



ENERI SM  
COMMUNICATIONS

Energy Upon Impact

**PRESS CONTACTS**

**San Francisco**

Lenora Lee  
Asian Improv Records  
Lenora@  
asianimprov.org  
415.816.9376

**National and Chicago**

ENERI Communications  
info@enericom.net  
312.635.0888  
www.enericom.net and  
www.enericom.net/blog

MP3 Sample Download  
and Digital Photos Link  
www.enericom.net/  
private/tatsu/toyo

**WWW.TOYOAKI.ORG**



Little Tatsu, Age 5 or 6  
Circa 1963



Tatsu Aoki in 2009

Asian Improv aRts  
Midwest  
donate@airmw.org  
312.209.7178

For Wholesale  
Distribution:

Asian Improv Records Inc.  
infoairmw@airmw.org  
708.386.9349

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 2012 VIA www.amazon.com



**“TOYOAKIMOTO” by Tatsu Aoki**  
**Reconstruction of Tokyo Style Geisha Music**  
**Asian Improv Records 0083**

Chicago’s renowned musician, Tatsu Aoki, presents his new work  
of a 300-year legacy of Japanese cultural arts.



Front Cover



Back Cover

Aki Aoki at Age 18, Unknown, Circa Probably Early 1900’s  
(Grandmother of Tatsu Aoki)

## ***TOYOAKIMOTO: Reconstruction of Tokyo Style Geisha Music***

Chicago's renowned musician, Tatsu Aoki, presents his new work of a 300-year legacy of Japanese cultural arts.

Tatsu Aoki is a prolific artist, composer, musician, educator and a consummate bassist and Shamisen Lute player. Born in Tokyo, Japan and now based in Chicago, Aoki works in a wide range of musical genres, ranging from traditional Japanese music, jazz, experimental and creative music.

TOYOAKIMOTO is a project stemming from Tatsu Aoki's personal musical heritage and journey. Aoki was born in Tokyo, Japan (in 1957), into an artisan family clan called "TOYOAKIMOTO," a lineage that was defined by its profession and business as "okiya." Okiya houses were training and booking agents for geisha, whose proficiency in the arts of traditional music, dance, and conversation were in high demand in the designated entertainment area in downtown Tokyo. While the economy and changed social environment forced many okiya to close down in the 1960's, Aoki was fortunate to receive, from the age of four, the important training essential to traditional Tokyo geisha culture, and became a part of the family performing crew.

After his grandmother passed away, he continued the Tokyo music training until his early teens, when he shifted his musical focus to American pop music and experimental music. Since his biological father was a movie producer at Shin Toho Studio, he had also began working in small gage films and started to produce experimental films. He was an active performer during the early 70's in the midst of the Tokyo underground arts movement and became a member of a Japanese experimental music ensemble called GINTENKAI, which presented a mixture of traditional Japanese music and new western music. Since coming to the United States in 1977, Aoki has been active in traditional music, progressive music, and the advancement of Asian American music in the Chicago area. He studied experimental filmmaking at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is currently an adjunct Associate Professor there in the Film, Video and New Media Department, and teaches film production and history courses. Aoki is one of Chicago's most in-demand musicians on contrabass, taiko (Japanese drums) and shamisen (Japanese lute).

Under those environments of his childhood, Aoki has inherited historical and traditional essence of Tokyo Entertainment district's musical concepts, basics and value of flexible creations and applications. With the fall of these special districts in the late 60's and early 70's, the Tokyo's regional Entertainment musical concepts also disappears and as many other art forms did, Tokyo Geisha music had institutionalized.

Aoki started the reconstruction of his geisha house music in 2006. His hope was to retrieve and preserve this culturally important tradition. The project started when Aoki met with two acclaimed shamisen grand masters from the Kineya family in Tokyo, and it developed through their collaboration as Aoki taught them the music and concepts. It took the three of them about three years and much travel--to and from Japan, Chicago, and San Francisco—to learn the songs and to become fluent in their performance. The realization of this project has been a long time ambition of Aoki's, but it has been difficult because of the high level of commitment required not only to learn the songs, but also to perform them masterfully.

