Presents

Taikoza: Japanese Taiko Drums & Dance

Friday, February 16, 2007
10:00AM Concert Hall

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About Taikoza

Taikoza is a Japanese Taiko drum group that uses the powerful rhythms of the Taiko drums to create an electrifying energy that carries audiences in a new dimension of excitement. The taiko is a large, barrel-like drum that can fill the air with the sounds of rolling thunder. Drawing from Japan's rich tradition of music and performance, Taikoza has created a new sound using a variety of traditional instruments. In addition to drums of assorted sizes, Taikoza performers also play the shakuhachi and the fue (both bamboo flutes) and the koto (a 13 string instrument).

Taikoza was formed in New York City by members of Ondekoza (the group that started the modern day renaissance of Japanese Taiko in the 1960’s and introduced Taiko to the world). Taikoza’s love for taiko drumming transcends national boundaries bringing new energy to this ancestral form. Taikoza has performed in Europe, and Asia. The group has also appeared on the History Channel and The Last Samurai DVD set. Taikoza’s goal is to educate people about the exciting art form of Taiko and introduce them to Japanese culture.

Taikoza was formed in 1995 by some of the original members of Ondekoza, the group responsible for the Taiko renaissance in the 1960’s. Much like their music Taikoza’s members come from culturally diverse backgrounds.

European Marco Lienhard, fue and shakuhachi musician, studied under Japanese Masters Teruo Furuya and Katsuya Yokoyama. A solo virtuoso, Lienhard has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Boston Symphony Hall, Osaka Castle Hall and the Hong Kong Cultural Center.

Koto player, Masayo Ishigure, is a native of Gifu, Japan and began learning the instrument at a very young age. Arriving in New York in 1992 she was invited to play with the San Diego Orchestra and the NY City Ballet. In 1998 she recorded music played at the Nagano Olympics.

At the age of seven Momo Suzuki began classical Japanese dance studies with the Fujima School of Yamagata, Japan. Before her 1983 arrival in New York, Suzuki was a teaching member of the Kamioka Japanese Folk Dance Company of Tokyo. As a kimono clad Japanese dancer she was featured in Madonna’s music video, “Nothing Really Matters.”

The rest of the group is rounded out by Taiko players Marguerite Z. Bunyan, Malika Yasuko Duckworth, Masayuki Mizunuma and Chikako Saito.

For more information, visit the Taikoza website at: http://www.taikoza.com
About the instruments

**Bachi** are the sticks used to beat the taiko drums.

**The Fue** is a bamboo flute similar to the piccolo and held horizontally.

**The Koto** is a thirteen stringed instrument. It is made out of wood and originally had silk strings. (Today the instrument has nylon strings.) Because each string has a movable bridge, the performer can use many different tuning combinations. The musician plucks the strings with small picks worn on the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand. The instrument is in the shape of a dragon, the bridges being the spine of the dragon. The earliest Koto had only five strings and was about three feet long. The Koto dates from the 8th century and could be found in the court music ensembles.

**The shakuhachi** is a bamboo flute with four holes in the front and one hole in the back. It was used in Japanese court music to accompany the koto and also in the Buddhist religion as a form of meditation.

**Taiko** literally means big drum. It is generally used to describe a particular kind of Japanese drum that is hollowed out from a solid piece of keyaki wood (zelkova wood) and skinned by stretching and tacking a cow or horse hide over each end of the body. The word can also be used to refer to a type of Japanese drumming. There are many types and sizes of drums that make up a drum ensemble. When the word “taiko” is preceded by an adjective (usually to indicate the type of drum or style of playing), then the “t” changes to a “d”. There are many kinds of Taiko drums in Japan, but they can be broadly divided into two categories: Taiko with a nailed head (byou-daiko), and Taiko with heads stretched over a hoop and tensioned with ropes (shime-daiko).

**Byou-daiko** (also called byou uchi-daiko) have bodies that are traditionally carved from a single log, and heads that are stretched onto the taiko and tacked in place. This style of taiko cannot be tuned after the head is stretched. Since the bodies of byou-daiko are carved from a single log, making a large taiko typically requires a large tree that has grown for a minimum of two hundred years; the largest odaiko ever produced required a tree that was 1,200 years old. The heads are made from cowhide.

The **nagado-daiko** (long-bodied taiko) is by far the most popular taiko used in the modern style of playing. They are also very common in festivals and in temples and shrines. They have a characteristically deep, reverberant sound. These drums are often referred to by their size: ko-daiko or small drum about twelve inches; chu-daiko translates as medium drum, about twenty to thirty inches; and odaiko (big fat drum) range from thirty inches to five feet or more.

