

TAIKOz

Vol.6 No.2 March 2006

'NATURE'S RHYTHM' TOUR WRAP



*The "Nature's Rhythm" team:
L-R back row: Anton, Shu, Ian, Riley, Greg, Hase, Kevin, Graham
L-R front: Masae, Kerry, Eitetsu, Matthew*

TaikoZ has had a wonderful month on the road. Its been hard work, but the joys of touring with Eitetsu, Shu, Hase and all of the terrific 'Nature's Rhythm' crew have been considerable. The concerts were well received with full houses all 'round. Thank you to all who supported us in each city – it was a great source of pleasure to play to such appreciative audiences.

I would also like to pass on Eitetsu's reaction: he was very touched to have received such warm responses from the Australian public and expressed his delight at your keen and attentive listening. The program was a varied one with many contrasts and changes of mood and to have everyone with us – all the way – was very gratifying. As performers we can't ask for any more.

I would particularly like to thank the Sydney students who doubled as stage crew for the Town Hall concerts. As wonderful as this venerable venue is, the stage access is not very user-friendly and the bump-in/out required patience and hard work; everyone appreciated your support.

(IC)



In rehearsal: "Mitsumai"
L-R: Graham, Shu, Riley, Eitetsu, Hase, Matthew, Ian

REVIEW OF 'NATURE'S RHYTHM'

By Elizabeth McKenzie, taiko student

Our midst has been blessed with the presence of Eitetsu Hayashi who has inspired us with his masterful playing and generous spirit. He was accompanied by two highly talented and devoted young taiko players from Japan, Shuichiro Ueda and Mikita Hase. When playing as an ensemble they are known as EITETSU FU-UN NO KAI. Their inclusion of the stringed instrument, the koto, added a certain liquid dignity to the impact of the music. And of course Eitetsu was joined by our own TAIKOZ, whom we all respect and love.

As well, there was Riley Lee, the first non-Japanese person to attain the rank of shakuhachi Grand Master or "Dai-shihan". Riley is always a very vital element of the taiko experience - his music drifting through the different layers of emptiness. Eitetsu is renowned for his, at times, modernistic approach to taiko and to this end he invited Matthew Doyle, a true musical wizard, to accompany him on one of the most ancient of instruments, the didgeridoo. With this line-up, all five elements of nature were represented.

I was fortunate enough to attend three of Eitetsu's concerts. This allowed me to appreciate the performances from different perspectives as well as being able to compare the variation in sound quality. The first performance I attended was from the upstairs section at the back of the Sydney Town Hall. Having the full scope of the Town Hall stage was superb, especially for the first piece, "Yamasachi", where the choreography was perfectly performed. This put a smile of delight on everyone's face. But I was not alone upstairs, for sitting in the row behind me were

eight highly "testosterone-ized" young men with long hair, a few tats, pierced lips and eyebrows, low slung jeans and heavy boots.... all of whom were poised on the edge of their seats. All moved in some sort of syncopated appreciation of the music being performed; it reminded me of times when I was at sea, sailing in high swells and gusty winds.... I certainly had the spirit moving through me!! So in touch were they with the music, that in "Yamagoe" when Eitetsu finished the piece with the ring of a single bell, the boys gasped in unison and just melted into silence and stillness. And so did I. Eitetsu kicked up his own storm in "Mitsui-mai", driving Ian and Graham to play faster than a shooting arrow, their bachi almost igniting into flames.

Another concert was spent, again upstairs at the Town Hall, but on the side, on par with the stage, up close and personal, with quite an intimate perspective. I wanted time to stand still. Seeing "Dedication" from that angle - witnessing the posture, poise, discipline, technique, intense concentration and finally the broad, beaming smiles of satisfaction at the end, was worth a thousand hours of practice in the dojo. This was TaikOz at one of their best moments!

And then "Jakuchu: The Wings of Flightless Birds" took us away. In all sincerity, words escape me as to the power of this piece; Eitetsu metamorphosed from a butterfly to a dragon, to an eagle on numerous occasions. The effort and sincerity required perfecting his art and expressing his spiritual commitment was evident on his face. The alchemistic appearance of the three feathers at the end was a touch of sublime perfection: a common sigh wafted through the air, supporting the feathers as they settled towards the earth. Speaking with people after the performances, it was obvious that many were still travelling through the place to where they had been transported. One in particular, a Maori, with tears in his eyes, was soaring through the forests of his homeland.