*"One of my most important goals is to preserve the original essence of fluidity and flexibility, and to perform the rawness of REAL sound. I always apply this idea to everything I do. From my childhood environment, I inherited the historical and traditional essence of the Tokyo entertainment district's musical concepts, and the fundamentals and value of flexible creations and applications. With the decline of these special districts in the late 60's and early 70's, the musical concepts of Tokyo's regional entertainment also faded away, along with many other art forms that Tokyo geisha music had institutionalized. I wanted to recreate the lost spirit and reconstruct this wonderful music."*

-- Tatsu Aoki, June 2012, Chicago

## TOYOAKIMOTO CD CREDITS

Executive Producer and Artistic Direction: Tatsu Aoki and Toyoaki Shamisen  
Producers: Francis Wong, Hiromi Tanaka,  
Joyce Ashizawa-Yee  
Associate Producers: Jeff Chan, Kazu Yamamoto, Sharon  
Hidaka, Lori Ashikawa  
International Producers: Chizuru Kineya, Miho Sato

Recorded at: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago,  
Heptagon Studio at Ex'pression College for Digital Arts, San Francisco

Recording Engineer: Karen Stackpole, Stray Dog  
Recording Services;  
Caleb Willitz  
Assistant Engineer: James Boudreau  
Mixing Engineer: Caleb Willitz & K-LAB DAD Sound  
System

Graphic Design: Al Brandtner, Brandtner Design  
Photography: Adebukola Bodunrin (cover), Ken Carl and Tadahiro Tonomura  
Archival photos: Courtesy of Takako Kimura  
Cover Calligraphy: Michi Aoki  
CD Label Art: Miyumi Aoki

All rights reserved  
Asian Improv Music Pub. Co. (ASCAP) and Toyoaki Shamisen

© © 2012 Asian Improv Records  
Asian Improv Records Inc.  
44 Montgomery St., Suite 2310  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Tatsu Aoki as Toyoaki Sanjuro, shamisen  
Kineya Chizuru, shamisen

on ensemble works:

Kineya Satomayu, shamisen  
Melody Takata, narimono  
Amy Homma, shamisen  
Chinatsu Nakano, narimono  
Hide Yoshihashi, narimono  
Miyumi Aoki, narimono (Track 12)

## TOYOAKIMOTO TRACKS

1. Matsu no Midori	3:45
2. Mushi no Ne ~ Tsukuda ~ Shinnai Nagashi	3:02
3. Kaburagi	2:41
4. Kenmai	3:35
5. Sawagi (ensemble work)	3:10
6. Tokkuriyoshi	1:51
7. Ume nimo Haru	3:57
8. Nomikai	2:14
9. Kakinabe (ensemble work)	6:47
10. Sakura no Oma	3:49
11. Deai Gashira	3:19
12. Odoriba	2:24
13. Sawagi (ensemble work)	2:38
14. Arakicho Meguri	2:47
15. Genroku Hanami Odori (ensemble work)	6:23
16. TOYOAKIMOTO	2:11

\* archival recording from damaged tape, circa 1950

All compositions and arrangements by Toyoaki Shamisen and Gintenkai  
ASIAN IMPROV MUSIC PUB. CO. ASCAP AND TOYOAKI SHAMISEN

All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction of this recording is prohibited by  
federal law and subject to criminal prosecution.

### Acknowledgements

Toyoaki Shamisen is a program of Asian Improv aRts Midwest.  
This project is made possible in part by 3Arts Artist Projects (3AP) at [3arts.org](http://3arts.org)

We would like to give special thanks to: Yukiko Aoki, Joanne Kiyoko Tohei, Bucky Halker, Grand Master Shunojo Fujima and Fujima Ryu of Chicago, Melody Takata and GenRyu Arts, the Japanese American Service Committee of Chicago; Chizuru Kai, Mark Becker, Jon J. Satrom, Esther Grimm, Rene Baker, Miho Sato Foundation and Lara Oppenheimer

**[WWW.TOYOAKI.ORG](http://WWW.TOYOAKI.ORG)**

"TOYOAKIMOTO" by Tatsu Aoki  
Asian Improv Records 0083

National CD Release Party/SAN FRANCISCO July 29, 2012/Tateuchi Auditorium  
CHICAGO CD Release/Press Party/August 9, 2012/Café Sushi

