002 Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival
"US/Japan Taiko Festival"
Kabuki Theater, San Francisco

April 19, 2002 Asian Law Caucus
30 Year Anniversary
Marriot Hotel, San Francisco

April 17, 2002 Brockus Project Dance Company
"Quest"
Ivar Theater, Hollywood

April 16, 2002	Cal Arts Dance California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles
February 24, 2002	Day of Remembrance "Conscience in Rhythm" Kabuki Theater, San Francisco
November 2-4, 2001	Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble Home Season Concert - "Out of the Box" Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco
September 8, 2001	Western Arts Alliance San Jose Convention Center, San Jose
August 17-19, 2001	PoMo Arts Festival The Forum/Yerba Buena Center for the Arts San Francisco, CA
August 3, 2001	Crowding the Rim - International Summit 2001 Stanford University, Palo Alto
July 11, 2001	Summerfest/Dance 2001 Cowell Theater, San Francisco
June 26, 2001	Collaboration with Facing East Dance and Music Excerpts of The Nature of Nature Julia Morgan Theater, Berkeley
May 19, 2001	Malcolm X Jazz Festival San Antonio Park, Oakland
May 9, 2001	Santa Clara University Santa Clara
April 29, 2001	Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center SOMARTS Theater, San Francisco
April 13-15, 2001	Susanne Gallo Excerpts of The Nature of Nature w/FEDM Open Arts Circle, Oakland
March 16-25, 2001	Collaboration with Facing East Dance and Music The Nature of Nature: 5 Elements, 5 Dancers, 5 Musicians Oakland Asian Cultural Center
January 20, 2001	Collaboration with Facing East Dance and Music Excerpts of The Nature of Nature Lunar New Year Stamp Celebration Oakland Asian Cultural Center
December 14-16, 2000	Collaboration with Sara Shelton Mann Survival/Phase 1 ODC Theater, San Francisco
December 7, 2000	Institute For Unpopular Culture Benefit Venue: The Black Cat, San Francisco
November 4, 2000	Prop L Benefit Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco
August 30, 2000	Pro Arts Blues Festival Live Old Downtown Oakland
May 26-28, 2000	Collaboration with Sara Shelton Mann 1/Monk at the Met: A Community Performance Extravaganza Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

May 21, 2000

Satsuki Festival
Berkeley Buddhist Temple, Berkeley

February 24-27, 2000

Collaboration with Robert Moses' Kin
5th Anniversary Home Season
Cowell Theater, San Francisco

Artist Bios

Naoko Amemiya grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and has a strong background in dance and choreography. She earned her B.A. in dance at Wesleyan University, with a focus on Asian American choreographers. She found taiko to be a natural extension of her love of movement and music and in 1993 began study with Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka's San Francisco Taiko Dojo, later becoming a performing member. In 2000 Naoko joined Portland Taiko's core artistic staff. Besides touring nationally with Portland Taiko Ensemble, she was active in composition, instruction, and educational presentations. In 2003-4 she performed in Taikoproject, a Los Angeles-based taiko theater production. Naoko has a M.A. in Japanese and also translates Japanese children's books and manga into English. She and her husband Andy Nakatani have a one-year-old son, Gen.

Ellen Reiko Bepp is a native to the San Francisco Bay Area and began taiko training in 1974 under Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka of the San Francisco Taiko Dojo. As a member of the second generation of American taiko players, she continued on to become one of the original members of San Jose Taiko with whom she performed for eleven years. Since then she has co-founded and/or worked with various ensembles such as Tampat: A Sacred Place and Drumfire. Besides drumming, Ellen is a visual artist with an extensive background in the textile arts field as well. She has exhibited her paintings, mixed media work and art installations in galleries and museums throughout the United States since 1980. Her background in clothing design and wearable art has inspired her original costumes and stage creations for the ensemble.

Hiroyuki Jimi Nakagawa was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1957 and arrived in the United States in 1981. He studied jazz and performed with local bands before joining the San Francisco Taiko Dojo, directed by Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka in 1987. In 1997 he returned to Japan to continue his study of taiko and to perform with Sukeroku Daiko Hozonkai and master Kenjiro Maru of the Wakayama style festival music. He has also studied with celebrated drummer Robert Kaufman, former professor at the Berkley College of Music. Hiroyuki's refined but driving stickwork has been featured in film, video and on stage. He has collaborated with Robert Moses and Robert Moses' Kin, Dr. Anthony Brown and the Asian American Orchestra, Steven Kent/Ancient Future with renowned musician Habib Kahn. Currently an instructor for JMI (Japanese Music Institute), he is also a member of its performing group Essence.

Kallan Yoichi Nishimoto received Bachelor of Music degrees in Music Education and Clarinet Performance from the UOP Conservatory of Music. He currently studies shamisen with Hideko Nakajima, shakuhachi with Masayuki Koga of the Japanese Music Institute and has trained under Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka of the San Francisco Taiko Dojo. Kallan has composed music and has designed sound for the Asian American Theater Company, Asiantics Theater, Wise Fool Puppet Intervention, Cellspace as well as various film, video and dance projects. He has co-founded or worked with various funk, rock and world music ensembles such as Littleton, Bolo, Rebecca's Mask, Jane His Wife, Candide, Drumfire, and most recently, Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble. Kallan currently works as a producer/recording engineer at Flytrap Studios.

Repertoire

"**Accel.**" - Accelerando - quickening (the time). A simple two motif composition linking interwoven perceptions and distortions of time... real or perceived. often abbreviated accel. (2) shime and odaiko.

"**Blue Bamboo**" - Expression of young bamboo life. Shime, chu-daiko & huaca

"**Buena Onda Ondo**" - Translated "good vibes" (Spanish), "dance" (Japanese) as Japanese folk dance meets Latin percussion rhythms. Uchiwa "fan" drums swing, sticks twirl and feet step to the lively taiko clave beat.

"**Chindonya Medley**" - In the olden days of Japan, one of the most unique and entertaining forms of advertising was the chindonya band. These musical bands of gaudily dressed musicians performing in wild and outrageous costumes were hired by a shop owner to hit the streets, improvising festive music, beating drums and gongs, playing woodwinds or brass instruments, and handing out flyers to all the passersby.

"**Dan Dan Batake**" - Beginning with the white of the potato in winter, changing to the green of watering, then to the golden yellow of rice ears, and finally to the brown of the land as winter approaches again, the year brings a constant change in colors. The living earth and the people who toil it create a beautiful, emotional scene. Unique 5 drum terraced composition using our largest Okedo to smallest shime.