The third concert I attended was in Canberra - in a space that was built for sound. What a blessing! The sound was clear, articulate and true. The audience was so appreciative, showing this by unanimously jumping to their feet at the end, for a standing ovation. A true master shows his humility and childlikeness, as did Eitetsu, when, as he was racing upstairs backstage after the concert, a couple of us spontaneously serenaded him with the Beatles' "It's Been A Hard Day's Night"! He stopped, looked at us earnestly and burst into joyous laughter. And then he disappeared. Eitetsu, I hope you come back soon!! We will miss you!!

NEW GM FOR TaikOz AND SYNERGY PERCUSSION

It is with great pleasure that we announce the appointment of Michelle Kennedy to the position of General Manager of Synergy Percussion Ltd. Despite Michelle's youth, she comes with several years of experience in arts management, most notably as manager of the Country Wide section of Musica Viva.

Michelle is full of energy and enthusiasm and is looking forward to sharing her ideas concerning the future development of the company. She has just completed her first week with us and over the course of the coming year, is looking forward to meeting you all. We wish Michelle the very best in her new career.

We would also like to pass on our sincere best wishes and thanks to Karen Steains who for the past three months, has been fulfilling the GM's role: a job she has performed with great skill and dedication. I'm sure you will be pleased to know that Karen remains with the company in her previous position of Administrator. (IC)



Riley and Eitetsu rehearsing the shakuhachi-odaiko duet in "Jakuchu"

'DAICHI...BIG EARTH' - CD LAUNCH CONCERT

For some months now, TaikOz has been working on a new recording. We're very excited about the music on this album and the CD will be launched at our Enmore Theatre concert on May 26. We recorded all of the material at Trackdown Sound Stage at Fox Studios, which is the only studio in Sydney large enough to handle the sheer volume and depth of sound of our taiko. The studio environment also allowed us to carefully record and balance the delicate nuances of Riley's shakuhachi and shinobue, which all goes towards making a pleasurable experience for the listener.

The title of the CD is *'Daichi...Big Earth'* after Graham's popular kumidaiko piece. We chose this particular title for the CD because it nicely expresses the essence of TaikOz's music: the grandeur of the Australian landscape – big, wide and open – evoked by the sound of the full ensemble.

The Enmore Theatre program will of course feature *Daichi* as well as a number of other pieces from the album, including *Resounding Bell* and *Kaigan Sen*. Ian's piece *Pearl* will also be presented in an exciting new arrangement for seven Odaiko that will be sure to have the rafters of the old Enmore shaking!

We'd love to see you all there and celebrate the event with us. Mark it in your diary: **Friday May 26 at the Enmore Theatre.** (Full details will be released soon).

JAPAN'S LEADING NEWSPAPER: YOMIURI SHINBUN AND 'TAIKO OF THE ANTIPODES'

Sincere thanks to the many students who took part in the Yomiuri Shinbun interviews. Yomiuri Shinbun – Japan's biggest selling daily newspaper – is presenting a series of articles on future directions in Japanese culture. As part of his research, the journalist, Mr Ono, travelled to Australia to witness the collaboration between Eitetsu and TaikOz to gain insight into our development of 'Antipodean taiko'.

Mr Ono enjoyed meeting you all and appreciated your thoughtful insights. He commented favourably on your level of understanding of Wadaiko practice and was pleasantly surprised by the variety of ages and backgrounds in our student body.

This is a significant piece of journalism and we look forward to its publication in late March.

TAIKO AND SHINOBU CLASS INFORMATION

Term 2 will commence the week beginning Monday 10 April. The term dates are listed below.

