



krannert center

YOUTH SERIES

2019-20

SCHOOL-DAY PERFORMANCES
FOR PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND HOME
SCHOOLS, GRADES PreK-12

DRUM TAO

2020



I ILLINOIS
College of Fine & Applied Arts



ABOUT DRUM TAO

The performers who take the stage for DRUM TAO are both highly trained athletes and highly expressive artists. DRUM 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 DRUM TAO create an unforgettable production. Established in Japan's Aichi region in 1995, DRUM TAO's creative production center is now on Kyushu Island, site of the legendary Aso Kuju National Park.

Connects to Illinois Learning Standards in Fine Arts, Social/Emotional Learning, and Science.

**SUPERNATURALLY
FIT AND SUPERBLY
TRAINED... STUNNING...
FULLY DESERVING OF
THE STANDING OVATION
THAT THE COMPANY
RECEIVES**

—HERALD

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 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 cow-hide 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](https://atlasobscura.com) (search taiko drum).



YOUTH.KRANNERTCENTER.COM

SPOTLIGHT ON COSTUMES

Costume design is one of the most important elements of a DRUM TAO production. In addition to contributing to the dramatic look and vibrant energy of the show, these costumes have to work well with the range of movement, power, and speed of the performers.

While you're at the performance, take a look for ways that the following elements of costume design come into play:

SHAPE/SILHOUETTE

COLOR

TEXTURE

MOVEMENT



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.

ON THE MAP

TAO IS FROM . . .

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



Hakata in Fukuoka, Japan



Kuju Mountains



Rice Fields, Kyushu, Japan

DRUM TAO 2020

Youth Series Performances

We-Th, Mar 11-12, 2020, at 10am
Tryon Festival Theatre • \$5/ticket
Performance length: 60 minutes
Recommended for grades 4 and up

Public Marquee Performance

We, Mar 11, 2020 at 7:30pm

DRUM TAO appears courtesy of
Columbia Artists Management, Inc.

DRUM TAO 2020 sponsors

The Susan Sargeant McDonald Endowed Fund
for Youth Programming (Suzi was the founder/
developer of the Krannert Center Youth Series)
Erica McClure in memory of Malcom McClure
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LIBRARY CONNECTIONS

Krannert Center has also partnered with Champaign Public Library and The Urbana Free Library to help expand your students' Youth Series experience. Our local libraries have placed materials that relate to *DRUM TAO 2020* on display, 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.

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

www.champaign.org | www.urbanafreelibrary.org

OPEN HOUSE AT THE SPURLOCK MUSEUM OF WORLD CULTURES: MAR 11-12, 11AM-12:30PM

Drop in for a self-guided, interactive visit on the day of your Youth Series performance. Museum guides will offer hands-on object studies and gallery-based challenges for students tied to the themes of *DRUM TAO 2020*. The Spurlock Museum also has a variety of resources for classroom use. Contact Kim Sheahan at ksheahan@illinois.edu or 217.244.3355 for information on available artifacts and lesson plans.