"**Festival**" – description to come

"**Guardians**" - An invitation to travel to another time, another place, where the ancestors guide and protect.

"**Hai Kitaka Sasa**" - Original festival song.

"**Hitenko**" - An image of light... of flying celestials in the air, coming down to the lower world (earth).

"**Indra's Net**" - A musical portrayal of the Buddhist myth of Indra, a great god who hung a wondrous net adorned with multifaceted jewels from his heavenly mansion. Just as each jewel reflects every other jewel, so all are seen in each one: a universe of mutual interrelationships. This piece expresses this metaphor with its placement of drums, interconnected rhythms and movement that depicts these many facets and aspects all contained in the whole. (Commissioned by the Ronald Y. and Irene K. Nakasone Endowment Fund in Buddhist Art, Aesthetics, and Culture)

"**Omurasaki**" - Named after the national butterfly of Japan. The song takes us into a natural habitat, surrounded by the sounds of cicadas, frogs and crickets. The butterflies emerge and follow the endless cycle of life. Shamisen, taiko and fan drums.

"**Ramen Ondo**" - Sweet potatoes, bamboo poles, candy...each street vendor has his own cry. Their melodious calls were once an integral part of the soundscape of Japan. Even now, when night falls, the oboe-like *charumera* beckons one and all to a steaming bowl of noodles at the ramen vendor's stall.

"**So Du So**" - Somei Yoshino's first original composition based on four musical motifs created by each member of the ensemble. The piece is then organized into three parts solo, duet and solo.

“Stranger Spirits” - A world above, a world below --- take a glimpse --- open your heart to the rhythms of life and death.

"Tasogare" - (Twilight) - The crossfade of day into night . Shakuhachi, taiko, clarinet and dulcimer.

“The Wall” - Invest, Stay and Fight. We build to be torn down again, again and again. With two steps forward, one step back, two steps forward... we march before the Jericho of the unjust and racial rust. Large okedo, odaiko and two chu-daikos

"Wamblegleshka" - (Eagle in the Mist) - Lakota word for eagle, the brother who can take our prayers to the Great Spirit and whose feathers are given to us for doctoring. Taiko w/Native American flute and fue.

"Zag Tag" - All about diverging and converging, going apart and coming together, like a game of tag in a zigzag world... always chasing, never catching... too tired to play.

Residency Activities

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble is available to present workshops, master classes and lecture demonstrations for children and adults. The group has had experience with school age children from elementary through high school and adults, young and old. These workshops cover the fundamentals of taiko playing: stance and form, stick technique, spoken rhythms, correct etiquette and philosophy.

Elementary School Assembly Programs (K-6)

The 45-minute educational program teaches K-6 students about the origins of taiko and Japanese music through performance, storytelling and audience participation. *Rei* or cultural etiquette and communication in the study of taiko is introduced.

Middle & High School Assembly Programs (K-12)

The 55-minute educational program shares the art of taiko and Japanese music through performance, demonstration and audience participation. The four elements of taiko: *Karada* (Discipline of Body), *Kokoro* (Discipline of Mind), *Waza* (Musical Skills), *Rei* (Communication, etiquette) are introduced.

Hands-On Taiko Workshops

Available for children (7-15) and adults (16 and older) with all levels of prior experience. A hands-on introduction to playing taiko from form and philosophy, to history and oral tradition, including learning a short song.

Lecture Demonstrations

An overview of taiko and Japanese music background and history including early uses and origins of Japanese instruments such as taiko, shakuhachi, shamisen (Japanese banjo), fue (bamboo flute) in Japanese and Asian culture.

In addition, an overview of American Taiko and its context in Asian-American history is included by SYTE member Ellen Reiko Bepp, who was an original member of San Jose Taiko, the third taiko group to be established in the United States.

Review Excerpts

"...*the musicians sliced space and made it tingle*. The drummers channeled energy with adventurous vigor; they sent it out, welcomed it back, built on it and made a moving art form in the process."

- Los Angeles Times

"I especially liked when there was direct interaction between drummers and dancers . . . *the concept and the piece was groundbreaking*, and look forward to seeing more of such work."

- Hyphen Magazine

"...the show opened with a *high-voltage performance* by (Somei) Yoshino Taiko Ensemble that seemed to welcome the gods and goddesses to the theater. Walking slow patterns across the floor, chanting and clapping, the group established an atmosphere of community ritual that steadily gained momentum as the evening progressed. The four drummers of Bruce Mui Ghent's ensemble formed an *octopus of arms waving like a possessed painter, brushes in hand wildly smearing a canvas with percussive and lyrical rhythms*."

- SF Bay Guardian

"visually stunning"

"A bonus to the ticket holder came with the appearance of the four musicians of the Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble. Drumming with *calculated, martial-art-inspired patterns and arcs, the drummers got the blood rushing, while accelerating to a collective blur resembling living Asian brush drawing*."

- Contra Costa Times

"From there, The Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble let out all the stops in 'We Hsing,' striking up an intense drum piece... *extremely tight as an ensemble, they stir up the audience's energy and excitement*."

- AsianWeek

"The musicians are consistently evocative and physically resonant... (the) haunting music... is rhythmically interesting and physically dynamic."

- Urban View

"They were *superb!* In total harmony with one another! Movements flowed. *A MUST see!*

- Dara's World

"I saw four electrons laugh triumphantly as they filled D type spiritual orbitals! All I could gasp in the way of intelligible speech while witnessing Somei Yoshino (Taiko Ensemble) Sunday night at San Francisco's Dance Mission Theater was "I didn't know it could be like this..." The four dance-musicians began by hovering just above the studio audience in a delicious invitation to flight, then rhythmic flashes of P type activity drew in the fearful stragglers who wanted to fly most."

- D Orbitals

Wamblegleshka... "Overall, this piece is brilliant. There is a great build up, the melody lovely, the pacing nearly perfect. The flute-chant-flute section keeps the interest while Jimi's playing adds the necessary spice until Ellen and Naoko kick in. The movement, the hands on the drums, the flow of this piece is really enjoyable. Ellen and Naoko's choreography is nice and varied without being forced.

"... I love all of the elements that Somei Yoshino has pulled together. There is a grace, gravity and spirit unique to your group. Please keep it up as Yuko and I continue to expect Somei Yoshino to be one of the standard bearers for modern, professional taiko in the US."