**Odaiko** literally means "big fat drum" and can refer to any large taiko drum. The term is usually reserved for nagado-daiko that have a head over three feet in diameter. Odaiko are typically placed on a stand and played horizontally, often by two people at once. Typically, one player will beat out a basic rhythm while the second player solos.

Odaiko can reach huge proportions, sometimes weighing in at over three tons and spanning six feet in diameter. These Mammoth Odaiko are often built for shrines or temples, and their cost can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.
**Shime-daiko** is a general term for a rope-tensioned drum and can be tuned. The word "shime" comes from the Japanese verb "shimeru", which means to bind or tighten up. Shime-daiko have two heads which are sewn over steel rings and laced to a body with a rope or cord. They are tensioned with another rope or cord that is wound around the lacings of the first rope. The pitch can be changed by adjusting the tightness of this second rope. In taiko groups, the shime is often used to keep the basic rhythm and establish time, but they are a versatile solo instrument as well.

The **oke-daiko**, or **okedo**, is made with a stave construction - not carved from a single piece of wood. They tend to be larger than a typical nagado-daiko, often around six feet in length and three feet in diameter. They are usually played horizontally, raised up on a high stand.

**Vocabulary**

**Kami** are Shinto deities. They are sacred spirits which take the form of things and concepts important to life, such as wind, rain, mountains, trees, rivers and great people.

**Matsuri** is the Japanese word for a festival or holiday. Festivals are usually sponsored by a local shrine and often feature processions and elaborate floats.

**Shinto** is a Japanese way of life that includes rituals, practices, attitudes, and institutions that express the people's relationship with their land and the lifecycles of the earth and humans. The beginnings of Shinto cannot be traced because the myths and rituals were transmitted by word of mouth until the 5th century when writing was introduced into Japan. The oldest type of Shinto ceremony was dedicated to agriculture. Worship took place outdoors at sacred sites and over time the Japanese built permanent structures at these sites called shrines. The Japanese paid homage to many spirits, or kami. These spirits represented aspects of the natural world, such as the sky, the earth, heavenly bodies, and storms. In its present form Shinto is characterized by the observance of popular festivals, many involving pilgrimages to shrines.

**Shrines** are places of worship and the dwellings of the kami. Sacred objects that represent the kami are stored in the shrine where they cannot be seen by anybody.

**About the Art Form**

Taiko has been associated with many aspects of Japanese culture since ancient times. It is said that Taiko was used to drive away the plague and evil spirits. In the Shinto religion, it was used to call upon and entertain the gods, or kami, and in Japanese Buddhism, its sound was the manifestation of the voice of the Buddha. Both noblemen and commoners played and listened to Taiko, which could be found in imperial court orchestras, in Kabuki and Noh Theater, on the battlefield and in the rice fields. Fifth-century clay dolls holding drums and seventh-century poems and paintings are evidence that Taiko was an integral part of the Japanese culture for the past fifteen centuries.
In ancient times, during droughts or dry seasons, the life of a Japanese village rested on the endurance of their taiko drummer. Control of the water from a river that ran between two villages was gambled. The village whose taiko drummer could play the longest got the right to control the river water.

**Discussion Questions**

- Why might it be important for a village to control water from a river?
- What does this tell us about economics of a Japanese village during ancient times?

When many Japanese immigrated to North America in the early part of the 1900's, they brought taiko drums with them. In 1910, Taiko drumming was well established in Hawaii and by 1930 had made inroads to San Francisco on the US mainland. However, after World War II, Taiko drumming in the United States died out. It was not until 1968, when Japanese-born drummer, Seiichi Tanaka established the first ensemble taiko group that the drumming saw a renaissance in the United States.

**Discussion Questions**

- Why might Japanese immigrants and those of Japanese heritage stop practicing Taiko after World War II?
- Why do you think it took so long for Taiko to be revived in the US?
- Did other important things happen in the US during the 1960's that might have influenced the Taiko resurgence?

**Japanese Festivals and Taiko**

The Japanese people celebrate many festivals throughout the year. Some of these festivals, called matsuri, can be tied back to ancient times through the practice of Shinto. Shinto is a Japanese way of life that includes rituals, practices, attitudes, and institutions that express the people's relationship with their land and the lifecycles of the earth and humans. The festivals were tied to the agricultural seasons. Winter and spring festivals prayed for a good planting. Summer festivals were used to drive away any misfortunes that would hurt the crop. Fall festivals gave thanks for an abundant harvest. In the rural areas, spring and fall festivals were the most important. In the cities, summer festivals were directed at keeping away disease or other disasters which might fall on the inhabitants.

