

**Asian Arts & Culture Program at the Fine Arts Center
University of Massachusetts Amherst**

For Immediate Release

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WHAT: TAO: The Way of the Drum

WHEN: Tuesday, March 27 at 7:30PM

WHERE: Fine Arts Center Concert Hall, UMass Amherst

TICKETS: Fine Arts Center Box Office 545-2511/ 1-800-999-UMAS
www.umasstix.com

IMAGES: To download images relating to this press release please go online to <http://www.fineartscenter.com/pressphotos>

TAO drummers can't sit still!

"Extraordinarily talented...incomparable muscular zeal"- Chicago Tribune

Move over KODO, here comes TAO! On **Tuesday, March 27, at 7:30PM** the UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center Concert Hall will reverberate with the sounds of **TAO** the high energy Japanese Taiko drum ensemble. Presented by the Fine Arts Center Asian Arts & Culture Program, tickets range from \$35 to \$15 and are available online at: umasstix.com or by calling 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511.

Called "Powerful, dynamic and unique" by Time Out magazine, TAO's production features athletic bodies dressed in contemporary costumes in a show of explosive drumming and innovative choreography. Currently on a U.S coast to coast tour, the stars of TAO live and train at a compound in the mountains of Japan. They reach the highest level of musical virtuosity only after years of intensive study. Each performer brings a nontraditional flair to the group by drawing on their diverse backgrounds: one as a hard rock musician, another as a gymnast and yet another as a composer. They offer a young and vibrantly modern take on a traditional musical art form.

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TAO's extraordinary precision, energy, and stamina have been witnessed by more than a million spectators. The director and founder, Ikuo Fujitaka, has created a world-class company and a performance that incorporates both the complexity and diversity of the traditional Taiko drum. By implementing a regimented and meticulous training approach and selecting only the most disciplined and talented artists for the ensemble, Mr. Fujitaka's TAO drummers demonstrate great physical strength and an innate sense of rhythm and expressiveness. Adored in Japan and across the world, they present an unprecedented and timeless Taiko performance, exposing new audiences to this age old cultural tradition.

TAO's performers incorporate martial arts routines as they pound the large eight hundred pound drums that fill the stage. Taiko drums originated in Japan and are played with sticks called bachi. They are made of leather and wood and can range in size from eighteen inches to four feet in diameter. The drums have played multiple roles in Japanese culture ranging from dispelling evil entities at harvest festivals to a form of battlefield communication. Typical of a Taiko drum performance is the inclusion of other traditional percussive instruments such as the fue (wooden flute) and the shamisen (a stringed guitar).

With an early start time of 7:30PM, the TAO performance is perfect family entertainment!

Tao is sponsored by Cooley Dickinson Hospital, the Pioneer Valley Hotel Group and the UMass International Programs Office with media sponsors Daily Hampshire Gazette and New England Public Radio.

Please see our website at www.fineartscenter.com/asian for additional information. Tickets available online: www.fineartscenter.com or by calling 1-800-999-UMAS or 413-545-2511.