

Study Guide For Teachers

Taikoza

In *Japanese Festival Drums*

presented by

Young Audiences

(866) 500-9265

www.yanj.org

www.yaep.org



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

“Japanese Festival Drums” is an exciting introduction to Japanese folk festivals. The energizing Taiko drum is the center of this performance, used by the artists to explore the history and culture of these festivals along with various other musical instruments, dance and song.

ARTIST INFORMATION

Taikoza is a Japanese music and dance group founded by Marco Lienhard. The ensemble has been performing since 1995. In 2004, “Beginnings”, Taikoza’s first album, was nominated for a Just Plain Folks Music Award.

While touring as a professional taiko player in Japan, Marco Lienhard, a native of Switzerland, studied the shakuhachi, quickly becoming a virtuoso solo artist. He also studied the fue and the nohkan (Noh theater flute). He has performed more than 3000 concerts in Europe, Asia and North America, appearing in prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall, Hong Kong Cultural Center and Suntory Hall in Tokyo.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The Japanese drum, the taiko, is an instrument that embodies the spiritual essence and heartbeat of Japan and its people. With its roots in the folk tradition of Japan, the taiko has served many purposes. Priests used taiko to chase evil spirits and insects from rice fields; samurai used taiko to bolster their courage and to instill fear in the enemy; villagers used taiko to pray for rain, to enliven festivals, and to give thanks for bountiful harvests.

The practice and performance of taiko requires selfless dedication, physical endurance, harmony and a collective spirit.

Festivals are celebrated in all cultures and are a phenomenon that unites people. Hardly any other aspect of Japanese life is better qualified to help us understand the country's traditions. Festivals are a very important element of local village cultures and are striking both in their frequency and in their variety. The attributes of long-forgotten times have lived on in them, often in a surprisingly complex form, and are now able to tell us a great deal about the nature and development of Japanese culture.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

1. Introduce students to the geography of Asia. Have them familiarize themselves with Japanese geography and its physical relation to surrounding countries.
2. Get the music teacher involved! Have students listen to classical and folk music of Japan, China and Korea. Have them compare the instrumentation and musical characteristics.
3. Have students read folktales from Japan. Discuss the stories and any morals or lessons learned. Discuss similarities and differences to familiar folktales
4. Have students research some Japanese festivals. What kinds of music and dance do these festivals include?

LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Be introduced to Japanese classical and folk music and dance.
- Be encouraged to participate in creating rhythm as an ensemble.
- Be exposed to Japanese culture and the cultural similarities of countries surrounding Japan.
- Be provided a climate of multi-cultural appreciation.

RESOURCES

Japanese folktales:

<http://japan.lisd.k12.mi.us/resources/jumppages/folktales.htm>

The Drums of Noto Hanto. J. Alison James.

Japanese festivals:

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2063.html>

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Have students again listen to the Japanese music. Ask them to identify the various instruments that they hear and elements of the music they recognize from the Taikoza performance.
2. Have students discuss how the members of Taikoza work together to create the music. Are the students familiar with other types of musical ensembles which must work together in a similar fashion to create music?
3. Reread the folktales explored prior to the performance. Discuss the stories and how the students might better understand them or interpret their meanings differently in light of what they experienced in the Taikoza performance.
4. Get the visual arts teacher involved! Have students create origami (Japanese paper art) and/or temari (Japanese thread balls).

VOCABULARY WORDS

TAIKO - Japanese drum

FUE - horizontal bamboo flute

SHAKUHACKI - vertical five-hole bamboo flute

KONNICHIIWA – hello

OHAYO GOZAIMASHU - good morning

MATSURI - Japanese festival

BACHI - taiko sticks

NIHON- Japan

KAZAN – volcano

JISHIN – earthquake

OKOME – rice

HASHI – chopsticks

ODORI – dance