**Discussion Questions**

- Why might country residents view the spring and fall festivals as the most important?
- Why would the city residents celebrate a festival to keep away disease in the summer and not the winter?
Almost every Japanese village has a Shinto shrine dedicated to a spiritual being called a kami. Festivals were celebrations to honor the kami or a significant event or person in the history of the village. The festivals often centered around a procession of the mikoshi, a portable shrine, carried on two long poles through the streets. Music and dance played important roles in the celebrations. The local people felt they could communicate with the spirits through the festival and would ask for good luck and favor for special events or family members.

There were many rituals associated with the festivals. People believed that they and the area around the shrines needed to be purified. Then, offerings were be made to please the kami. Finally, the kami would come to earth and attend ritual banquets with the participants.

The matsuri also promoted a sense of community among the people. In addition to the parades, procession and feasts there were games and contests of skill. The contests could include tug of war, boat races, and horse races. In days of old, these contests were viewed not as forms of entertainment, but as a means of requesting help from the spirits.

The Legend of Hi no Taiko

In the Emperor Keitai’s day at his castle built on a hill in Mikuni, a special taiko was used to stir up the officers of the army and to frighten the enemy. Many years ago the Mikuni seashore was hit by a tremendous storm which lasted 60 days and nights. No ship could get in or out of the harbor and the townspeople, who were largely fisherman, had to stop fishing. This caused great hardship in the town and the people nearly died of hunger. The leader of the town called a town meeting to discuss a solution to their problem. It was decided to build a great fire and beat the taiko. This would calm the gods of the sea who were angry. They built the fire and beat the taiko for three days. The storm passed and the sea became calm. Peace and prosperity returned to Mikuni. The fisherman returned to fishing and good catches. Today, the Mikuni drum still sounds a welcoming blessing for prosperity as ships enter the harbor. Hi no Taiko is celebrated on January 7 each year. On this day the young townspeople compete at playing taiko.

Another festival featuring taiko drums takes place during the Chichibu festival in Saitama Prefecture (north of Tokyo). During the festival, gigantic shrines on wheels are pushed through the streets. The rhythms of the Taiko consists of two main phrases the Ko-nami (small wave) and the Ou-nami (big wave). These rhythms were originally played on the boats carrying the huge blocks of stone that were used to build Osaka Castle. The Taiko player would set the pace for the oarsmen and by the rhythm he could communicate the sort of waves that were coming ahead. The wheeled shrines are a symbolic reminder of the boats.

Discussion Question

- Can you think of any other cultures that used song or music to help them in their work?
Other Japanese festivals

January 15
Seijin-No-Hi: Adult's Day
This celebration is for all the boys and girls turning twenty that year.

February circa 1-3
Setsubun
On the evening of the first day before the beginning of Spring ("risshun"), a ritual called "mame-maki" (literally "bean-throwing") is conducted at temples and shrines to drive away evil spirits, disease and bring good luck. Important people throw handfuls of beans into the crowds.

March 3
Hina Matsuri: Girls Day or Dolls’ Day
This festival is dedicated to young girls. Dolls representing the ancient Imperial court are displayed in houses of unmarried girls to bring good fortune.

Circa March 21 and September 21
Higan
Memorial services for the deceased are held at temples on the 7 days preceding the vernal and autumnal equinox. People visit their family graves during this period.

May 5
Kodomo no hi: Boys Day or Children’s Day
Mostly dedicated to boys, families with male children fly paper streamers of carps called "koinobori", which symbolize healthy growth.

July 7
Tanabata: Star Festival
This festival celebrates the legend of the weaver maiden, the daughter of the Celestial Emperor. She fell in love with a common shepherd boy. They were forbidden to meet, except for that day of the year (tanabata), when the two stars Kengyu (the shepherd) and Shokujo (the princess) meet in the Milky Way.