---

**ASIAN IMPROV aRTS, GENRYU ARTS AND NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS PRESENT  
TOYOAKIMOTO: THE NATIONAL CD RELEASE CONCERT  
SUNDAY, JULY 29<sup>th</sup> AT TATEUCHI AUDITORIUM IN SAN FRANCISCO**

**TATSU AOKI AND A 300-YEAR LEGACY OF JAPANESE CULTURAL ARTS  
Reconstruction of Tokyo Style Geisha Music**

**CHICAGO CD RELEASE/PRESS PARTY  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 9<sup>th</sup> AT CAFÉ SUSHI IN CHICAGO**

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 14, 2012 (Rev. 3 July 16, 2012)

PRESS CONTACTS:

Lenora Lee/Asian Improv Records  
Lenora@asianimprov.org  
415.816.9376 (San Francisco)

ENERI Communications  
info@enericom.net  
312.635.0888 (National and Chicago)  
www.enericom.net  
and www.enericom.net/blog  
Electronic Release/Images/MP 3 Sampler:  
www.enericom.net/private/tatsu/toyo/

SAN FRANCISCO, CA and CHICAGO, IL - - Asian Improv aRts, GenRyu Arts and Nihonmachi Little Friends are pleased to present the upcoming concert: TOYOAKIMOTO – Tatsu Aoki and a 300-year legacy of Japanese cultural arts. This special event celebrates the release of a new compact disc recording featuring music by Tatsu Aoki (shamisen – Japanese lute), Chizuru Kineya (shamisen), and Melody Takata (taiko – Japanese drums). Also performing will be special guests Francis Wong (saxophone) and Yangqin Zhao (Chinese hammered dulcimer). The concert, free to the public, will take place on **Sunday, July 29, 2012 from 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. (a reception with the artists precedes the show from 12:30 p.m. – 1 p.m.)** in **Nihonmachi Little Friends' Tateuchi Auditorium, 1830 Sutter Street** (between Webster & Buchanan), **San Francisco, California**. For more info visit: [www.asianimprov.org](http://www.asianimprov.org) .

A **Chicago CD Release/Press Party** presented by ENERI Communications is scheduled for **Thursday, August 9, 2012** at **Café Sushi, 1342 North Wells Street, Chicago, Illinois from 12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.** The event will be hosted by radio personality Rick O'Dell. Media wishing to attend should request credentials by e-mail to ENERI Communications at [rsvp@enericom.net](mailto:rsvp@enericom.net) by August 3, 2012. The reception is being underwritten in part by Philip Wong, Esq. and RKJ Legal. A limited number of tickets will be available to fans at the cost of \$20 each, which includes the CD. For availability, please RSVP to [rsvp@enericom.net](mailto:rsvp@enericom.net) by August 3, 2012.

Tatsu Aoki will appear and perform at the Chicago CD Release/Press Party, along with Amy Homma, Rika Lin and Lori Ashaikawa from Toyoaki Shamisen Ensemble. (In special appearance, Grand Master Shunojo Fujima

(MORE)

**-- ADD ONE**

from Fujima Ryu of Chicago, will take care of Kimono dressing for the Ensemble ladies that day, who will look spectacular.) On taiko will be Noriko Sugiyama, Jun Tnakanarita and Kiyomi Negi Tran from Tsukasa Taiko.

**ABOUT THE MUSIC**

The July 29th San Francisco performance (and the music on the CD) focuses on the music of Toyoakimoto, a geisha house in downtown Tokyo where Tatsu Aoki was born and grew up. The origins of the house and its arts date back to the famed "Edo" period, perhaps the most formative era in Japanese cultural history beginning with the ascendancy of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603. Within this house, the ozashiki shamisen music that Aoki has reconstructed was mainly instrumental and used mostly as interlude music before the featured geisha ladies appear, or to fill time in large parties and gatherings. For Aoki, known both for his achievements as an experimentalist in music and film as well as in the traditional Japanese cultural arts, this legacy is at the center of everything he has done as an artist. Joining him for the concert will be Chizuru Kineya, Nagauta Shamisen artist and an accredited master of the instrument from the legendary Kineya Shamisen family in Tokyo. Chizuru Sensei, is a critical collaborator in Aoki's process of recovering and re-presenting the historic Toyoakimoto music. On taiko will be San Francisco's Melody Takata, a frequent Aoki collaborator in both his traditional and experimental projects and one of the City's celebrated practitioners of Japanese cultural arts.

