



NEWS RELEASE

“A genuinely theatrical experience, delivered with balletic grace and infectious humour,”
– Times UK

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Marie Estrada | (818) 677-6691
marie.estrada@csun.edu

Gary Murphy | (213) 700-9645
gmurphypr@gmail.com

YAMATO: the Drummers of Japan Return to The Soraya with New Program 人の力 *Hito no Chikara* – *The Power of Human Strength*

The contemporary Taiko troupe will bring its “visually stunning, musically interesting, powerful and humorous” (*Addicted Toronto*) show to The Soraya on Sat March 22. Tickets Starting at \$43 Are Available Now at www.TheSoraya.org.

LOS ANGELES (February 12, 2025) – From Jan. 16 through March 29 YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan will tour North America with their new show, *Hito no Chikara – The Power of Human Strength*. Yamato will perform at The Soraya at 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 22. The “simply captivating” (*The Evening Post*) Taiko troupe has reached nearly 8 million people globally in over 4,000 performances throughout their thirty-two-year history, adding to that number this season with seven performances in Canada; and 29 venues throughout the United States from New England to California.

“YAMATO believes that the drumbeat, like the heartbeat, is the very pulse of life and the epitome of the Japanese spirit,” says the troupe’s Founder and Artistic Director Masa Ogawa. The physically powerful cohort of musician-athletes work and live together as a community in the Asuka Village, said to be the birthplace of Japanese culture. There they create their own musical compositions, theater productions, sets, lighting design, choreography, performance techniques, costumes, makeup, stage settings and props. They make their own bachi sticks used to play the traditional Japanese instruments, beginning each show by hitting a Wadaiko drum weighing half a ton, made from a single piece of wood from a 400-year-old tree.

In every program, the drummers play 35-40 different Japanese drums, which are divided into four types: Miya-daiko, Hirado-taiko, Okedo-daiko and Shime-daiko, each varying in size and tone. Additionally, the troupe play Japanese instruments including the Shamisen, Koto, Chappa

and Shinobue. Ogawa explains, “after composing each song, I give a score to the drummers. From that point, YAMATO’s true creation begins. The drummers put their thoughts and spirit into each note. We open the eyes of the heart to find a sort of synchronicity with the other drummers. Our final purpose is to connect to the heart of the audience.”

This season’s new program entitled ***Hito no Chikara – The Power of Human strength*** examines humanity’s ever evolving relationship with technology and artificial intelligence. Masa Ogawa wonders, “Will there ever be a machine that can play Taiko with unparalleled accuracy? Will advanced algorithms make them sound human-like?”

Will people be used by the tools they have created, or will we no longer need people in the future? What will happen to Taiko drumming?” Ogawa concludes, “Let us beat the Taiko as we are YAMATO. We do not know when the end of humanity is, but we will strike until that moment. The sounds struck by the heart, resonating with each other, will become ***Hito no Chikara – The Power of Human strength.***”

For story development and interview requests, please contact:

- The Soraya Communications Associate Marie Estrada (marie.estrada@csun.edu)
- PR Consultant Gary Murphy (garymurphypr@garymurphypr.com)
- [CLICK HERE](#) to access your press kit!
- Promotional video for Hito no Chikara can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/3up8b8y5>

About YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan

Founded in 1993 in Japan’s Nara Prefecture and presently based in Asuka Village, said to be the birthplace of Japanese culture, YAMATO travels all over the world with Japan’s traditional Taiko drums, putting its very souls into the unusual instruments. Over the past 30 years, the troupe has performed in 54 countries and regions, giving 4,000 performances for nearly eight million people. They travel with about 40 Taiko drums, ranging in size from 10kg to 500kg. The troupe lives within the Village and engages in daily strength training, instrument practice, and program rehearsal. Always evolving and innovating while respecting the tradition, YAMATO is a modern and relevant ambassador for Taiko drumming and for the Japanese culture from which it derives.

Since their formation, YAMATO has been committed to preserving and respecting the Taiko tradition, while infusing originality and innovation into the ancient practice. Notably, YAMATO broke from Taiko’s long-standing patriarchy and has always included women in the troupe. And while the members train rigorously, YAMATO imbues each performance with joy and a sense of fun, breaking from the stereotypical stoicism associated with this ancient art form.

About The Soraya

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for The Performing Arts (The Soraya) is an award-winning, state-of-the-art 1,700-seat theatre designed and built by HGA Architects and Engineers and opened in January 2011 as the Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC). Through a transformative gift by Younes and Soraya Nazarian, the venue was renamed The Soraya in 2017. Vibrant programming has served to establish The Soraya as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley and its 1.8 million residents and

as one of the top arts and culture venues in Southern California. Since its inaugural season, The Soraya has presented over 500 artists and companies across the genres of music, dance, theater, and film and is a highly in-demand location for filming and rental events.

The Soraya's 2024-25 Season boldly advances the expansive sound of orchestras both traditional and contemporary; the freestyle vibe of jazz; an array of dance luminaries, and a cultural bounty drawn from the musical well of global voices. The Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to innovating, excelling, and amplifying access by offering a wide variety of performances that reflect Los Angeles' many distinctive communities and featuring new and original work and artists from the local region as well as nationally and around the world. Located on the vibrant campus of California State University Northridge (CSUN), The Soraya and the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication share an integral link that enhances student access and opportunities in the arts and performing arts.

A \$5 million contribution from record producer and former California Lieutenant Governor Mike Curb was pivotal in ensuring the completion and opening of The Soraya in 2011. For his founding support and in acknowledgment of the integral relationship between the Mike Curb College and The Soraya, Mike Curb is recognized as one of The Soraya's Cornerstone Benefactors. This partnership fosters academic and artistic excellence, elevating the talents and the future growth of CSUN's students through master classes, student tickets, concerts of student ensembles, and students appearing alongside renowned artists such as Wynton Marsalis, Aida Cuevas, and Martha Graham Dance Company.

For Calendar Listings:

What: Yamato – The Drummers of Japan

人の力 *Hito no Chikara* | *The Power of Human Strength*

Making its fifth appearance at The Soraya, YAMATO returns with Hito no Chikara, The Power of Human Strength. Packed with high energy and the traditional sounds of Japan, every YAMATO performance (they've done more than 4,000 so far!) engulfs audiences of all ages in the sound of Taiko.

When: Sat March 22 | 3PM

Where: Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)

18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

Website: www.TheSoraya.org

Ticket Office: 818-677-3000

Soraya Press Contacts

- Marie Estrada, Communications Associate, The Soraya
P: 818-677-6691 | E: marie.estrada@csun.edu
- Gary W. Murphy, Consultant
P: 213-700-9645 | E: gmurphypr@gmail.com