November 15
Shichi-Go-San: 7-5-3 Festival
Shichigosan is the traditional custom of taking boys aged 3 and 5 and girls aged 3 and 7 to be blessed at the local Shinto shrine to thank for their good health and pray for future blessings. Children are dressed up in colorful kimonos.
Pre-performance Activities

- Find the rhythms of daily life

Ask students to think about a simple action or activity they do every day, e.g., brushing their teeth, getting dressed, walking to school. When everyone has come up with something, ask them to recreate their actions all at the same time when you give the signal and to stop all at the same time when you repeat the signal. Introduce the idea of tempo (how quickly or slowly they move) and have the class repeat their actions trying different speeds--rushing to get it over with; feeling tired and moving slowly; moving like robots with circuitry problems that cause them to malfunction. Get their feedback on how moving at different speeds affects the way they feel.

- Use body percussion to practice simple rhythms with the whole class

Assign a letter of the alphabet to a simple percussive movement. For example: “C” would stand for a hand clap, “S” for a foot stomp, “L” for hands clapped on thighs. Using this notation, have the class come up with some simple rhythms and write them on the board. Then have small groups create their own rhythms. After a few minutes of practice time, have each group perform their rhythm for the group. See if the class can repeat the rhythm back to the group. Experiment with dynamics (the loudness or softness of the sounds produced) and working in unison.

- Create a classroom set of drums

Use mixing bowls or cans. Stretch waxed paper or cloth tightly over the top. Fasten it over the rim with string or a rubber band. Or use lengths of overlapping tape to make the membrane. Tap the membrane gently.

Experiment with various sounds and rhythms. Sprinkle a few grains of salt or rice on the top and you can see the vibration. Press on the edge of the membrane. Does the sound change? Compare the sound when striking in the center of the head and near the edge. Compare human reaction and discuss what is communicated.

Investigate other traditional instruments of Japan: the shakuhachi (flute), shamisen (banjo), and koto (zither). Listen to recordings.

Compare various drumming traditions to the Japanese tradition: American Indian, African, Latin American, Near Eastern (India), Modern Jazz, Rock ‘N’ Roll.

Investigate American composers who utilize Asian instruments: John Cage, Henry Cowell, Philip Glass

http://www.junkyardsymphony.com/studyguide.html
Chopstick Shigin

Many people are familiar with the Haiku, a three line Japanese poem consisting of seventeen syllables. Did you know that the Haiku was derived from a much longer poetic form called Waka that contained 31 syllables and five lines? (It starts out just like a Haiku but ends with two more lines of seven syllables each.). An even older Japanese poetic form is called the Shigin. This type of Japanese poetry is created to be chanted, either individually or within a group. Each shigin poem is composed of lines of kanji. Kanji is a Japanese form of pictogram writing. It is different from an alphabet since each Kanji stands for a word or an idea. The most common Shigin were written in four lines and each line was seven characters long. (Just like a quatrains with seven words in each line!) Shigin are thought to have originated in China early in the first millennium AD. During the 5th century many books from China were brought into Japan and it is believed the Shigin poetic form spread to Japan at that time.

Chopsticks are used in East Asian (China, Japan and Korea) countries as eating utensils. They can be very fancy and made out of precious metals like silver and gold or common materials like bamboo. For this activity each student will write a shigin on flat sided bamboo chopsticks—one line per side.

Materials

Black fine line felt tip pens
Flat sided bamboo chopsticks (like those found in Chinese take out restaurants)

Procedure

Read examples of Japanese poetry such as haiku, waka or shigin. Point out to students how often this poetry deals with nature themes and the seasons. It is similar to free verse and does not rhyme. It does not contain articles or conjunctions. Using a set number of words for each line, have students write a four line shigin. Write one line on each side of a bamboo chop stick.

Extension

In small groups have students place their chopsticks together and roll them over to create collaborative poems. How many possible new poems can be created using two chopsticks? Three? Four? Etc.

Bibliography

Resources


Information about Japanese Kanji (pictogram writing)

Web page especially for kids sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Contains information of special interest to children and teachers regarding Japanese life and traditions.

A handbook on writing poetry and lyrical prose from different world cultures and historical periods.


Good book for creative poetry writing activities.


Information about writing Haiku and other poetic forms from around the world.

Online encyclopedia of definitions for glossary terms. This site is good for basic information but should be confirmed with a second source.
Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the building, procedures are in place to ensure that the audience can exit safely.

Sections 4, 5, 6
Exit through the lobby.

Sections 1, 2, 3 & Pit
Exit toward stage.

Note: Interior house conditions may necessitate alternate exit routes.

Mezzanine
1, 2, 3
Exit rear through lobby.

