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***YAMATO DRUMMERS OF JAPAN PERFORM AT
ORPHEUM THEATER IN OCTOBER***

Drumming Group Showcases Athletic Strength and Precision in Omaha on October 23

OMAHA, NEBRASKA –September 21, 2011 – The art of Japanese drumming involves precision, athleticism, stamina and strength, and the 17 members of [Yamato Drummers of Japan](#) train and practice more than 12 hours a day to master these skills. The drumming group will perform at the Orpheum Theater at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 23 as part of Omaha Performing Arts' Family Series.

Tickets for Yamato Drummers of Japan start at \$19 and can be purchased at the Ticket Omaha office in the Holland Performing Arts Center, 13th and Douglas streets; online at TicketOmaha.com; or by calling 402.345.0606.

The group combines traditional Japanese instruments with modern music, choreography and theatrical design to rejuvenate the ancient tradition of *Taiko* drumming. *Taiko*, the Japanese word for “drum” and the name of the art form, recalls the very origins of music in the movement of the body, which must be seen as well as heard to be fully appreciated. The rhythms of the drums are designed to express different emotions, such as happiness, sadness, or even laughter. Masa Ogawa, founder of Yamato Drummers of Japan, says, “We are a group of people who create the beat of life by using a simple and interesting instrument and instilling our souls into it.”

Ogawa established the Japanese drum group in 1993 in Yamato-no-kuni—the country of Yamato and the present-day Nara prefecture. Nara is known for its many ancient monuments and is named as the birthplace of Japanese culture. For its first performance, Yamato Drummers of Japan participated in a festival held at the Toichi shrine in Nara. What began as one performance with four male performers at a local festival has evolved into the internationally renowned troop of men and women that we have today who perform more than 200 times a

year. In addition to public performances, Yamato Drummers engage in many educational and cultural learning activities. While here in Omaha, they will present a 60-minute presentation as part of the Omaha Performing Arts Student Matinee Series, which attracts elementary and middle school students from throughout the metropolitan area.

With a vigorous training schedule, the group practices all day, breaking only for meals. The average day of a drummer starts with individual practice, consisting of a 10km run and weight training in the morning, drumming practice as a group in the afternoon and individual practice again in the evenings. The group generally travels six to ten months out of the year. In all, Yamato Drummers of Japan have presented 2,300 performances in 51 countries around the world.

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About Omaha Performing Arts

Omaha Performing Arts is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing world-class performances to the Omaha metropolitan area. Omaha Performing Arts' commitment to the arts extends into its own series, Omaha Performing Arts *Presents*, as well as education and community involvement programs that help ensure the arts have a far-reaching impact. In partnership with Broadway Across America, Omaha Performing Arts also brings the finest in touring Broadway productions to Omaha,

Core to its mission, Omaha Performing Arts manages two landmark venues, the Holland Performing Arts Center and the Orpheum Theater – the former, which includes the acoustically acclaimed Kiewit Concert Hall and Scott Recital Hall and the latter, which includes Slosburg Hall, a proscenium theater. Omaha Performing Arts also provides comprehensive ticketing services for cultural and performing arts within the region through Ticket Omaha (www.TicketOmaha.com).

Omaha Performing Arts' performances are supported in part by the Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, the Mid-America Arts Alliance, National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Omaha and the Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund. For more information on Omaha Performing Arts visit www.OmahaPerformingArts.org.