In Aoki's words, *"For me, the most influential art is the cultural legacy, the sound which surrounded me. I've known this sound, this music, and this feeling as far back as I can remember. From my early 20s when I was a rebel wondering whether to go along or go against, everything I have done as an artist revolved around the art and legacy embedded into my very body and soul."*

San Francisco-based Chinese artists Francis Wong (Asian Improv Arts co-founder) and Yangqin Zhao (Artistic Director of Melody of China) will join the ensemble for an excerpt of a new work composed by Wong and commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission. This new work, entitled "Reconciliation", explores the interface of Chinese and Japanese cultural communities of San Francisco in the post-World War II era of Wong's parents.

**ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES**

**Tatsu Aoki** is a prolific artist, composer, musician, educator and a consummate bassist and Shamisen Lute player. Based in Chicago, Aoki works in a wide range of musical genres, ranging from traditional Japanese music, jazz, experimental and creative music.

Aoki was born in 1957 in Tokyo, Japan into an artisan family called TOYOAKI MOTO, traditionally categorized as OKIYA, meaning a booking and training agent for Geisha ladies in downtown Tokyo's designated area. While the economy and social environment forced many of those traditional artisan family business to close down in the 60's, Aoki was luckily able to receive some of the important essence of traditional Tokyo Geisha cultural training and studies at age 4, and became a part of the performing crew in early childhood. After his grandmother passed away, he had kept on with the Tokyo music training until early teens, and shifted his musical focus to American pop music and experimental music. Since his biological father was a movie producer at Shin Toho Studio, he had also began working in small gage films and started to produce experimental films.

Aoki was an active performer during the early 70's in the mist of Tokyo Underground Arts movement. He became a member of the Japanese Experimental Music ensemble, GINTENKAI presenting mixture of traditional music and new western music. After coming to the U.S. in 1977, Aoki studied experimental filmmaking at the School of the Art Institute

**-- ADD TWO**

of Chicago. He is currently an adjunct Full Professor at the Film, Video and New Media Department, and teaches film production and history courses. During the late 80's, Aoki became a leading advocate for Chicago's Asian American community and one of Chicago's most in-demand musicians on contrabass, taiko (Japanese drums) and shamisen (Japanese lute).

To this date, Aoki has produced and appears in more than 90 recording projects and over 30 experimental films and he has been working internationally. He is one of the most recorded artists in Chicago music scene. Among many of recordings. Aoki may be most known for his works with the late Chicago Jazz icon, Fred Anderson. But he has worked with musical masters and legends and produced remarkable duets works with bassist, Malachi Favors, multi-instrumentalists such as Roscoe Mitchell, Don Moye and world-renowned Pipa virtuoso, Wu Man, and with Chicago masters such as Mwata Bowden and Edward Wilkerson.

As an Executive Director of AIRMW, Aoki has initiated and managed several programs to advance the understanding of Asian American culture and community through the arts, including the Annual Chicago Asian American Jazz Festival and the JASC Tsukasa Taiko Legacy arts residency project. His work as an artist and educator in the cultural arts and as a leader in the Asian American community address as well as define the issues facing the community, including the need for quality artistic programs that reflect the Asian American experience. [www.tatsuaoki.com](http://www.tatsuaoki.com)

---

**Chizuru Kineya** is a Nagauta Shamisen artist and an accredited master of the instrument from the legendary Kineya Shamisen family. Chizuru started traditional Nagauta Shamisen studies at the age of 6 and has been performing professionally in the mainstream Japanese music and performing arts scene. In addition to her regular appearances at the National Theater of Japan, she has been active in workshops for regional schools and media to educate the general public of the nearly 400 year history of shamisen tradition. She has also collaborated with contemporary classical musicians.