- David Leong, Rolling Thunder

Reviews Full

DANCE REVIEW

'Quest' Musicians Supply Interesting Movement

By JENNIFER FISHER, SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

When the Brockus Project Dance Company and the Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble got together on the stage of the Ivar Theatre in Hollywood for the premiere of "Quest" Wednesday night, the most interesting dance came from the musicians. Odd, but not, unfortunately, entirely unheard of. At the start of the 90-minute performance, the four players were arranged at the edge of the stage, three of them on stools, draped in long black and white robes, their backs to the audience as their arms repeatedly swept overhead and paused. Then, they slowly claimed their drums and built a rhythmic tower of sound. For the several sections of dance that followed, they provided minimal percussion, faint vocalizing and the occasional flute tune, both onstage and off. In two extended musical sections, their dance-like embroidery again rose to the surface. Often settling into deep warrior lunges beside the large taiko drums, they created individual gestural patterns, sometimes leaping away from a drum, almost seeming to perform an incantation before returning to the majestic, choreographed reaching that preceded contact with the drum. One bit of steely frenzy from Jimi Nakagawa was particularly thrilling, although the ensemble's director Bruce "Mui" Ghent, Ellen Reiko Bepp and Kallan Yoichi Nishimoto also had their moments. The dancer (choreographer Deborah Brockus and five others) seemed caught in a time warp--somewhere between the naive, amateur "interpretive dance" of the early or mid-20th century (ponderous slow-motion and statue poses) and ta-da moments of jazzy flinging. Throughout, not much space was disturbed by the dancers; all impulses looked surface-deep, tentative, except for flashy brief solos. Whereas the musicians sliced space and made it tingle. This revived the idea of a quest, the title concept approached so flaccidly in the choreography. The drummers channeled energy with adventurous vigor; they sent it out, welcomed it back, built on it and made a moving art form in the process.

Jennifer Fisher
Los Angeles Times

Contra Costa Times
December 16, 2000
Review: Blair Tindall
Premiere of "Survival/Phase 1"
Sara Shelton Mann and Contraband
ODC Theater, 3153 17th St., S.F.
"SURVIVAL" DANCE PIECE NEEDS WHITTLLING DOWN
Blair Tindall

- * Who: Sara Shelton Mann and Contraband
- * What: Premiere of "Survival/Phase 1"
- * Where: ODC Theater, 3153 17th St., S.F.
- * When: 8 tonight
- * How much: \$15
- * Call: 415-863-9834

It's wondrous when a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. But the opposite is baffling especially when the ingredients are of such high quality. Choreographer Sara Shelton Mann's "Survival/Phase 1" premiered at the ODC Theater on Thursday night, combining the talents of eight breathtaking dancers, a videographer, the enthralling Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble and the wildly creative musician and instrument builder Peter Whitehead. Despite the artists' riveting presentation, Mann's 40-minute work dragged on yet may have been truly meaningful if compressed into half that length. Fortunately, "Survival's" dance quality and complexity were

deep and well-rehearsed; because Mann's piece is currently a work in progress, she may weed out the excess for a work that speaks directly. A long evening began with an uncomfortable wait. ODC didn't open the interior auditorium doors until the stroke of 8 p.m., jamming 200 fans of the sold-out house in the lobby on a rainy night. In addition, the one access aisle in the house the sole means of exit for the entire audience was blocked by the many people ODC management allowed to sit on the steps. "Survival/Phase 1" will become part of a work called "Monk at the Met," which will tour internationally and in full starting next fall. It is the result of Mann's 2000 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in Choreography. The work started off well, with a formally-dressed woman powdering the nose of a grotesque pig's head while a recording of Mann's own poetry intoned, "We imagine our very best pieces are taken home and fried and eaten by human beings." Interesting stuff indeed, but the fast-paced and fine choreography seemed to express a frustrated nihilism, which fell flat long before the 40-minute mark. Equally fascinating on its own was the tireless and visually stunning Taiko drumming and Whitehead's own impassioned performance on various conventional and found instruments. The dancers of Mann's own Contraband, Abby Crain, Ramon Ramos Alayo, Kathleen Hermesdorf, Jose Navarrete, Austin Forbord, Shelley Trott, Marantha Tewksbury and Yannis Adoniou, presented sharply focused, virtuosic work. They were mesmerizing as they re-created Mann's impressions of human relationships and undulated as great waves of movement throughout the piece. The dancing in itself was so spectacular, it dwarfed any greater intellectual meaning.

Earlier on the program, Adonious' premiere of "Auf deine Hande" was far more compelling as a strait-jacketed figure in a white bustle skirt wove through swarming figures. Pulled against the forces of nature, the dancers writhed with such calculated athleticism, it was hard to look away. "Auf deine Hande" was tight, with little of the extraneous material seen in "Survival." The eight dancers, many of whom also appeared in both works, performed with the same cutting-edge finesse.

A bonus to the ticket holder came with the appearance of the four musicians of the Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble. Drumming with calculated, martial-art-inspired patterns and arcs, the drummers got the blood rushing, while accelerating to a collective blur resembling living Asian brush drawing.

Choreographers like Mann can speak strongly by standing what we expect on its head. But where it's desirable for a choreographer to break the rules, management of a venue like the ODC Theater needs to stay mainstream.

Abby Crain and Austin Forbord, in "Survival/Phase 1," are part of Sara Shelton Mann's spectacular dance team, Contraband. (Karl Mondon/Times)

SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN

May 1, 2000

Review: Sima Belmar

Research/Phase I - Monk at the Met

Sara Shelton Mann

Dance Mission Theater

Whoa! Mann

Sara Shelton Mann's return to choreography is powerful.

By Sima Belmar

Sara Shelton Mann has become almost as famous for having done little since her performance collective Contraband disbanded in 1996 as for having founded and directed the group. For a critic who reached the Bay Area dance scene after 1996, the mere mention of Contraband elicits feelings of having stepped into faded glory drenched in nostalgia. So, with the exception of a few dark and distant videos, a glimpse of Mann dancing at a recent performance in her honor, and multiple tales of her directorial past, I had nothing to compare with *Research/Phase I/ Monk at the*

Met: A Community Performance Extravaganza. But Mann's return — last weekend at Dance Mission Theater signaled the resurrection of the spirit of community through the bodies of some of the Bay Area's finest dancers. Standing on its own, in front of a packed and hopeful house of old friends and new faces, the performance was one of those longed-for moments where the spiritual and the corporeal fuse in one ecstatic burst of energy, a nonlinear whirlwind of unrelenting physicality, gorgeous music, exuberant text, and *power*.

