

TAIKOZ

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TAIKOZ JOINS FORCES WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

On April 2, 3 and 5 TaikOz will be joining forces with the wonderful Sydney Symphony for performances of Maki Ishii's ground-breaking work for Wadaiko and Orchestra, *Monoprism*.

TaikOz has a deep commitment to playing Ishii's music for Japanese drums. We have been performing *Monoprism*, *Monochrome* and *Dyu-Ha* regularly for over 7 years. Indeed, its because these pieces require 7 taikoists that TaikOz is made up of 7 performing members!

What is it about Ishii's music that attracts us?

In a sense, Ishii-san is the 'other side of the coin' to TaikOz. He is a Japanese composer who is thoroughly versed in western Art music, composing for symphony orchestra, chamber ensemble and solo instruments. After several years study in Berlin, he returned to Japan and effectively're-discovered' the traditional music of Japan - in particular the music of Gagaku (ancient court music). Since that time he has used the concepts and inspiration of each musical culture to form a highly distinctive voice, one that is neither "Japanese" nor "Western". His journey to Europe as a young Japanese man is typical of his generation.

The personal story of several members of TaikOz is also typical of our generation of young Australians. Since the '60's when composers such as Peter Sculthorpe, Richard Meale and Ross Edwards turned away from the influence of Europe and looked to Asia for their inspiration, countless artists have made the journey to China, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and other SE Asian countries for stimulation, enrichment and learning. The influence of these musical traditions is now bearing fruit here in Australia, contributing to the development of a vibrant and ever-deepening artistic culture. TaikOz is a product of this change.

An Australian Wadaiko group performing the music of a Japanese contemporary composer is a tangible sign of the ever-increasing communication between cultures. May the language of music continue to be a force for meaningful and positive exchange!

Monoprism is an incredibly visceral and gripping composition. Its strength lays in the fact that Ishii does not try and make a musical fusion between the two

groups. Instead, each ensemble plays within its own aesthetic world. The delight of his creation is in the fact that the integrity of the taiko group and the orchestra is maintained throughout.

The key to understanding the work is in its title. The "mono" in *Monoprism* refers to the monochromatic quality of the taiko. Ishii writes, "Juxtaposing constant and irregular patterns and blending symmetric and asymmetric rhythms, [*Monoprism's*] construction develops spirally to an exciting climax. The sounds visualize primordial birth, the evolution of life, and the changes of seasons - monochromatic, but with myriad gradations of gray." The "monochrome" of the taiko is reflected through the "prism" of the symphony orchestra and the result is colourful beyond imagining.

As many of you already know, TaikOz' own Riley Lee was an original member of the legendary taiko group, Ondekoza. Maki Ishii lived with them on the island of Sado for several months, imbibing of the daily regimen and ritual of the group. After careful study of their drumming technique and approach to music making he put pen to paper. The resultant creation, *Monoprism*, received its world premiere in 1976 at Tanglewood with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the great conductor Seiji Ozawa. It has been a privilege to have Riley's knowledge and insight in the preparation of our performance. Hope to see you there!

Performances of *Monoprism* by Maki Ishii are on April 2 and 3 at 8pm, April 5 at 2pm. Bookings through the Sydney Symphony Box Office on 9334 4600 or Online at www.symphony.org.au

DVD RECORDING - COME AND BE A PART OF IT!

TaikOz will be making its first DVD recording on May 12 at City Recital Hall, Angel Place (Sydney). We would love to see you all there as part of the audience. The program will include the premiere of a new arrangement of Riley Lee and Matthew Doyle's beautiful *Spirits' Dance*. Didgeridoo specialist Matthew Doyle will be performing with us.

Tickets will soon be on sale.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A TAIKOZ FRIEND?

Since 1997 TaikOz has grown from a group of four taiko players who performed once a year, to an organization of 8 musicians, a General Manager and a year-round schedule of performances, workshops and class teaching.

To date, the ensemble's achievements include performances in some of Australia's finest concert halls and at its most prestigious festivals.

TaikOz's international appearances have taken them to Japan for performances in Kanazawa and Kobe, and Thailand for the Bangkok International Festival of Music and Dance.

TaikOz regularly collaborates with some of the greatest names in Japanese music; including Japan's greatest solo taiko player Eitetsu Hayashi, the wonderfully energetic yokobue specialist Takumi Takano and members of Kobe's Matsumura Gumi. The group has also joined forces with both the Sydney and Queensland Symphony Orchestras for concerto performances.

Dynamic young taiko professional Kenichi Koizumi joins TaikOz as its first annual guest member. In October 2003 he and other members will be involved in leading a week-long, live-in 'Wadaiko Master Course' for some of Australia's finest young musicians from the Australian Youth Orchestra.

Undoubtedly one of the group's most significant achievements has been the acquisition of a complete set of Asano Taiko. Unique to Australia, these superb instruments come handcrafted from Japan's finest taiko maker, Asano of Ishikawa - a company devoted to traditional taiko making skills since 1609. Asano makes taiko for the top professional taikoists and the company has expressed their support of TaikOz by custom-making its new set of instruments. Mr Akitoshi Asano has said, "TaikOz is part of the future of the international development of taiko."

TaikOz is continuing to grow and develop. We have invitations to tour Japan in 2004 and 2005 and will be filming our first DVD in 2003. We aim to expand our inventory of Asano instruments, publish a taiko instruction manual and video for our ever-expanding roster of weekly classes, and continue to invite the finest players from Japan for concerts and workshops.

To help us achieve these goals TaikOz needs your help!

For just \$30 a year please consider becoming a TaikOz Friend.

We will issue you with a "Friends" card, valid for one year, entitling you to a 15% discount on all TaikOz T-shirts, CDs, DVDs and bachi (sticks) sold at concerts or via our website www.taikoz.com.

Please send a cheque or money order made out to TaikOz along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to -

TaikOz Friends
P.O. Box 499
Dulwich Hill NSW 2203

or call Greg Johns on (02) 9703 2008 with your credit card details.