---

**Melody Takata** grew up in the Japanese American (JA) community of Los Angeles with a rich experience in traditional arts. From age 8 she learned odori (Japanese dance) as part of the obon festival ritual (festival honoring ancestors). At age 12 she began formal study of Nihon Buyo (Japanese classical dance) at the Fujima School under NEA Heritage Fellow Madame Fujima Kansuma until age 20. From age 13 to 18 she studied shamisen (Japanese lute) with the Kineya School. At 15 she began studying and performing with Los Angeles Matsuri taiko and at 20 traveled to Japan to study and later perform as a member of Tokyo's O Edo Sukeroku Taiko, one of Japan's most highly renowned taiko ensembles.

In 1995 Melody founded Gen Taiko and in 2009 incorporated under the name Genryu Arts in San Francisco Japantown. Gen Taiko is an ensemble and school which trains hundreds of youth each year in taiko and dance as a vehicle for community building. She has gained major recognition for her groundbreaking collaborations with composer Tatsu Aoki in Chicago, Francis Wong in San Francisco, and with Japanese traditional master artists Fujima Kansuma, Hideko Nakajima, and Chizuru Kineya. Over the past decade she has received commissions from the NEA (2005, 2006), Creative Work Fund (2007), San Francisco Arts Commission Individual Artist Commissions (2007, 2009), James Irvine Foundation (2007), Alliance for California Traditional Arts (2006). [www.genryuarts.org](http://www.genryuarts.org)

---

Few musicians are as accomplished as **Francis Wong**, considered one of "the great saxophonists of his generation" by the late jazz critic Phil Elwood. A prolific recording artist, Wong is featured on more than forty titles as a leader and

## **-- ADD THREE**

sideman. For over two decades he has performed his innovative brand of jazz and creative music for audiences in North America, Asia, and Europe with such luminaries as Jon Jang, Tatsu Aoki, Genny Lim, William Roper, Bobby Bradford, John Tchicai, James Newton, Joseph Jarman, Don Moye and the late Glenn Horiuchi. But to simply call the Bay Area native a musician would be to ignore his pioneering leadership in communities throughout Northern California. Wong's imaginative career straddles roles as varied as performing artist, youth mentor, composer, artistic director, community activist, non-profit organization manager, consultant, music producer, and academic lecturer.

---

Yangqin (hammered dulcimer) virtuoso and Artistic Director of Melody of China, **Yangqin Zhao**, was prophetically named after the instrument she has become famous for playing. She has established herself as one of the foremost yangqin (Chinese dulcimer) performers in the world, having been elected to the prestigious Chinese Musicians Association and the Chinese Nationalities Orchestra Society.

Ms. Zhao has been invited to perform in many countries, including Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Singapore, Hong Kong, Mexico and Germany, where she has lectured at universities, conservatories and music schools. In an excerpt from CHIME Newsletter by Frank Kouwenhoven, Secretary-general of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research, he notes: "I was impressed not only by her high technical standard of playing but also the strong musical feeling she displayed during Performance and by her friendly and modest character." In June of 1996, she was invited as one of seven musicians who are masters on the Yangqin - like instruments (hammered dulcimer) for the Tanz & FolkFest Rudolstadt (Folk Instruments Festival) in Germany in September, 1996, she performed as the yangqin soloist with Shanghai Ethnic Orchestra. In June 2000, she was invited to perform at the "Concert in the Wildstage" by Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in Berlin, Germany. [www.melodyofchina.org](http://www.melodyofchina.org)

## **ASIAN IMPROV ARTS**

The July 29th concert is the inaugural presentation of Asian Improv aRts' 25<sup>th</sup> Season of presenting high quality arts and cultural events in the San Francisco Bay Area in community-based and major venues such as Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (with Dohee Lee's FLUX), Great American Music Hall (with SFJazz), and Zellerbach Playhouse (Cal Performances) as well as various venues outside the Bay Area including the Museum of Contemporary Arts (Chicago), Flynn Center (Vermont), Library of Congress (Washington DC) and Banlieues Bleus Festival (Paris, France).

Founded in 1987, Asian Improv aRts' (AIR) mission is to produce, present and document artistic works that represent the Asian American experience. Asian Improv aRts goals are: 1) To make it possible for artists to create innovative works that are rooted in the diasporic experiences of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage. 2) To engage a next generation of community members in the arts through arts education. 3) To enable sustainability for artists and arts organizations in a challenging economic environment. 4) To facilitate creative collaborations that bring together major institutions, artists, and multigenerational audiences and participants.