Balconies
1, 2 exit toward stage, up two flights and down interior fire escape
NOTICE TO ALL TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES

- **PERFORMANCES BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 10AM OR NOON.**
  Many of our performances sell out. This means we can have up to 1,600 students to seat. Please help us by arriving **30 minutes** prior to the start of the performance. This will allow our ushers to get everyone seated and for you and your students to visit the rest rooms and get settled. It is important that we begin our performances on time so that all schools can meet their lunch and/or dismissal times.

- **PLEASE CHECK LOCATION OF PERFORMANCE WHEN MAKING YOUR BUS RESERVATION.**

- The staff of the Fine Arts Center needs your help! An increasing number of students are coming into the performance space with gum, food, beverages, cell phones and portable music players. **None of these items is allowed in the halls for performances.** Many of these items are stowed in backpacks and are not easily noticed. Our goal is to offer high quality performances for young people. In order to enhance the experience, we ask for your cooperation in preventing these items from entering the hall.

- For the comfort of all concerned, we ask that backpacks, lunches and other gear be left on the bus. Our long-standing policy of no cameras or tape recorders still is in effect.

- At the conclusion of the performance please remain in your seats until your school group is dismissed.

  *We hope that you and your students enjoy your theatre experience!*
PARKING AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE FINE ARTS CENTER’S
CONCERT HALL and RAND THEATER

School Bus Parking: Students should be dropped-off at Haigis Mall off of Massachusetts Avenue. University Security will direct buses to an appropriate parking lot during the performance (typically by the football stadium). PLEASE BE SURE YOUR BUS DRIVER KNOWS THAT ALL PERFORMANCES LAST APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR AND THEY SHOULD RETURN A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE ANTICIPATED END TIME. If drivers are not with the buses, they may miss the radio call from security asking them to return for pick-up, resulting in unnecessary delays returning to your school.

Individual cars: If necessary, individuals may drop-off students with a chaperone at Haigis Mall (you will be directed by security to the mid-point turn of Haigis Mall - see map) prior to parking. We recommend parking in the Campus Center Parking Garage to avoid searching for a metered space. It is a five-minute walk to the Concert Hall. All other available parking during weekdays is at meters. Available lots and pricing (current as of 1/1/07) are listed below:

- Parking in the Garage is available to our patrons at a discounted rate of $1. To receive this rate you MUST give the Garage attendant a parking pass. To receive your pass, please call our office to let us know that you will be arriving by car. Parking passes are sent with the invoices. Please call (413) 545-2116 if you didn’t receive one.
- Parking meters are enforced Monday - Friday, 7AM - 5PM. Meter rates are $1.00 per hour.
- Parking Garage - near Campus Center, across from the Mullins Center off Commonwealth Avenue
- Lot 34 - Behind Visitors Center with 3, 5 & 10-hour meters available
- Haigis Mall - 2 hour maximum on meters
- Lot 62 - Adjacent to Fernald Hall with 3 hour maximum on meters, limited spaces available.

From the North: (Vermont, Greenfield) I-91 south to Route 116. Follow signs on 116 “To the University of Massachusetts.” Exit ramp leads to Massachusetts Avenue. Turn left (east) on to Massachusetts Avenue toward the campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the South: (Springfield, Holyoke) I-91 north to Route 9. Turn right (east) on Route 9 over the Coolidge Bridge and through Hadley. Turn left (north) on Route 116 (across from Staples) heading toward campus. Turn right at first exit at “University of Massachusetts,” then bear right onto Massachusetts Avenue toward campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the West: (Northampton, Pittsfield) Route 9 east through Northampton and over Coolidge Bridge. Follow remaining directions under “From the South”.

From the East: (Belchertown, Ludlow) North on Routes 21, 181 or 202 to Route 9 into Amherst. Right on to North Pleasant Street (main downtown intersection), north through center of town. Turn left at Triangle Street (Bertucci’s Restaurant on your right), rejoining North Pleasant Street. To reach Lot 34 and Haigis Mall continue on main road, which becomes Massachusetts Avenue. Haigis Mall will be on your right, Lot 34 on your left.
For Concert Hall, Rand Theater and Bowker Auditorium – Patrons traveling by car are encouraged to park in the parking garage. Discounted parking is available in the garage for $1. A parking permit is required for discounted parking in the garage. Please call the Arts & Educational Programs Office if you require permits at (413) 545-2116. All other parking on campus is at available meters at the rate of $1 per hour. Parking is enforced Monday – Friday, 7AM – 5 PM.

Buses will drop-off students as indicated on map. Buses will be given parking instructions by Campus Security.