Directed and choreographed by Mann together with some longtime collaborators and several others newer to the fold, the show opened with a high-voltage performance by Yoshino Taiko Ensemble that seemed to welcome the gods and goddesses to the theater. Walking slow patterns across the floor, chanting and clapping, the group established an atmosphere of community ritual that steadily gained momentum as the evening progressed. The four drummers of Bruce Mui Ghent's ensemble formed an octopus of arms waving like a possessed painter, brushes in hand wildly smearing a canvas with percussive and lyrical rhythms.

Krissy Keefer, who co-produced the show and wrote some of the text for it, nearly stole the evening with her daikini/valley girl performance. A Buddhist butcher in turquoise satin gloves, with a carving knife in her hair, Keefer gave a rather alternative dharma talk over a pig's head. A voiceover of a pig's imagining of its existence was interrupted by Keefer's discussion of reincarnation, karma, and forgiveness. As usual, she hypnotized the audience, avoiding heavy-handed preaching through humor.

After Keefer's prologue, flickering images of tombstones (film by Austin Forbord) began dancing behind Kathleen Hermesdorf. Her ghostly presence set the dancers, some in red slips, others in Hawaiian shirts, in motion. The contact duets that ensued, though skilled and exciting, represented the weakest part of the evening. There is something loose and chronically monotone about a standing circle around center action that causes my attention to slip. A sound score of layered snippets of jazz, opera, blues, rap, and EKG beeps kept the action on edge. What followed was some of the most glorious dancing this flawed earth has to offer. Both Mann and Keefer epitomize the strong woman: creative, life-giving, life-affirming. And though a couple of the male dancers (Ramon Ramos Alayo and Forbord) truly shined, it was the women who shocked the pants off me and knocked my socks off. Abby Grain danced a beautiful flailing solo, Marantha Tewksbury showcased her liquid accuracy, and Hermesdorf commanded the stage with intensity and virtuosity. Monique Jenkinson, Deb Taylor, and Shelley Trott each brought a peculiar brand of focus to the ensemble: seductive, ecstatic, and athletic, respectively. The women onstage replanted the seeds of matriarchy and set them to grow right before our eyes. At this point I was thinking, "I'm just sitting here loving every damn minute of the dancing and not thinking one bit about what it all means." When Keefer reentered, her otherworldly goddess voice and expression replaced with that of a California girl, saying, "Wow! That was amazing. I just loved that so much!" I was vindicated. She went on to ask whether beautiful dancing by itself can dispel negative karma, for me that was the crux and the content of the evening. After Keefer's hilarious discussion of the meaning of pig— from the negative self-image of '70s radical therapy to having no manners to the Tibetan definition of wisdom and ignorance— the women of Dance Brigade (Keefer's dance collective) took over the taiko drums with real power: not feigned, not grasped at, but simply grasped. Keefer didn't return with any final words of wisdom. But Mann doesn't appear to be concerned with closure. In fact, an open-ended, continuous being seems more her aim — a sense of connectedness based on faith rather than deliberate craft. Mann chose to close the piece with a marvelous segue from taiko into Norman Rutherford's punky strains of bass, cello, guitar, and banjo. The drummers pounded lightly, and everyone came in to lie face down in the fading light. For Mann, I hope it symbolizes a restful nap and not another deep sleep.

THE NATURE OF NATURE
SUE LI-JUE
OACC

“The music, provided by the Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble, is the most thrilling part of the work. The four classically-trained and multi-talented musicians are used not only to accompany the work on drums, but are also featured as participants in it. As part of the set, they are woven into the choreography and interact with dancers, who at one point drum along with them. Seeing the music as part of the visual landscape makes The Nature of Nature sensually overwhelming and exciting.”

Julie Bloom

**INTERNATIONAL EXAMINER
ARTS**

MUSIC:

The ephemeral sounds of Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble

By Stan Shikuma
Examiner Contributor

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble (SYTE) is an exciting voice in the rapidly proliferating Bay Area taiko scene. "Out of the Box," their first CD, presents us with a seamless integration of taiko with strings, woodwinds, vocals and percussion, providing each a clear and distinct voice. Their frequent and effective use of ma (space) on several pieces helps create a spare and ephemeral sound rare among North American taiko CDs.

SYTE's music is at times elegant and subtle, at times spare and simple, at other times complex, multi-layered and highly nuanced. Their playing is powerful, full and precise, but the sound is not overwhelming or excessively dense, as you sometimes hear with larger drum groups. I thought the straight-ahead taiko piece "So Du So" would benefit from more drums, as perhaps would the closing section of "Dan Dan Batake," a beautiful flute ballad with an insistent taiko tag, but the rhythms stand out well enough on their own. The drums are absolutely mesmerizing on the driving pulse piece "Hitenko."

While all four members of SYTE play taiko on the CD, each also brings a special talent that embellishes everything the others do. Bruce "Mui" Ghent is a modern dancer and choreographer. Reiko Ellen Bepp is a visual artist with a background in painting, mixed media, textile art and art installations (and was a founding member of San Jose Taiko.) Hiroyuki Jimi Nakagawa is a jazz drummer and percussionist who has also studied Edo Matsuri Bayashi. Kallan Yoichi Nishimoto is a composer who plays clarinet, shakuhachi and other woodwinds. All four have studied taiko with Seiichi Tanaka and San Francisco Taiko Dojo.

The CD itself is superbly engineered and gets a full range of sound from the four main players and their guest artists; it is a showcase for their technical expertise, power, precision, and masterful arrangements. The acoustic balance of all the instruments and vocals brings out the true quality of each sound with nothing muffled, missed or overwhelmed by the power of the drums (often a problem on taiko recordings). In order to hear all the subtleties and nuances of the music, I strongly urge you to listen to this on a good stereo system. I listened to the CD several times in the car or through headphones on a portable player and the difference I heard when I played it on the big system in my living room was simply astounding.

The real joy comes in hearing the exceptional integration of Native American vocals, Vietnamese string instruments, shakuhachi, clarinet, shinobue, hammer dulcimer, shamisen, bells, chimes, yotsutake, and other percussion with taiko. From the haunting vocals of Native American singer Jane DeCuir on "Wamblegleshka" (Eagle in the Mist) to the flowing lyricism of the dan bau (Vietnamese monochord) and dan tranh (Vietnamese zither) by Van-Anh Vo on "Omurasaki" to the ephemeral improvisations of shakuhachi master Masayuki Koga on "Tasogare," the taiko is used

to alternately underlay, amplify, complement, answer or interweave with the guest artist.

