

YAMATO PROGRAM 2007 - 2008

Title: HEARTBEAT

Japanese: SHIN-ON

★Image

My heartbeat was forged in ancient times

From one beat to the next, slowly it links together

(A thought set within each sound)

Carrying forth lives

I feel

This energy which flows from past to future

And today

I beat

With all my might

A beat connecting past with future

One beat, one sound.

★ *Yamato's New Program* "SHIN-ON : HEARTBEAT :"

Since the day we formed *Yamato*, we have been thinking about the importance of "one beat, one sound". As *taiko* (Japanese drum) players, we put our energy and thought into getting a resonating sound each time we beat the drum. The link between each of these beats is very important as well. It is as if our lives were made up of each of these moments every day. History, too, can be viewed as composed of links between each person, numerous links between people existing on the Earth. When we see ourselves as simple members of this Earth, we are surprised and moved to discover

that, in fact, we have inherited our heartbeat from the past and will give it on to the future. With this in mind, we beat the drums to meditate on the significance of “one beat, one sound”, “one piece of music, one performance”, and “one chance in our lives” to perform with *Yamato*.

For 15 years the rigorous training of the 10 men and women of this troupe has allowed us to give all our energy to every beat of music that we play. Each beat of the drum is meant to synchronize with your heartbeats, and, through this, all of our thoughts will be united. Today is the one chance for this we will have in our lives.

One beat, one sound.

We play, hoping that the heartbeat we make will become energy for tomorrow.

The Musical Compositions

The first piece is called *Yakara*. In the Kansai Area, from which the group originates, *Yakara* means “youngsters full of vigor” (and also includes the notion of “violent”). We’d like to express the high spirit and energy of young people who are all the more vigorous for their ignorance of the world, and their unconsciousness of the feelings of others.

The second piece is *Hayate*. *Hayate* means “a wind which swiftly blows through”. According to the Beaufort Wind Scale, *Hayate* is ranked as “Wind Force 5”. Here, we play the *syamisen*, a kind of Japanese stringed instrument that invokes the moment this invigorating blast shakes the trees and ripples the water.

The third piece is *Rekka* (or “Fierce Fire”). In our last two tours, two men performed this piece, but this time, a man and a woman will play it. As quick as lightning, and with thorough care, the two will compete with each other through the beat of the *taiko*.

Kizashi (or Sign) is the fourth piece. Originally composed in 1995, the hallmark of this piece is its speed and synchronicity. The sticks move like choreographed lightning. To perform this piece to perfection, we practice working together with beauty and harmony, even in our daily lives. We hope you will see the uniformity we’ve attained by living together in this way.

The fifth piece is *Lion*. It means “Thunder”. In Japanese, its pronunciation is similar to the English word “Lion”. So in this piece we express the strong image of these two

words “Thunder” and “Lion” through a typical Japanese drumming style called *Kumi-taiko*. In *Kumi taiko*, players combine to beat many kinds of *taikos*. This form of *taiko* playing developed soon after the Second World War, and is now the most popular style of *taiko* performance. For us, playing in the *Kumi-taiko* style is the most enjoyable!

The sixth piece is *Rakuda*. This is also a well-known musical style. This piece is one of our most important works and playing it never fails to make us happy. *Rakuda* is a coined word whose Chinese characters literally mean “merrily” and “to beat”. And the Japanese word *rakuda* also means “camel” in English. So let’s conjure up the image of a happy-go-lucky camel, and enjoy ourselves!

The seventh piece is *Garakuta*. This was performed for the first time on our previous tour. In this piece, we put down our drums in favor of the *chappa*, small cymbal-like instruments. The highlight of this piece is a comical scene in which big burly men perform with these small instruments in their hands. In Japan we have a word, *Oto-dama* (or “the soul of sound”). Since ancient times, we have thought of sound as having a soul. For this piece, we have created a little performance where *Oto-dama*, or sound balls (another meaning of *Oto-dama*), fly back and forth. If one of these balls reaches you, we’d be very happy.

The final piece is called *Shin-on*. The sound of the Japanese drums is *Shin-on* (or “Heart beat”) itself. It’s full of strength and vitality. For this piece, we bring *Yamato’s* big *taiko* to the front of the stage. With everyone present, we feel the heavy, low sound of the big drum shaking the Earth in the center of the stage. The sound of this drum becomes the sound of the heartbeats of the players, jumping around the stage. Your heartbeat too, will synchronize with the sound. Gradually all our heartbeats will overlap, and we will be united at last.