

# TAIKOz

Vol.1 No.1 March 2001

## GREETINGS FROM TAIKOZ

TaikOz wishes to thank all of you who took the time to fill out the recent questionnaire. Considering the enthusiastic response we received, it's great to see the amount of interest out there for Japanese taiko and TaikOz's activities.

Apart from keeping you up to date with TaikOz performances and future workshops, this newsletter will also be a source of general information about the art of Wadaiko. There are certainly a plethora of fascinating areas to discover and explore – the instruments, players, styles, music, history and tradition. There might also be particular aspects of Wadaiko or TaikOz that you are interested in and would like to know more about. Please feel free to write or email with any questions, thoughts or observations. Please also let us know if you have any friends or colleagues who would like to receive this newsletter, or if you would like to be removed from our e-mailing list.

## TAIKOZ IN JAPAN

As many of you may know, TaikOz will soon travel to Japan for performances and intensive training with taiko master, **Eitetsu Hayashi**. This is incredibly exciting for the group as it is indeed an honour to be invited to the very home of Wadaiko.

TaikOz will make its way to **Ota-cho in Fukui-ken** on the West coast of Japan on April 16 where we will begin a fortnight of intensive work. As there will be no other distractions – this is real "inaka" (i.e. "the bush") – the group will be able to concentrate for several hours a day on practicing form and technique and learning new music and styles. Eitetsu will be working with us through this period, preparing us for our debut performances in Kanazawa and Kobe.

## KANAZAWA

Both concerts represent important milestones for the group. In **Kanazawa (April 29)** we will be playing many of the pieces you heard at The Studio in February. With our mixture of Japanese and Australian works and particular mode of presentation the audience will certainly experience something a little different. Indeed I trust our performance will go some way to consolidating the beginnings of 'Go shu no taiko' – Australian taiko.

## "KAIKYOUSAI"

Kobe will see us in a different context altogether. On May 4 in the **World Kinen Hall** TaikOz will be guests at '**Kaikyousai**', a concert featuring the two greatest names in taiko – **Eitetsu Hayashi and the legendary Kodô drummers**.

TaikOz will perform two pieces on this program - *Small Forest* and *Monochrome*. I am particularly happy that we have been invited to perform these particular compositions as I feel they truly represent something of the character and philosophical foundation of our group.

Drawing on elements of both musical cultures, *Small Forest* is a true synthesis of the Japanese and the Australian. With Eitetsu joining us on the platform, *Small Forest* will demonstrate to the largely Japanese audience the growing internationalisation of this wonderful art. It will show how taiko can speak to people of other countries and backgrounds and can express a wide variety of musical ideas and emotions. An exciting prospect indeed!

As for *Monochrome*, this piece is a modern "classic". Written by Maki Ishii for seven members of Ondekoza - the revolutionary taiko group of the 1970's that now exists as Kodô - *Monochrome* is the reason TaikOz also exists with seven players at its core.

Maki Ishii is a composer of contemporary "Western" classical music that often draws on elements of his own traditional music. Having a background in Western classical music myself, I found his musical language natural and easy to understand. I believe his music represents for TaikOz the "flip" side of the coin – Japanese Western composer / Australian Wadaiko group. A nice symmetry!  
(Ian Cleworth)

## EITETSU HAYASHI

Here is some background information on our Japanese master, Eitetsu Hayashi. Firstly, Eitetsu was born in Hiroshima in 1952. In 1971, while training as a marathon runner, he helped found the now legendary Sado-Ondekoza, a unique communal-living taiko group.

After 10 years he left Sado-Ondekoza, founding and directing a new group called Kodô - now perhaps the most famous of all taiko ensembles. In 1982 he left Kodô to begin a new career as a solo artist. In 1984 Eitetsu made his Carnegie Hall debut as the first taiko soloist with symphony orchestra.

Having created a new method of solo performance, requiring technique and physical stamina previously unknown in traditional Japanese taiko playing, Eitetsu has given many concerts at home and abroad to great acclaim. He has

performed and collaborated in jazz, rock and world music, given performances with both Western dance and Butoh (a uniquely Japanese contemporary dance form). It could be said that Eitetsu transcends all genres.

Eitetsu has composed original taiko music for films, theatre, and commercials, and has made numerous CDs and videos. In addition he has authored a book entitled "To the Taiko Player of Tomorrow".

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### CANBERRA, ACT

- **National Folk Festival**

April 11-14

Four-day program includes a performance at the National Gallery of Australia, taiko workshops and 3 evening performances. Final concerts before travelling to Japan.

### OTA-CHO, FUKUI-KEN, JAPAN

- **"Taiko Retreat" with Eitetsu Hayashi**

April 16 –31

Two-week intensive study and training with Eitetsu Hayashi. Sponsored by the district of Ota and Asano Taiko.

### KANAZAWA, JAPAN

- **Kanazawa Concert Hall**

April 29

International debut of TaikOz featuring Japanese and Australian works for taiko and shakuhachi.

### KOBE, JAPAN

- ***Kaikyo Sai* at Kobe World Kinen Hall**

May 4

Featuring Japan's greatest Wadaiko player Eitetsu Hayashi, the legendary Kodô and TaikOz playing Maki Ishii's *Monochrome* and Ian Cleworth's *Small Forest* (with soloist Eitetsu Hayashi).

### LISMORE, NEW SOUTH WALES

- **NORPA, Lismore City Hall**

August 7

Return visit to Lismore after a successful debut in 1999.

### BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

- **The Powerhouse**

August 9, 10 and 11

Special guests Austral-Asian Performance Ensemble, Frank Productions, in a collaboration of Maki Ishii's *Dyu-Ha*. Two concerts for schools on August 9.

**MELBOURNE, VICTORIA**

- **Melbourne International Festival, Myer Music Bowl**

October 27

Outdoor performance featuring TaikOz, Synergy, Omar Faruk Tekbilek, Hassam Ramszy and Ali and Adama N'Dye Rose.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Please feel free to email us at [ian@taikoz.com](mailto:ian@taikoz.com) or send a letter to...

**TaikOz**  
**c/- Synergy Percussion**  
**PO Box 499**  
**Dulwich Hill**  
**NSW 2203**

Please visit our website at [www.taikoz.com](http://www.taikoz.com)