Some of the most unusual pieces on the CD include "Guardians," a vocal chant accompanied only by yotsutake (bamboo sticks). "Chindonya Medley" shows a playful and comic side of SYTE – chindon is sort of a "taiko meets klezmer" style of street music used by Meiji era merchants to advertise their products and featuring drums, clarinet, bells and even brass instruments. (Somei Yoshino may well be the only group in North America performing chindon music today.) "Utsukushiki Tennen" is best described as a melancholy chindon waltz.

My only complaint with "Out of the Box?" I wish they had included more extensive liner notes on the songs and the artists. To get this, you will have to check out their website at: www.taikoensemble.com.

I had the pleasure of seeing Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble in a live performance at the Rialto Theater in Tacoma in 2004, and as much as I enjoyed the CD, the theater aspects, movements and drum arrangements cannot be appreciated in a recording. Some of this is captured in their video, but a live performance is even richer and more nuanced and exposes the full beauty of their arrangements and choreography, visuals and props, movement and expression. Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble truly plays "Out of the Box" and then some.

Stan Shikuma is a taiko player, teacher and writer in the Seattle area.

Review: Somei Yoshino's Runaway Moon

Rolling Thunder

www.taiko.com

Written by David Leong
Saturday, 18 November 2006

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble (SYTE) has never been afraid to push the boundaries. They have incorporated dance choreography, added non-traditional instruments, and have forged alliances with other performers outside of the taiko community. With "Runaway Moon", SYTE's newest production at the SOMA theater in San Francisco, all of these elements are brought together into something as subtle and compelling as the last taste of dream before you open your eyes to the dawn.

The performance is inspired by a series of sumi-e paintings by Minette Mangahas that tell the story of a horse being chased by the moon all through the night. The paintings form an intrinsic part of the performance, being projected, and sometimes animated on the black backdrop. Guest artist Jeannie Mckenzie adds a wonderful layer of cello and violin playing that fills out the sometimes sparse drumming.

Runaway Moon is a precious, crafted little jewel of a performance. In the closed confines of SOMA, where the stadium style bleachers perches the audience right on the edge of the stage, the effect is encompassing. You feel that the traditional boundary of performer and artist has vanished, and that you are somehow drawn into a dark storyland. This is an effect that SYTE exploits to it's fullest. Ambient sounds fill the dark, performers in black crawl onto the stage, forcing you to peer through the darkness to catch tantalizing glimpses of what's transpiring. Once SYTE has your attention, once they bring you through the mirror, they take you on a journey through story.

Your attention is well rewarded. Performers dancing with uchiwa-daiko turn into fireflies under a projected moon. The horse runs through water and wind, passing by animals (and stranger spirits) dancing on the mountain. SYTE Brings all of this to life with a delicacy of touch and a deliberate exploration of dynamics. They allow the music to breathe when needed, yet don't forget the thundering power of taiko at their command.

Through out all of this, the focus is on the story rather than the performers. SYTES plays behind the curtain, dresses in black on a dark stage, plays in subdued lighting, hides behind masks and costumes. Then, just as when the story ends and the book closes you finally become aware of the storyteller, the finale of Running Moon has SYTE coming to the fore, beaming and playing taiko with all their hearts. It's definitely a satisfying conclusion to this tale.

Reviews of shows from the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts published by the Los Cerritos Community News. The writer and paper are in their fourteenth year of covering these events.

SYTE/ON Ensemble March 2, 2007



SYTE/On Ensemble: Taking Taiko and Cerritos to Another Level

By Glen Creason

Judging by the full house, mixed between young hipsters and wise possessors of distinguished gray, the talents of the Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble and the ON Ensemble are not exactly a secret. There was a buzz denoting something special about to happen in the big hall on Friday night and audience volume without the fuel of alcohol sometimes means a lot. This being my maiden voyage with both groups I expected a good Taiko performance, which I got, and then much, much more. Both groups are polished and professional and each performed marvelously basing the proceedings on the ancient art of Taiko drumming. Yet, this was an evening of transcendence by both.

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble, henceforth known as SYTE performed most of the first half of the show and stayed close to the Kumi-Daiko or ensemble drumming style while adding visual charm and choreography to their songs. Some of the initial pieces such as “Guardians,” and “Hitenko” were dreamy and almost hypnotic but the precision of the four players alternating from contemplative to an increasing rhythm raised the pulse of onlookers without raising the volume. “Dan Dan Batake” was demanding and took side-by-side drumming at a brisk pace dependent on razor sharp timing. “Ramen Ondo” was light-hearted but almost pop sounding, a refreshing change from the intensity of the opening numbers and even included an into the audience foray complete with gifts to a lucky few in the orchestra seats. “Wamblegleshka” brought out eight musicians and pulled out all the stops and instruments from didgeridoo to the O-Daiko as SYTE and ON got it on together for the first time of the night. The finishing kick of “So Du So” was utterly dazzling with choreography and surgical precision between the four drummers. Despite the sophistication of the art form there was an edgy, primal feel to the rapid drumming in unison. SYTE is probably not a group you would want to follow if you were a performer.

Unfazed, the youngsters of ON Ensemble just simply tore up the second half of the show. This is one of the most innovative and musically fresh groups ever to take the stage in the big hall. From the magical sound of the opening “Gengakki” and its 13 string “okoto” playing to the lyrical and delicious “Watashi Watashitachi” the ON ensemble was playing with utterly esoteric instruments vibrant music you could hear on the radio and really dig. When is the last time you heard taiko drumming on the radio? The group could entertain alone on the fevered, four-part groove they achieve with their drums as in “Yama Song,” “Little Man” or the pure energy and synergy of “Zeecha” but they seemed to reaching for the stars on this night. The risky and totally avant-garde combining of turntable, western drum kit and taiko on “Turns” actually made for beautiful sounds and Shoji Kameda’s powerful throat singing on “After Rain” just expanded the now riveted audience’s musical consciousness. This is a very talented and unique group with the guts to take a centuries old art form to another level. This could never be confused with the sometimes dirty word: fusion. The taiko drumming is at the center of the ON performance but glitters like gold when surrounded by so much enthusiasm and polish.

