



If you enjoyed
Yamato Taiko
 Chico Performances recommends:

Native American Music: Singers, Dancers, and Flute
The Nammys on Tour!
 Friday, November 20

Multi Grammy winners Joanne Shenandoah and R. Carlos Nakai headline a very special evening celebrating Native American Heritage month. From Joanne's sweet voice and stellar songwriting to the pure notes of Nakai's Native American flute, the cultural heritage of our First Nations will fill Laxson Auditorium. Joining this celebration are Arizona's Yellow Bird Dancers.

Fiddles & Dance

Bowfire: Holiday Heart Strings
 Tuesday, December 15

Ten fiddlers – bows flying, music pumping. Irish step-dancers – the best in the nation. Lights, sets, a production value so high that this performance has been called a "blockbuster stage show." Don't miss out as Bowfire celebrates the holiday season with some of the world's greatest violinists and step dancers performing new arrangements of holiday classics like "Sleigh Ride", "Twelve Days of Christmas", "Silent Night" and "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree". An energizing performance!

Afro-Pop

Baaba Maal
 Wednesday, April 14

Celebrated Senegalese singer, guitarist, and percussionist Baaba Maal is an international superstar whose music ranges from contemporary Afro-pop to traditional West African music. Maal is on tour featuring his newest album *Television*, a multi-lingual successor to his 2001 Grammy-nominated CD *Missing You*. Maal recently created the soundtrack to the Playstation/X-Box game "Far Cry 2" and collaborated on the soundtrack to *Black Hawk Down*.

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PRESENTS
YAMATO TAIKO
 JAPANESE DRUMMING

OCT. 13, 2009 • 7:30 P.M. • LAXSON AUDITORIUM



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Yamato Taiko – Matsuri/Fiesta

The word Matsuri (“traditional Japanese festival”) comes from Matsuru, which means “praying to the higher spirits.” The rituals of the festival—from giving thanks for a bountiful harvest to personal prayers for good health and peace—were called Matsuri. And at the heart of every Matsuri gathering, you would always find the traditional Japanese drum, the Wadaiko. The Wadaiko is a primitive instrument made of animal skin and ancient trees (some of which are several hundred years old). It is an instrument created entirely from once-living creatures. Which is why its presence is more commanding than other instruments. Above all, its sound—how loud and deep a sound this simple hollow tree and cattle skin drum can make! Imagine, at the hands of a skilled craftsman, an ancient tree deep in the forest is reborn as a Wadaiko, several hundred years after its birth. A drummer arrives and strikes the hide surface with a long, heavy stick called a Bachi. The drum thunders. The tree and hide vibrate together. Immense sounds resonate throughout the space. The sound of Wadaiko enters your body—through your skin, not your ears. When the drum and drummer become one, the sound becomes Oto-dama, “the soul of sound.” Oto-dama—a sound made up of souls and their aspirations—defies language and roars up to the sky. As it descends, it envelops all people on the Earth. The world starts to vibrate gently, and everyone along with it. The sound of the drum unifies the people with the Universe—the place where sky and earth, spirit and human, everything and every creature exist. This is the image of Matsuri we wish to evoke with our drumming.

Why Matsuri? I thought the quickest route to the true spirit of Wadaiko would be to choose the word Matsuri as the central theme, even though the word may seem too obvious and corny to some. Discover Wadaiko through Matsuri. In Japan, people think of Taiko, drum or drumming when they hear the word Matsuri, and vice versa. These two words, Taiko and Matsuri, are inseparable. Why has the drum always been at the centre of Matsuri? I thought long and hard about this. What makes people so inspired when they hear the sound of drumming? Does the sound make their hearts pound and resonate? Then I thought that ‘resonate’ could also be an important word. ‘Resonate.’ Drums resonate: our hearts resonate. ‘Inter-resonance.’ Resonance is born, it multiplies and interacts, and the energy between them is the Oto-dama. People surely want to ‘inter-resonate’ don’t they? When I strike every beat, I will pray for my sound to resonate. Let the sky resonate with the Oto-dama, the soul of sound. That is my wish. That is our wish. That is the wish of all the people gathered here. I will put my soul into drumming. I will put every ounce of my being into drumming, so our Oto-dama can rise and the Universe can resonate. Let our Matsuri begin!



Program Notes

1. Ucho-ten

These three kanji characters literally mean ‘being’, ‘top’ and ‘sky’ respectively. Together they form an expression that describes someone who is so happy he’s slightly out of his mind (or ‘high in the sky’). Let’s aim to get up there together, shall we? Forget about the world for a while and let your body go with the rhythm. Release your everyday tensions and we’ll scale the heights together.

2. Tone

These two kanji characters mean ‘distant’ and ‘sound’. This combination can be read as ‘to-ne’, which of course looks like an English word ‘tone’ (a coincidence we like). It is a distant sound from the past that lives quietly on in your memory. It could be a tune you hummed while walking alongside a riverbank one evening, or a familiar melody floating in from a distant hill...

3. Rekka

‘Fierce Fire’ It is two male VS two female drumming session, almost like a competition, by four highly trained drummers. Enjoy the sparkling tension and speed of lightning.

4. Garakuta

This song is performed not using drums but using small cymbal-like instrument called ‘Chappa’. The highlight is the comical interaction of well muscled men with tiny musical instruments. Ancient Japanese thought that sound has a soul and call it ‘Oto-dama’. ‘Dama’ also means ball and ‘Oto-dama’ can mean ‘Balls of sounds’. We wanted to create a performance where balls of sounds bounce around. Catch our ball and soul of sound.

5. Yakara

Nara prefecture where we live is situated in Western Japan, called ‘Kansai’, and in Kansai, a certain kind of rowdy youths, in the full bloom of youthful arrogance, are called ‘Yakara’. They may look insolent but we want to express their exuberance and their naivety.

Intermission

6. Rakuda

The first kanji character means ‘happy’ and the second means ‘strike’, but when read together as ‘rakuda’, it also can mean ‘camel’, which is appropriate for us because we want to evoke the somewhat comical way that camels move. This is our trademark piece, which starts with the powerful yell: “Ikimasse !” (“Let’s go!”).

7. Otodama

Oto means sound and dama means soul. The ancient Japanese thought that when properly nurtured, a soul would develop a voice or word called ‘Koto-dama’. We want to create a new soul, and so coined the word ‘Oto-dama’. Interestingly, the word ‘dama’ can also mean ‘ball’. We like this coincidence because it can be used to explain Wadaiko music as a series of balls. How many balls can we keep in the air during a performance? Numerous, and all of them have souls.

8. Hanabi

Hanabi means ‘fireworks’. Fireworks spread across the night sky at the end of a festival—so breathtakingly beautiful and colorful, but lasting only a few minutes. What do people see in them—past memory or future hope? Hanabi is usually written with (‘flower’) and (‘fire’) but we chose to spell it meaning gorgeous and glittering— a way of celebrating the beauty found in everyone.