To book into Term 2 classes please email Karen or Michelle: admin@taikoz.com or phone 9572 8595. Confirmation of your booking will be sent out during the week beginning Monday 20 March, and your invoice will be sent to you during the week beginning Monday 27 March. **Payment of fees is due by Tuesday 4 April.**

TAIKO CLASSES: TERM II 2006

Monday 7:30-9PM:

10/4 24/4 1/5 8/5 15/5 29/5 5/6 12/6

TWO CLASSES Tuesday 5:45-7:15PM and 7:30-9PM:

11/4 18/4 2/5 9/5 16/5 30/5 6/6 13/6

Wednesday 7:30-9PM:

12/4 19/4 3/5 10/5 17/5 31/5 7/6 14/6

Friday 7:30-9PM:

21/4 28/4 12/5 19/5 2/6 9/6 16/6 23/6

**Saturday 12:40-1:30PM:

22/4 29/4 13/5 20/5 27/5 3/6 10/6 17/6

***this class is for 10-13 year old children*

*** Saturday 12:40-1:20PM:

22/4 29/4 13/5 20/5 27/5 3/6 10/6 17/6

****this class is for 7-10 year old children*

TWO CLASSES Sunday 9:30-11AM and 11:15-12:45PM:

23/4 30/4 14/5 21/5 28/5 4/6 11/6 18/6

COSTS

Adults:	\$280
Children:	\$150
Under 16:	\$225
Bachi (taiko sticks):	\$30 (essential for all students)

HOW TO BOOK

Email Karen or Michelle: admin@taikoz.com
Phone: 9572 8595

CONFIRMATION OF PLACE IN CLASS

1. Confirmation of booking (via email): week beginning Monday March 20
2. *Invoice sent (via email): week beginning Monday March 27
3. Payment of fees by: Tuesday April 4

Term 2 shinobue classes will take place on the following days.

SHINOBUUE CLASSES: TERM II 2006

Thursday 6-7PM:
20/4 27/4 11/5 18/5

COSTS

Flat rate: \$88

HOW TO BOOK

Email Karen or Michelle: admin@taikoz.com
Phone: 9572 8595

CONFIRMATION OF PLACE IN CLASS

1. Confirmation of booking (via email): week beginning Monday March 20
2. *Invoice sent (via email): week beginning Monday March 27
3. Payment of fees by: Tuesday April 4

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Congratulations to the student ensemble for their February performance at the JEOL Technologies Anniversary dinner. The feedback has been very positive with many of the delegates from Japan particularly appreciating the sound of 'Aussie taiko'!
- We were pleased to receive positive feedback regarding your practice sessions while we were away. If you have any comments to make about these sessions please feel free to drop Ian a note at ian@taikoz.com
- The children's class are continuing to conquer the airwaves with their appearance on Channel Ten's 'Totally Wild!' last week.
- Our newest and youngest class is doing extremely well. The 7-10year olds have begun learning basic technique on shimedaiko with Masae, Graham and Kevin and most are taking to it with enthusiasm and skill. So watch out - these guys are the TaikOz of the future!

WHAT'S ON

UPCOMING CONCERTS

“DA-HA...POUNDING WAVE” in BELLINGEN (Presented in association with Bellingin Music Association)
TaikOz, featuring RILEY LEE
April 8 (Sat)
BELLINGEN MEMORIAL HALL / 8PM
bellmus@midcoast.com.au

SCHOOLS CONCERT in PARRAMATTA (Presented in association with Musica Viva)
TaikOz, featuring RILEY LEE
May 5 (Fri)
PARRAMATTA RIVERSIDE THEATRE / 11AM
<http://www.riversideparramatta.com.au/whatson.asp>

“DAICHI...BIG EARTH” in PARRAMATTA (Presented in association with Musica Viva)
TaikOz, featuring RILEY LEE
May 5 (Fri)
PARRAMATTA RIVERSIDE THEATRE / 8PM
<http://www.riversideparramatta.com.au/whatson.asp>

“DAICHI...BIG EARTH” in SYDNEY
TaikOz, featuring RILEY LEE
May 26 (Fri)
ENMORE THEATRE / 8PM
Enmore Theatre Box Office: 9550 3666; www.enmoretheatre.com.au
Ticketek: 132 849; www.ticketek.com.au

WORKSHOPS

“TAIKO FOR EVERYONE!” in BELLINGEN (Presented in association with Bellinghen Music Association)

Apr 7-10 / times TBC

BELLINGEN MEMORIAL HALL

bellmus@midcoast.com.au

We NEVER send out unsolicited e-mail, nor do we sell our lists. But sometimes people subscribe their friends. So if you don't want to receive future emails from us, you may cancel your membership by replying to this e-mail with "REMOVE" in the subject line (we'll miss you!). taikoz.com does not support spamming in any way, shape or form.