## **GENRYU ARTS**

Founded as Gen Taiko in 1995 and incorporated as GenRyu Arts in August 2008, its mission is to promote, present and participate in Japanese and Japanese American culture through Taiko (Japanese Drumming) and other traditional and contemporary music and dance forms. Deeply rooted in San Francisco's Japantown, GenRyu Arts engages in art-making that merges Japanese cultural forms taiko, dance and folk songs with new music, spoken word and visual design into singular expressions that honor community heritage and address key issues stemming from the legacy of internment and redevelopment.

-- ADD FOUR

### NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS (NLF)

A community-based, Japanese, bilingual and multicultural childcare organization committed to providing quality and affordable childcare services. Incorporating Japanese language and curriculum, our programs foster children's self-esteem, cooperation and confidence. Tateuchi Auditorium is located in the historic Sutter YWCA building (now one of NLF's program sites) designed by the famed architect Julia Morgan in 1930 in San Francisco Japantown.

**TOYOAKIMOTO** pre-orders are available online via the website Amazon.com now.

Media requests for interviews, images or a MP3 download sample should be directed to **Lenora Lee of Asian Improv Records at [Lenora@asianimprov.org](mailto:Lenora@asianimprov.org) or 415.816.9376 (San Francisco press)** or to **ENERI Communications at [info@enericom.net](mailto:info@enericom.net) or 312.635.0888 (National and Chicago press)**. Please visit **[www.enericom.net/blog](http://www.enericom.net/blog)** for an electronic link of this press release.

- 30 -

### READING LIST / GEISHA LIFE

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liza\\_Dalby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liza_Dalby)

**Liza Crihfield Dalby** (born 1950) is an American anthropologist and novelist specializing in Japanese culture. For her graduate studied, Dalby studied and performed fieldwork in Japan of the geisha community which she wrote about in her Ph.D dissertation. Since that time she has written five books. **Her first book, *Geisha*, was based on her early research.** The next book, *Kimonos* is about traditional Japanese clothing and the history of the kimono. She followed that with a fictional account of the Heian era noblewoman Murasaki Shikibu, titled *The Tale of Murasaki*. In 2007 she wrote a memoir, *East Wind Melts the Ice*, which was followed two years later by a second work of fiction, *Hidden Buddhas*. Dalby is considered an expert in the study of the Japanese geisha community and has acted as consultant to novelist Arthur Golden and film-maker Rob Marshall for the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* and the film of the same name

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mineko\\_Iwasaki](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mineko_Iwasaki)

**Mineko Iwasaki** (岩崎 峰子<sup>?</sup>) also known as **Iwasaki Mineko** (岩崎 究香<sup>?</sup>), born **Masako Tanaka** (田中 政子 *Tanaka Masako*<sup>?</sup>, born November 2, 1949), was a Japanese businesswoman, Geiko and author. Iwasaki was the most famous Japanese Geiko in Japan until her sudden publicized retirement at the age of 29. Known for her performances for various celebrity and royalty during her Geisha life, Iwasaki was also an established heir or *atotori* to her geisha house (Okiya) while she was just an apprentice.

American author Arthur Golden later used her story to write his 1997 book, *Memoirs of a Geisha*<sup>[1]</sup>. Iwasaki later regretted interviewing for Golden, having cited a breach of confidentiality and later sued then settled with Golden for the pararellism between his book and her life. She later released her own autobiography entitled ***Geisha of Gion*** in 2002, which became an international bestseller.

## GLOSSARY

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okiya>

An **okiya** (置屋?) is the lodging house in which a [maiko](#) or [geisha](#) lives during the length of her nenki, or contract or career as a geisha.

A young woman's first [step](#) toward becoming a geisha is to be accepted into an okiya (*boarding house*), a geisha house owned by the woman who will pay for her training. The [proprietress](#) of the okiya is called *okā-san* (the Japanese word for "mother"). The okiya normally pays all expenses, including for [kimono](#) and training. The okiya plays a large part in the life of a [geiko](#) or maiko, as the women in the okiya become her geisha family, and the Okā-san manages her career in the *karyūkai* (flower and willow world).

