

Uzume Taiko – Taiko Drumming Group

KNOW

About the Artist



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! To play music that unites us all is their goal! Visit <http://uzume.com/>

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 is 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. Study guide available: https://artstarts.com/assets/ad/study_guides/uzumetaiko-study.pdf

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.

Links to Curriculum

- **Music:** From diverse historical, cultural, and social contexts. Singing short rhythmic patterns and exploring elements of expression.
- **Drama:** Role of drama in a variety of historical, social, and cultural contexts. Masked characters from Japanese mythology are sometimes introduced.
- **Social Studies:** Arts as a means of expressing and preserving cultural identity. (Uzume Taiko's creation of new Canadian composition allows taiko drumming to be a 'living' tradition.)

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?

Post-Performance Activities

- **Creating songs using Taiko Verbal Notation:** In groups, students can create rhythms and choreograph movements based on martial arts forms and dance movements. Use martial arts kiai's, vocal shouts to add team spirit! See Taiko Verbal Notation on page 6 in Study Guide: https://artstarts.com/assets/ad/study_guides/uzumetaiko-study.pdf
- **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 youtube link: <https://youtu.be/M0YiD8KqKpo>

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- Do you think that listening is part of being 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?
- Were you able to feel the power and spirit of the drummers? After watching their performance, do you feel that you could also train in a team to do something powerful using your body?

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