

Know

About the Artist: Uzume Taiko



Uzume Taiko drummers are Bonnie Soon and Jason Overy. Bonnie attended tap, modern and ballet classes as a young girl and Jason trained in both Japanese martial arts and drumming from an early age. As adults they were motivated to train their bodies to communicate their power and spirit through movement and music and the Japanese art form of taiko drumming. Music makes the world a better place and sharing their love for drumming and music brings them joy! Performing in schools gives them an opportunity to share this art form with distant communities and their goal is to play music that unites us all!

About the Performance

- **What the audience can expect:** Uzume Taiko drummers present an energetic and spirited 45-50-minute show of taiko drumming. The drummers perform choreographed martial arts based taiko drum songs. Their repertoire includes a variety of drum playing styles, exciting rhythms and powerful beats to suit elementary, middle and senior school audience levels.
- **What is expected of the audience:** The audience can join in singing rhythms and making kiai, vocal shouts to encourage the troupe's performance. Active teacher and student participation are encouraged.
- **Technical Requirements:** Uzume Taiko requires a clean 40' wide by 30' deep performance area at one end of the length of the gymnasium with the audience entering from the end opposite from the performance area.

Uzume Taiko School Performance: <https://www.uzume.com/school-performance>

Do/ Inquire

About the Art Form

Taiko drums have existed for over two thousand years in Japan, when they were a big part of village life and were played to help people in their work, meditation and celebrations. More recently, the art form of Taiko Drumming began to develop after the Second World War when it became an activity to help many people to regain a sense of pride in the Japanese culture. Taiko Drumming is like martial arts drumming; it is a combination of music, movement and teamwork. By sharing their experiences from different cultural backgrounds, the drummers hope to gain a better understanding of themselves and of others, creating a better world in the process.

Taiko in Japan & North America: <https://www.uzume.com/taiko-japan-and-north-america>

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- What does 'Taiko' mean? What country does Taiko come from?
- What does drumming make you feel like? When you hear a good rhythm, does it make you want to move?
- Do we have a drumbeat going on in our bodies? What does our heartbeat sound like?

Links to Curriculum

Music: Students participate in singing short rhythmic patterns and identify the patterns when played on the taiko drums.
Physical Education: Students participate in gentle physical activity and martial arts vocal shouts. They gain body awareness and explore elements of choreography.
Social Studies: Students learn about some of the early uses of taiko in Japan and how they were played to help people in their daily village life.

Understand

Post-Performance Activities

- **Creating songs using Taiko Verbal Notation:** In groups, students can create and sing rhythms and choreograph movements. See [Taiko Notation](https://www.uzume.com/school-performance) pdf. <https://www.uzume.com/school-performance>
- **Matsuri Taiko song:** Listen to the song and sing along using Taiko Verbal Notation then try 'air taiko' moves (miming drum motions in the air) while watching the [Matsuri Taiko YouTube link](https://youtu.be/4zxNcJa5CbQ): <https://youtu.be/4zxNcJa5CbQ>

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- How can you be a good team member when you are drumming with other people?
 - How do you drum and listen at the same time?
 - What made the taiko drummers' performance different from other drum performances?
 - How were you able to feel the power and spirit of the drummers?
 - What activity do you feel that you could train in a team to do something powerful using your body?
- Learn more about this artist online at artstarts.com/aotd