Presenter Testimonials

"The boom of the large drum dispersed into the air like a showering mist sending chills from head to toe. As it evaporated, the sound of silence became louder than the drum. The contrast of powerful energy and graceful quietness was portrayed by the unique individual artistry of the members of the Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble. As a whole **they moved together with precise choreography leaving a lasting impression that our audience is still talking about.** They (SYTE) were wonderful and everyone was in awe. All in all, it was a great success."

Barbara Russell
Booking Coordinator
Friends of the Arts
Bonnors Ferry, Idaho

"SYTE is an amazing group in all aspects - the educational offerings were top-notch, the performance was sold out, and people are still talking about it. The quality of the performance was above and beyond, and the group was wonderful to work with.

Lizzy Hughes, Executive Director
Pend Oreille Arts Council
Sandpoint, Idaho

To: Rachel (SYTE Booking agent)

"I have to tell you that Somei was one of the best groups I have ever presented. They are so professional. They are exceptional artists. **Their performance was thrilling and their smooth transition from one piece to the next was really beautiful.** Their use of good theater principles to keep the audience engaged throughout was seamless. Thank you for making this tour possible. I had a very enthusiastic audience of about 600 and they just fell in love with the group. They are funny and riveting too - a great combination. And, the youth performance was very good - the students and the teachers gave us very positive feedback. I liked how they linked the art with the extreme physicality necessary to be a taiko artist. Thanks again and I can't wait to present your other fine artists.

Faye McCalmont
Executive Director
Mimbres Regional Arts Council
Silver City, New Mexico

"While waiting for the curtain to go up, anticipation grew as it became closer to show time. Not knowing what to expect, we were intrigued by the display of drums on stage. **From the first act we were captivated by the artistry of this group not expecting a night of drumming to be so varied, interesting and dynamic.** They were not only musicians, but artists, actors and dancers. A night to remember, this should be seen by anyone wanting a full experience."

Joan Myers, audience member
Bonnors Ferry, Idaho

... "had an **excellent experience** with Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble. The members were very pleasant to work with. Thanks for the opportunity to work with such great artists!"

Kevin Stacy
Performing Arts Coordinator
Cultural Forum
University of Oregon

Hi Rachel, (SYTE Booking agent)

“Everything went great. We received many, many positive comments and several requests for a return engagement. They sold a lot of CD's and shirts. The school show was a big success. ***The kids loved them.***”

Jim Mack
Executive Director
Flickinger Ctr. for the Performing Arts
Alamogordo, New Mexico

“I was so impressed with the lec-dems. they were educational, well paced, fun, engaging; I loved that you involved the audience. I didn't think it could get better until I saw your full performance. ***I was truly amazed. The flow, theatricality, distinctiveness of pieces, energy communicated by each of you, interplay with each other, I can go on and on, it was the most amazing show.*** The humor interjected here and there, added a lot to the overall performance. It was one of our most well-attended shows of the year, and I think the standing ovation spoke clearly as to the enthusiasm of our audience.”

“I surely hope we can do it again some time in the future. ***Your residency and performance were hands-down, the best event of the season.***”

Ronna Kalish
Executive Director
NM Tech Performing Arts Series
Socorro, New Mexico

Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble • **Technical Rider**

Technical rider between Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble ("Company")

and _____ ("Presenter").

Date: _____

Company's staff includes (4) musicians and (1) lighting designer/operator personnel. Presenter agrees to cooperate with the Company's production manager in the preparation and presentation of the performance. In the event of a dispute between the Company production manager and the Presenter's agent or representative having like capacity, the decision of the Company production manager shall be final. It is nevertheless expressly understood and agreed that the Company production manager shall not make a demand in excess of the potential of the Presenter in relationship to the facility and equipment.

A check list has been provided for your convenience. A check mark in the box indicates fulfillment of said conditions and/or agreement(s).

I. Facility

The performing area must have a stage that is deemed safe and acceptable to Company in its sole judgment.

- The performing area must be an area minimum 30' X 30'.
- The performing area must be covered with black Marley surface and must be installed, seamed, taped and damp mopped, prior to Company load in, setup and spiking. The floor must be subsequently damp mopped prior to all rehearsals and performances.
- The surrounding non-performance floor areas (wings, crossovers, etc.) must be smooth, free of splinters, tacks, nails, etc., and not be heavily varnished or waxed. It shall be swept and damp mopped immediately prior to all rehearsals and performances. The Company performs without shoes. Conscientious attention to details will help insure the safety of the Company.
- The stage shall be available to Company 48 hours minimum and not used by any other attraction, event, etc., once Company has begun set up until after the final performance and the removal of all Company property and equipment. If the 48 hours minimum is not available, the Company must be notified in writing of the time restraints and alternative arrangements agreed upon by Company and Presenter.
- A quick change area 10' x 10' on both sides of the stage is required.

II. Equipment Requirements

- Stage equipment, including lighting and sound system as may be in the possession of the theater, shall be readily AVAILABLE for use by the Company.
- Prior to the production manager's arrival, the Presenter shall provide a scaled floor plan of the stage, and if available, a circuit diagram and a diagram of the dimming system showing operational features and capacity of each dimmer.
- A complete and accurate fly or hanger schedule must be included with the scaled floor plan and all information required in the attached Technical Questionnaire.
- The Technical Questionnaire shall be returned within ten days of receipt.
- A "Hanging Plot" shall be sent in advance of the arrival of the Company production manager and/or lighting designer. Lights must be hung, circuited, and patched prior to the arrival of the Company production manager and/or lighting designer. The Company production manager or light designer will supervise all angling and focusing of equipment.
- Presenter must notify Company within 60 days if any equipment or house condition listed in house specifications, hanger schedule, scaled floor plan, circuit diagram, dimming system, operational features has changed or is inoperable.
- The lighting equipment must not be moved or re-angled after it has once been set for the performance(s).
- Venue must have basic equipment expendables i.e. black tie line, safety cables for lights, gaffers tape, spike tape, broom, mop and bucket.
- An operational cherry picker or lift tall enough to focus lamps at the trim height of the theater grid.
- AND/OR - one strong 'A' frame ladder that can reach the lights safely at a trim height of the theater grid.
- If there are any difficulties in meeting the above needs, the Company must be informed 60 days in advance.

