

Rhythm of life

There's nothing humdrum about this show, writes Angela Allan

DRUM TAO

When: July 6–11

Where: The Palms at Crown

Created by director Ikuo Fujitaka in 1993, Drum Tao brings traditional Japanese taiko drumming to a modern audience.

For the new production *The Samurai of the Drum*, the drummers have composed new rhythms based on Fujitaka's vision of the show.

"He gives us images of the (musical) numbers to compose," lead drummer Taro Harasaki

explains. "All numbers and the choreography are composed by some of the members. They are totally original."

The show features contemporary choreography, props and costumes based on the tradition and culture of the Samurai, all intertwined with taiko drumming on ancient Wadaiko drums, which are up to 1.7 metres in circumference and can weigh up to 400 kilograms.

"The stage props are beautiful," says Harasaki. "The show is an expression of

Japanese culture with modern numbers, rhythms, movement and costumes."

The 13 drummers call the Aso-Kuju National Park in Japan home. There are no modern interruptions, only lush surroundings where the cast can practice and create their rhythms.

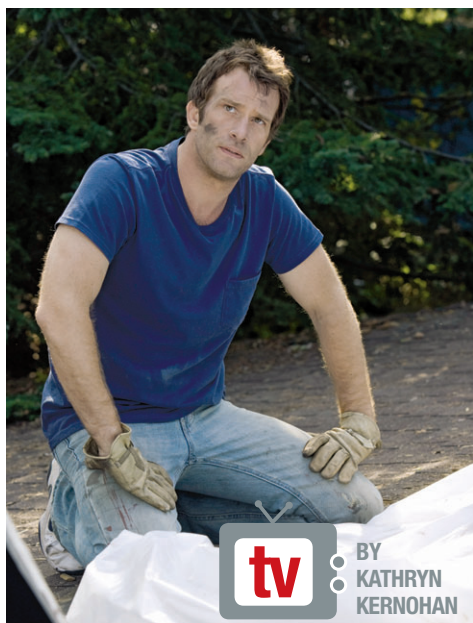
"There is nothing around, only nature," says Harasaki. "There are no 24-hour supermarkets or petrol stations. There are only beautiful sunrises and sunsets. The numbers we play on stage are inspired by nature or our experiences on tour."

In New Zealand, one drummer created a beat based on the Maori haka and the cast have an interest in Aboriginal culture.

"Every time we have been looking for traditional Australian (sounds) or thinking of using the didgeridoo, but we haven't made it so far."

Drum Tao performed in Australia two years ago, but were unable to bring their full-scale show. This time it will be a complete affair.

For more information and bookings, call 132 849 or visit ticketek.com.au



tv BY KATHRYN KERNOHAN

From the sublime to the ridiculous

From the very, very good to the very, very bad – that's two just-premiered US imports on Seven in a nutshell.

The good – the very, very good – is comedy-drama *Hung*. American network HBO has a ridiculously good strike rate when it comes to producing quality television (see: *Sex And The City*, *The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under*, *Entourage*, *The Wire*... how long have you got?), and this one's another winner. Thomas Jane is Detroit high school history teacher Ray Drecker. His wife's left him, and his memories of being a star basketballer in his time are fading fast. So what's a guy to do to cheer himself up and get out of debt? Turn to prostitution, of course. Drecker and poet friend Tanya (Jane Adams) decide upon Happiness Consultants as a business name and set about trying to find clients through a series of misadventures.

If the concept sounds strange, it's because it is. What network, aside from HBO, could get away with a show filled with gratuitous nudity and swearing and label it a sub-drama?

They're not wrong. Although *Hung* has its extremely funny moments, the show is also full of heart. Relationships, shattered dreams and loneliness are recurring themes, and there's an odd sense of poignancy, too.

Seven has decided to show the 10-episode first series as double episodes over five weeks, so you better get your skates on if you're yet to delve into Drecker's world. Monday's double is a cracker, with Ray becoming involved with new client Jemma, who insists he lives out her "fantasy date" – without telling him what it is.

Now, to the very bad. When Seven's own publicity material describes Fox's newest reality show *I Married A Stranger* as "so

ridiculous I can't stop watching it", it's safe to assume the program is as nasty as a Tim Cahill red card sendoff. And oh, it is. Former Miss Kansas runner-up (now there's a claim to fame) Brie, 29, has decided that as the big 3-0 is approaching she must get married. Like, in about 72 hours' time. To a complete stranger.

Brie's mother, sister and best friend have the task of grilling and selecting one potential husband from a line-up of five, while Brie is locked away in a villa and won't see her husband until she strolls down the aisle.

Which himbo will be chosen? Will the wedding eventuate? More importantly, who gives a s--t?

* *Hung*, Seven, Monday, 9.30pm

** *I Married A Stranger*, Seven, Wednesday, 9.30pm