



krannert center

YOUTH SERIES

CELEBRATING
35 YEARS

TAD

DRUM HEART





ABOUT THE ARTIST

The performers who take the stage for TAO are highly trained athletes and highly expressive artists. TAO's modern, high-energy performances showcasing the ancient art of Japanese drumming have transfixed audiences worldwide. Combining ultra-physical, large-scale drumming with contemporary costumes, dynamic choreography, and innovative visuals, the performers of TAO: *Drum Heart* create an unforgettable production.

Find out more about TAO on YouTube: search "TAO featured on Entertainment Nippon" for a documentary that details the company origins, drums, training, and their creative home in Japan.

ABOUT THE SHOW

Drum Heart weaves together spectacular drumming and choreography in a story of resilience and strength. The story begins with a thunderous volcanic eruption that devastates the countryside. One of the few survivors is a young boy who is left trying to rebuild his village alone until he's attacked by neighboring villagers seizing an opportunity to take the land. A celestial nymph appears and reasons with all the villagers to cooperate and rebuild their community. The villagers exchange their weapons for drumsticks in order to harmoniously play music together.

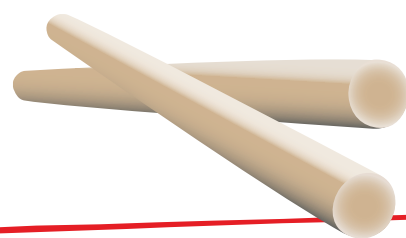
This season we invite school communities to explore the performing arts through a selection of topics that reveal the IMPACT of the Arts for Youth.

- INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTS
- MEANING AND CULTURAL CONTEXT
- PRODUCTION
- ART-MAKING AND CREATIVITY
- CAREERS
- TRAINING

C IS FOR CAREERS

When you think about careers in the arts, the musicians, actors, and dancers you see on stage may be the first to come to mind. But there are many other important ways to contribute! A production like *Drum Heart* relies on costume designers and stitchers, carpenters, painters, prop-makers, audio engineers, graphic designers, publicists, and food services staff, to name just a few.

Your assignment: When you come to see *Drum Heart*, take a look around you and observe all the different kinds of work being done. With your classmates, make up list of jobs that contribute to the performing arts. Just for fun, take a look at the list of over 80 staff members on the Krannert Center website (KrannertCenter.com).



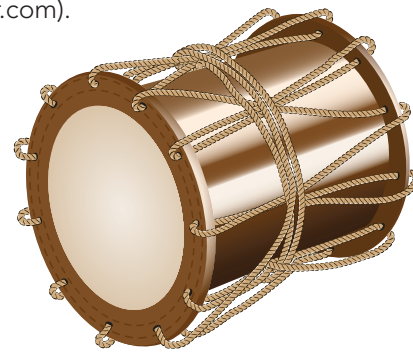
BACHI BEATS

It takes many years to learn to play taiko, whether you're learning traditional or more contemporary styles, but you can get a taste for the art with this group activity. You'll need: something to use as a drum (a canister, bucket, or garbage can), and some *bachi* (drumsticks made from wooden dowels, or try swim noodles!).

Get started by setting up a steady beat, alternating hands as you play. Pay attention to the sound you're making as a group: are you all striking your drums right on the beat, or is your sound more like a wave crashing on the shore? Keep practicing until you can play with unity.

Next, make up a simple rhythm you can play all together. As with many percussion traditions, Japanese drumming uses special syllables (*kuchi showa*) to refer to specific types of drum beats and rhythms. So you might have a rhythm that goes: *don, don, doko, don*. Once your group has learned the new rhythm, try splitting your group in two, and play your rhythm as a call and response.

For your final challenge, stand in a circle and try to pass the beat around it, having each person playing one note. Start with your simple, steady pulse, and then advance to a more complex rhythm.



THE MAKING OF TAIKO

The making of a traditional Japanese drum is an ancient art. Each drum takes about five years to make—or many more, if you count the several hundred years the Japanese elm *Zelkova serrata* needs to grow to the giant size of the largest drums! Once a tree is selected, its trunk is cut into several drum-size chunks. The bark is removed and a special machine is used to cut cylindrical pieces from each segment of the trunk. The cylinder is then carved into the special curved drum shape and then slowly dried in a humidity-controlled room for three to five years.

The aged drum is then sanded and planed on the exterior, while the interior is carved with an intricate pattern to create the desired sound. Different patterns are used for drums played on stage compared to those played at outdoor festivals. They are known by colorfully descriptive names such as *kikkobori* (turtle back), *amijyourokobori* (fish scales), *yarigataayabori* (zig-zags), and *hadosenjyobori* (tornado).

Once the interior carving is complete, the exterior is coated with lacquer, and often decorative handles are added. Finally a damp cowhide skin is attached and slowly tightened as it dries. When the skin is tightened to the correct tension it is nailed in place (or on other styles of drums, tightened by rope around the exterior).

TYPES OF TAIKO:

Odaiko—the largest drum, placed horizontally on a stand and often played by two musicians.

Nagado daiko—a medium-sized drum that can be placed on a stand vertically or horizontally; it offers a deep drum sound and is more portable than the Odaiko.

Tsukushime (Shime) daiko—these drums have skins that are tightened with rope and can be tuned to make higher or lower sounds. Before each performance TAO tunes their Shime drums, since the tuning is affected by the temperature and humidity in the theatre.

See images of the process used by the Asano Taiko factory, which has been making taiko drums since 1609, at AtlasObscura.com (search taiko drum).



Can you guess the drum being played by Tao musicians in this photo?

ON THE MAP

TAO COMES FROM ...

TAKETA CITY AND ASO KUJU NATIONAL PARK, KYUSHU ISLAND, JAPAN

KUJU MOUNTAIN RANGE

KYUSHU'S ISLAND LANDSCAPE

DOWNTOWN KUMAMOTO

Drum Heart

TAO appears by arrangement
with Columbia Artists, Tim Fox, manager

Tuesday, March 27, 2018, at 10am

Colwell Playhouse
Approximately 60 minutes
Recommended for grades 4-12

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LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS

Krannert Center has partnered with Champaign Public Library and The Urbana Free Library to help expand your students' Youth Series experience. Our local libraries have placed materials on display that relate to the performance of *Drum Heart*, and librarians are prepared to help your students immerse themselves in the wide-ranging subject areas that are covered by the production. These resources will be available approximately two weeks before through two weeks following the performance.

www.champaign.org | www.urbanafreelibrary.org

We hope that you are able to take advantage of these exciting partnerships with our local libraries!

SPURLOCK MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE, MARCH 27, 2018

Drop in for a self-guided interactive visit before or after the performance. Museum guides in each room will offer hands-on object studies and gallery-based challenges for students, tied to the themes of the *Drum Heart* performance. The Spurlock Museum also has a variety of resources for classroom use. Contact Kim Sheahan at ksheahan@illinois or 217.244.3355 for information on available artifacts and lesson plans.



Krannert Center

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