Electrical - except as otherwise noted, Presenter shall provide:

- 48 working dimmers (2.4k capacity each). If 48 working dimmers are not available, Company must be notified in writing.
- Programmable ETC or similar light board with 100+ cue capability
- 200 amp minimum service for lighting
- Bench Focus Lights - all instruments in working order - spare bulbs

Repertory Plot

- Front light (6) Source 4 - 50° or equivalent
- Back light (6) Source 4 - 50° with scroller or
- (6) additional Source 4 - 50° if no scroller is available
- Shin busters (8) Source 4 - 50° or equivalent
- Mids (8) Source 4 - 50° or equivalent
- High side (8) Source 4 - 50° or equivalent

Specials

- (3) Source 4 - 19° with iris
- (9) Source 4 - 36°
- (7) Source 4 - 50°
- (7) 6" Fresnel (500w)
- (2) Twin spin gobo rotator (optional)
- Strip lights for white upstage scrim (if scrim is available)
- Accompanying color filter frames for all instruments.
- (8) [10-12 foot] light booms with bases.
- (2) Floor stand bases
- Slide hanging side-arms may be needed depending on grid set up.
- Enough footage of #12 or #14 cable sufficient for hanging the light plot.
- (12) multiple connectors (i.e. twofers or 3-ways).

Sound - except as otherwise noted, Presenter shall provide:

- Intercom with a minimum of three sets of headphones (two-way communication) located:
 - lighting console
 - sound booth
 - stage managers desk
- Paging system to all dressing rooms. (opt.)
- Amplification with sufficient wattage to drive house system speakers (minimum-two) and backstage monitor (minimum-one).
- (3) standing microphones on booms
- (1) small wireless lavalier clip on microphone and matching wireless receiver
- (1) low floor stand wireless microphone and matching receiver
- Cable and outlets available with appropriate equipment so each microphone can be independently controlled.
- A CD playback system wired into the house sound board.
- Stereo overhead microphone system.
- A proper audio feed from house sound board to video camera input.

Draperies and Masking - except as otherwise noted, Presenter shall provide:

- Act curtain.
- Four pair legs and borders-black in color.
- Mid-stage traveler (set 10' to 15' behind act curtain-dark color) opt.

III. Dressing Room Requirements

As required by Actors' Equity Association (AEA) in their safe and sanitary code:

- The Company will need adequate space for 2 women and 2 men (preferably two dressing rooms). Dressing rooms should have hot and cold running water, tables, chairs, mirrors, adequate light for applying stage makeup, and clothes racks for the costumes.
- Dressing rooms must be clean, sanitary and absolutely private; must be reserved for the exclusive use of the Company during their stay; and must have direct access to the stage out of public view.
- The restrooms provided for the actors must be separate facilities from those provided for the audiences and should contain adequate paper supplies and soap. All dressing rooms must be cleaned and dusted prior to the arrival of the Company.

IV. Personnel Requirements

Except as otherwise noted, Presenter shall provide minimum requirements for technical assistance for the Company.

- Head Electrician
- Flyman - must be available for dress rehearsal
- Soundman - must be available during specified rehearsals as well as performance
- Crew Needs: A minimum of 6 personnel (preferably the same 6 consistently) during load in, setup, focusing, general tech, rehearsals, performance and break down.
- Presenter personnel must not touch, relocate, place anything on, over or underneath any Company musical instrument or equipment without expressed permission from a Company member. Presenter is responsible for any damage, repair or replacement costs resulting from violation of above agreement.

Miscellaneous

- Two 6' x 3' tables shall be provided at stage right for props.
- Adequate security must be provided to insure safety of costumes and props.
- House staff must clear with Company's production manager before opening the house. Company will open the house at least 30 minutes before show time.
- All visitors shall be excluded from the theater during set-up and rehearsal periods unless written permission is obtained from Company in advance.
- Adequate fresh drinking water within a comfortable distance of the stage shall be provided.
- Parking space for one van, one trailer and one other vehicles must be reserved for Company as near the performing area as possible.
- Hospitality requests will be agreed upon with Presenter, prior to the Company's arrival.

Agreed by Presenter _____

Technical Questionnaire
Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble
Presenter Contacts

Name of Performance Space
Address
City State Zip Code
Name of Institution, college or Organization:

Person responsible for this engagement:

Name
Position

Office Telephone
Home

Person to whom the light plot should be sent:

Name
Position

Office Telephone
Home Telephone

Address

Person completing this questionnaire:

Name
Position

Office Telephone
Home Telephone

I. General Information

A. Auditorium capacity: Main floor + Balcony = Total

B. Load-in point: Directly on stage Scene shop Other. Describe

C. Is loading area: Above stage level (dock height) Stage level Other. Describe

D. Comments on load-in problems (stairs, narrow door, etc.)

E. Is a union crew required

II. Dressing Rooms

A. Total number of dressing rooms

B. Where are there dressing rooms located? stage level Above stage level Below stage level

Describe distance and path from stage to dressing rooms:

C. Are there page monitors in each room?

D. Are the rooms equipped with? Mirrors Make-up lights Sinks Showers Wadrobe racks Heat

III. Stage Dimensions

A. Proscenium opening: Width Height

B. Stage:

1. Depth from the plaster line (upstage area of proscenium wall) to back wall:
2. Depth from front apron to plaster line:
3. Wing space right:
4. Wing space left:
5. Height from stage floor to grid (or ceiling if dead hung)
6. Usual trim height (floor to bottom of borders or teasers):
7. List all usable entrances to the stage (with dimensions):
8. Comments on stage space (columns, permanent set storage, piano storage, etc.):

C. Do you have a fly system? yes No

D. Act curtain (house curtain)

1. Does it Fly or Draw
2. Is it Manual or Motorized
3. What is its color and material?

IV. Masking

A. Legs (side, vertical masking drapes)

1. How many pairs of legs are necessary to mask the stage?
2. How many pairs of legs are available?
3. What are their hanging dimensions? x
4. What color and material are they?
5. Are the legs permanently hung?

B. Borders or teasers (overhead, horizontal masking drapes)

1. How many borders are necessary to mask the stage?
2. How many borders do you have available?
3. What are their hanging dimensions? x
4. What color and material are they?
5. Are they permanently hung?

C. Backings

1. Do you have a curved cyclorama? yes No
- a. What are its dimensions? x
- b. What color and material is it ?
- c. What is the distance from the plaster line?
- d. Is there a cross over behind the cyclorama?
- e. Can the cyclorama be moved or struck?

D. Additional comments:

V. Lighting System

A. Dimmers

1. Brand name of dimmers:
2. Type: solid state(SCR or Trac) auto-transformer resistance
3. Total number of working dimmers:
4. List dimmers by wattage capacity:
 dimmers at watts capacity each
 dimmers at watts capacity each
 dimmers at watts capacity each
5. How old is the system? years
6. In what condition are the dimmers? (how reliable are they?)

