

TAIKO DRUM

TASMANIA UNIVERSITY UNION TAIKO SOCIETY

website: www.taikodrum.com

2008

C/O TUU
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Introduction

The **Tasmania University Union Taiko Society** was formed in 2002 to create the opportunity to train, perform and teach the Japanese art of drumming and provide an opportunity to university students, school students, and the general public the thrill of taiko. The leader of the group, Simon Vanyai, learned taiko while he lived in Japan for three years. The group has evolved dramatically since he first introduced it to Tasmanian audiences, with groups forming in Burnie and Launceston.

Taiko training teaches players to move, beat, and shout like a Samurai Drummer! Starting from basics, taiko teaches the fundamental rhythmic patterns from which it has evolved. Taiko is distinguished from other types of percussion by its unique combination of choreographed movements that are combined with rhythms that form a mesmerizing and dynamic contemporary performing art.

Taiko is relatively simple. No musical experience is necessary. Anyone can have a go, and it's such great fun. But more than that, most people find it extremely rewarding to work as a team, challenge themselves and celebrating achievements together.

What is taiko?

Japanese drumming, known as Taiko, is a visually spectacular art form, which originated in the festivals and rituals of the agricultural society of ancient Japan. 'Taiko' in Japanese means 'drum', and is now enjoyed by audiences around the world for the tremendous energy that it exudes.

Unlike other 'high-cultural' art forms such as the Kabuki, Noh Dancing or Tea Ceremony, Taiko culture is community-based, and the most widely practiced 'popular-cultural' art form in contemporary Japanese society. It is played as part of local festivals in virtually every district throughout Japan, and local Taiko masters have passed on its techniques orally for many hundreds of years. Most performers at such festivals are non-professional, local residents, and many of them are school children. Taiko plays a strong role in promoting a sense of community, and cultivating teamwork skills among the local residents.

It is only in the last fifty years that Taiko has become internationally recognised as a performance art. There are more than 8,000 Taiko groups in Japan, as well as other countries around the world, particularly in the United States. Taikoz from Sydney is the only professional Taiko group in Australia.

About Taiko Drum...

Taiko Drum is the performance arm of the **TUUTS**, and can be seen at a wide variety of multicultural events and community festivals around Tasmania. The most popular being the Taste of Tasmania in summer, the Huskies Picnic in mid winter, the Tulip Festival at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in spring and the Christmas Parade held in late November every year. The group holds public drumming workshops from time to time, as well as performing in schools and at corporate and private functions.

The group trains three nights a week, with about 40 members attending training sessions regularly, and many others taking advantage of special workshops and other taiko events. In Taiko Drum, we encourage taiko enthusiasts to experience the thrill of performing as an essential element of their taiko training.

Taiko in schools

Taiko Drum has thrilled school groups around Tasmania for the past five years. As well as playing some of their songs the group gives the students an opportunity to play on our Tassie-built drums and learn some of the movements and rhythms. Selected students have an opportunity to perform in front of their peers.

Comments from recent tour of schools around Tasmania

The 2004 performance that you did for our Grade 5/6's was fantastic. The type of music, because of its strong and unusual beat, was something that captivated the children. The opportunity to perform themselves of course for them was a highlight.

Phil Crowden, Riverside Primary School

Thanks so much for coming out and sharing your experience and knowledge of Taiko drumming with my class. The demonstration and background knowledge that you shared with the class was both interesting and informative for the children. The children were really engaged in the workshop and showed this through their expressions of enthusiasm and delight on their faces when they played the drums. The children really enjoyed playing the drums, trialing the techniques and conventions that make Taiko unique. I was really impressed with the historical and symbolic information that was relayed to the children on Taiko drumming. It was a real authentic learning experience where the children "learned by doing." Thanks once again for your time and effort that you put into the workshop

Tanya Maddison, Goulburn St Primary School

Thanks for coming to our school it was wicked! I thought it was the best concert and I enjoyed it. I thought it was great that you let us join in. The songs you played were cool and I liked the song where you moved your arms. Thanks for coming, from Emily Mitchell. P.S. I hope you have fun taiko drumming in the future.

Emily Mitchell, student, Glenorchy Primary School

Program

These can be tailored to a school's particular needs or requests. The following is an indicative range of programs:

- **Taiko Introduction and Demonstration** **Your school hall**
Hobart and surrounding area \$400
Northern Tasmania \$500

200 - 400 students (recommended) **1 hour - 1.5 hours**

This session will introduce some background information about Taiko through performance and audience participation. The group will perform a range of original and traditional music, supported by interesting facts and stories about taiko drumming. Quiz-style questions are used to select students to participate in playing drums on stage. The more time allowed, the greater the opportunity for more students to be involved.

- **Taiko Introduction and Workshops** **Your school hall/ large classroom**
Hobart and surrounding area \$250
Northern Tasmania \$350

10 - 26 students (recommended) **1.5 hours**

Brief introduction to Taiko, including a whirlwind Taiko lesson taking students from stick technique to group rhythm work. A short live demonstration by our instructors is also an option. (Teachers might also like to book a workshop for themselves for P.D or boosting morale.)

- **Come to our Dojo (training venue)** **Hobart only**
workshop \$200
demonstration \$ 250

For smaller schools or class groups, we will be offering the chance for schools to visit us for workshops or performances, at our Dojo (training venue) in Hobart. Please inquire for details as there are limited opportunities to do this.

Booking form available on our web site <http://www.taikodrum.com/events.htm>.