[Geiko](#) (Kyoto dialect for geisha) live in a [geisha](#) house (*okiya*) and work in a teahouse ([ochaya](#)), where there are [music](#), [dancing](#), [partying](#), sometimes food, and always plenty of [alcohol](#). A geisha pays a [percentage](#) of her [earnings](#) to maintain the house and support all the people living there who are not working geisha, including *maiko* (apprentice geisha), retired geisha and house [maids](#). [Kyoto](#) is the only place where the strict geisha [training](#) continues still and the geiko traditions are handed down.

There may be more than one geisha or maiko living in an okiya at any given point. Inversely, there are houses licensed as okiya but without any [geisha](#) living there. Generally, a geisha who has fulfilled her [financial obligations](#) to the house may choose to live independently, but will remain affiliated with the okiya for the remainder of her [career](#). Inside the small confines of the geiko communities, it is women, not men, who wield [power](#): everyone hopes for girl children, not boys, so that they can carry on the line of geisha, also if a woman has a boy, she must move out of the Okiya, or give him up, as it is forbidden for men to live in an okiya. For all of their focus on men when they are at work, geiko and maiko live in a [matriarchal society](#). Women run the okiya, women teach girls the [skills](#) they need to become a full-fledged geisha, and women introduce new maiko into the [teahouses](#) that will be their livelihood. Women run the teahouses too and they can make or break a geisha's career. If a geisha offends the mistress of the main teahouse where she does business, she may lose her [livelihood](#) entirely.

The Okā-san of the okiya may [adopt](#) one of the geisha as her daughter (*musume*) and [heiress](#) (*atotori*). Henceforth that girl will live in the okiya permanently and all the money she earns will go to that establishment and other various people that help to take care of the geisha's outfits, hairstyles and accessories. Under such an [arrangement](#), the geisha's [debts](#) are absorbed by the okiya.



**ASIAN IMPROV aRTS CO-PRESENTS  
THE FRANCIS WONG TRIO**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 25<sup>th</sup> AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SAN FRANCISCO**

**FRANCIS WONG, TATSU AOKI, MELODY TAKATA AND  
SPECIAL GUEST, GRAND MASTER FROM JAPAN, CHIZURU KINEYA**

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 14, 2012**

**PRESS CONTACTS:**

**Lenora Lee/Asian Improv Records  
Lenora@asianimprov.org  
415.816.9376 (San Francisco)**

**ENERI Communications  
info@enericom.net  
312.635.0888 (National and Chicago)  
www.enericom.net  
and www.enericom.net/blog  
Electronic Release/Images/MP 3 Sampler:  
www.enericom.net/private/tatsu/toyo/**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA and CHICAGO, IL - - In related news, **The Francis Wong Trio** will appear as part of the **University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration, Wednesday, July 25, 2012 at the Laurel Heights Campus, The View, 3333 California Street, San Francisco, California, from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.** Admission is free.

The performance is presented by the Asian Pacific American Systemwide Alliance, the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) and Asian Improv aRts. It features Francis Wong on saxophone, Tatsu Aoki on shamisen and bass, Melody Takata on taiko, and special guest, Grand Master Chizuru Kineya (from Tokyo, Japan) on shamisen.

- 30 -

/TA/FW/LL/e

ASIAN IMPROV ARTS, GENRYU ARTS  
AND NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS PRESENT

A 300 year legacy of Japanese cultural arts

# TOYOAKIMOTO



A CD RELEASE CONCERT WITH

**Tatsu Aoki**

*Shamisen (3 string Japanese Lute)*

**Chizuru Kineya**

*Shamisen*

**Melody Takata**

*Taiko*

AND SPECIAL GUESTS

**Francis Wong**

*Saxophone*

**Yangqin Zhao**

*Yangqin (Chinese Hammered Dulcimer)*

**SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2012**

**FREE ADMISSION**

RECEPTION: 12:30-1PM • CONCERT: 1-2:30 PM

**TATEUCHI AUDITORIUM**

**NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS**

1830 SUTTER STREET BUILDING, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

**Inaugural presentation of Asian Improv aRts' 25th Anniversary Season**