B. Control board

1. Is it memory preset manual
2. List brand name and model:
3. Is it a memory board:
 - a. Is it programmed by keyboard potentiometers both
 - b. Does it have sub-masters? If so, how many?
 - c. Does it have assignable control channels? If so, how many?
 - d. Does it have soft patch capabilities?
4. If it is a preset board:
 - a. List the number of presets
 - b. Describe the kind of presets (cards< pots wheels, etc.)
- c. Is there a grand master controller?
- d. Are ther sub-masters? If so, how many?
- e. Is the fade controller cross fade split fade pile on time
5. What is the location of the control board?
6. Is there a remote control station?

C. Patch panel

1. How do you patch circuits to dimmers? dimmer per circuit pin and plug patch panel quick connect hard wired
2. Brand name of patch panel
3. Where is it located?
4. Total number of circuits in the system?
5. Is there a F.O.H. disconnect in the patch panel?

VI. Lighting Equipment

A. Lighting instruments

Quantity Type Lens Diameter X Focal length wattage brand

B. Do you have strip lights? yes no

1. How many sections?
2. Length of each section
3. Number of circuits in each section
4. Wattage of each lamp
5. Are strip permanently hung?
6. If permanently hung, list distances from plaster line

C. Connectors

1. What type of connectors are used in your lighting system?
 - a. Pin connector: 2-pin 3-pin 3-pin locking (Hargelock)
 - b. Twist lock: 2-prong (ungrounded) 15A 20A 30A 3-prong (ground out) 15A 20A 30A 3-prong (ground in) 15A 20A 30A
 - c. Parallel blade (household or edison) 2-prong (ungrounded) 3-prong (grounded) stage plug (slip plug) 20A 30A Other describe

VII. Lighting Positions

A. On stage lighting positions

1. First Electric or bridge
 - a. Distance from plaster line
 - b. Number of different circuits
 - c. Does it fly? If no, list height
 - d. List any permanently mounted instruments:

2. Second Electric or bridge
 - a. Distance from plaster line
 - b. Number of different circuits
 - c. Does it fly? If no, list height
 - d. List any permanently mounted instruments:

3. Third Electric or bridge
 - a. Distance from plaster line
 - b. Number of different circuits
 - c. Does it fly? If no, list height
 - d. List any permanently mounted instruments:

4. Fourth Electric or bridge
 - a. Distance from plaster line
 - b. Number of different circuits
 - c. Does it fly? If no, list height
 - d. List any permanently mounted instruments:

5. Cyclorama lighting
 - a. From what pipe do you light the cyclorama?

- b. Distance from this pipe to the cyclorama?
- c. Do you have a cyc pit or trough?
- d. If, yes, list distance from plaster line.
- e. What kind of instrument do you light the cyc with?
- Type of instrument
- Number of instruments
- Wattage of each lamp
- Number of units required to get an even wash
- 6. Tormentor or cove position
 - a. Distance from plaster line?
 - b. Distance off-stage from center line
 - c. Height range from floor to
- 7. Side booms or ladders
 - a. How many do you have?
 - b. Describe their locations
 - c. How many different circuits does each have?
- 8. Floor pockets
 - a. How many do you have?
 - b. What type of connectors?
 - c. Number of separate circuits in each floor pocket.
 - d. Are they ganged side to side?
 - e. Are these pockets the source of circuits used for side lighting?
 - f. Describe the location of all floor pockets

B. Front of house lighting positions

- 1. Beam slot #1 (ceiling slots or ports)
 - a. Distance from plaster line
 - b. Height above stage level
 - c. Number of different circuits
 - d. Describe all permanently mounted instruments
- 2. Beam slot #2 (ceiling slots or ports)
 - a. Distance from plaster line
 - b. Height above stage level
 - c. Number of different circuits
 - d. Describe all permanently mounted instruments
- 3. Beam slot #3 (ceiling slots or ports)
 - a. Distance from plaster line
 - b. Height above stage level
 - c. Number of different circuits
 - d. Describe all permanently mounted instruments
- 4. Balcony front (balcony rail) if applicable.
 - a. Distance from plaster line
 - b. Height above stage level
 - c. Number of different circuits
 - d. Describe all permanently mounted instruments

5. House booms (vertical pipes or ladders in the house)
a. Describe their position in relation to the stage

b. Height above stage level
c. Number of different circuits
d. Describe all permanently mounted instruments

VIII. Sound System

A. Do you use the sound system for reproduction of music recordings?

1. How would you objectively rate the sound created by your system?
2. How reliable is your sound system?

B. Amplifiers

1. Brand name Model
2. What is its (their) age?
3. What is its (their) condition?
4. Is the system stereo?
5. What is the rated wattage per channel?

C. Pre-amplifiers (mixers)

1. Brand name Model
2. What is its (their) age?
3. What is its (their) condition?
4. How many channels are available?
5. Are bass and treble adjustable?
6. Where is the control board located?

D. Microphones and Stands

1. Brand name Model How many are available
2. Brand name Model How many are available
3. Brand name Model How many are available
4. Brand name Model How many are available
5. Brand name Model How many are available
6. What is its (their) age?
7. What is its (their) condition?
8. Are there any wireless mics available? If yes, describe
9. Are there any wireless headset mics available? If yes, describe
10. Are there any wireless lavalier mics available? If yes, describe
11. Are there any straight mic stands? if no, How many?
12. Are there any boom mic stands? if no, How many?

E. Speakers

1. Brand name Model
2. What is its (their) age?
3. What is its (their) condition?

F. CD Player

1. Brand name Model
2. What is its (their) age?
3. What is its (their) condition?

G. Cassette Player

1. Brand name Model
2. What is its (their) age?
3. What is its (their) condition?

H. Communications

1. Do you have a communications system?
2. How does it operate? (head-sets, biscuits, phone handsets)
3. How many stations are there?
4. Where are they located?

IX. Miscellaneous Items

A. Stage Floor

1. Is the stage floor resilient?
2. Describe floor surface (material and condition)
3. Are there traps or elevators in the floor?
4. Do you have access to a portable (Marley) dance floor?
5. If so, brand name? condition color
6. Notes

B. Do you have a ladder, cherry picker, or rolling sccaffold high enough to reach the on-stage electric when they are at their trim height (approximately 28')?

C. Please make any other comments about your performance space which will be helpful to us.