



Young Audiences Series Study Guide

November 2018

The Rhythm of Inspiration By David Wells

We are so excited to provide high quality, live performances to your students during your time here at Inner-City Arts! These performances are specifically crafted for our student audiences and designed to encourage an appreciation for the performing arts. From the moment your students step inside the theater space, encourage them to notice everything! What do they see? Hear? Feel? Think about? What do they think will happen? Live performance is MAGICAL when audiences feel invested in the space, the content, the performers and each other. THIS IS YOUR THEATER! THIS PERFORMANCE IS FOR YOU!



WELCOME TO YOUR THEATER The Rosenthal Theater at Inner-City Arts

ABOUT THIS PERFORMANCE:

David Wells has 15 years of experience in taiko. From performing internationally with Stanford Taiko and serving as one of the group's Artistic Directors, David has since trained extensively and has performed with nationally acclaimed groups such as the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble, TAIKOPROJECT, On Ensemble, and Unit Souzaou. He is an instructor at the Los Angeles Taiko Institute and an avid composer.

David has assembled an ensemble of highly skilled musicians to perform a youth-oriented program that honors a tradition that is thousands of years old. Through interactive performance, he and his group makes this art form accessible for modern young audiences. His ensemble includes **Debbie Lin**, an accredited movement educator with the Los Angeles Taiko Institute (LATI), **Doug Sakamoto** who trained from the age of 8 with the renowned San Jose Taiko and **Isaku Kageyama** an award winning taiko drummer and recording artist who has performed on NBC and VH1, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and all over the world.

The Rhythm of Inspiration celebrates the foundations of the Taiko tradition as a pathway to invention and evolution in an art form. Its repertoire contains both traditional and modern compositions. ***The Rhythm of Inspiration*** will feature David as the emcee and storyteller, guiding us on a journey through Taiko history to today with Taiko's most innovative performers. They highlight the transition from antiquity to modernity by showing how drums were used and how those uses changed over the years. ***The Rhythm of Inspiration*** will not only cultivate an appreciation of the art form, but of how artists honor traditions through deep experiential understanding and practice, AND they do not have to be bound by it. By building on a historical foundation, the creators of today innovate, creating new traditions for tomorrow.

USING THIS GUIDE

Use this Guide before and after the performance of ***The Rhythm of Inspiration*** so that you and your students can create connections and maximize the potential for meaningful participation. This guide focuses on **Pre-Show Questions** that can provide thematic relevance. **Art Form Connections** touch on the artistic and historical connections inherent in the show. **Vocabulary** highlights the language used and can reinforce learning before or after the show and in journal reflection. The **Literacy Connections** include the origin myth of the taiko drum and its use. While this myth is not directly included in the show, it is provided here in the event some story connections are desired. Any of the **links** provided also give ideas for lessons or ways to extend the learning. After the show, talking and writing about what they saw, how they felt and what they think of and wonder about will only deepen the experience! Our **Post-Show Reflection Questions** are provided as conversation starters so that students are given every opportunity to connect to the personal, academic and artistic learning inherent in this powerful art form.

PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS

This performance prompts us to ask how old traditions can become the foundation for new ideas and innovation. **Tradition** is defined as a long-established custom or belief that has been passed on from one generation to another. Tradition in arts is a method or style established by those who came before that is taught to those who practice it now.

- To begin this inquiry, students can be asked questions to connect what they already experience:
 - What traditions they enjoy celebrating with family and friends? How did those traditions begin? How do you imagine they might have started?
 - What cultural art forms do your students take part in now? (Folklorico Dance, Lion Dances, Ballet, performing plays, even sports, though not an art form per say, has a tradition of rules, uniform and guidelines for conduct).
 - How do we honor traditions and be inspired by them? How do we ensure the quality of experience for generations to come?

ART FORM CONNECTIONS

MUSIC: PERCUSSION AND TAIKO

Taiko in Japanese means any type of “drum”. Archaeological evidence shows that taiko were used in Japan as early as the 6th century CE—that’s over 2,000 years ago! While the drums themselves have been around a while, the style of ensemble drumming that is performed in this show, known as *kumidaiko*, is relatively new. Beginning in the 1950s in Tokyo, Japan, the instruments came to be used not just to support traditional arts and folk festivals, but as their own dynamic and vibrant performance art. People were inspired by the traditions and culture of the instruments to create something new, which is fast becoming a rich tradition all its own.

There are many different types of I each with their own unique sounds and pitches that are used for a variety of combination of sounds in a piece. The following is an overview of only some of the drums used. This is an excerpt from website called The Taiko Connection (thetaikoconnection.com):



NAGADO (Chu) DAIKO

Nagado taiko are the most common form of taiko seen in *kumidaiko* in North America. They can be considered similar to the “vocals” in a standard rock band arrangement. The *nagado taiko* is very flexible in the way in which the taiko may be utilized. It is able to be positioned at different angles, leading to different stances that have both musical and aesthetic function. Within a *kumidaiko* group, the *nagado taiko* is often utilized as the main drum acting as the “melodic line” of the piece. Photo from: Asano Taiko



TSUKESHIME DAIKO

The *shime daiko* can be considered the snare drum of the *kumidaiko* ensemble. It is often considered the time keeper, the constant rhythm that keeps the entire ensemble in time. The higher pitch of the *shime* allows the sound to cut through the lower frequencies of the *nagado* and *odaiko* allowing it to be heard over the loud beats of the drums. The *shime* is essential in *kumidaiko* for its versatility as a solo melodic instrument with intricate rhythms as well as the ability to keep time.



KATSUGI OKEDO

These are one of the most portable forms of taiko and can provide some of the most theatrical taiko due to the freedom of movement. The *Okedo taiko* is a drum that is constructed out of staves of wood rather than one hollowed out piece of wood, allowing for a lighter drum. Photo by: www.taiko.com



CHAPPA

A small bronze cymbal, the *chappa* was used widely in the ancient Near East. Passing along the Silk Road, it was first brought to China, and then to Japan. It is often used at religious services. Photo by: taiko-shop.com



ATARIGANE (KANE)

The name of this instrument translates to “striking metal”, this is a hand-held brass gong. The *kane* is played by striking the inside with a beater.



SHINOBU (FUE)

This instrument of the woodwind family is a side-blown flute that has a high-pitched sound.

In recent years, taiko has begun to break out of the traditional means of *kumidaiko*. Composers understand the power of taiko drums and have begun to incorporate them into musical scores for films as well as in the elements of world music. More recently, taiko has found its way in the world of popular music, especially in music videos and live performance. The powerful sounds of the taiko can also be found within many scores for films and video games, and not just those themed around East-Asian cultures. The taiko is recognized as a very powerful instrument in conveying certain emotions within film that other instruments would not be able to create.

For more information on Japanese Taiko drums other relevant curriculum content, go to:

<http://thetaikoconnection.weebly.com/types-of-taiko.html>

<https://imgartists.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Yamato-Introductions-of-Taiko-and-instruments.pdf>

<https://www.musiccenter.org/globalassets/documentspac/education/artsources/publications/japanese-festival-sounds/html/files/assets/common/downloads/publication.pdf>

VOCABULARY CONNECTIONS:

Bachi Drumsticks, made in a wide variety of sizes and materials, as appropriate to the drum it will be used to play.

Bass A tone of low pitch.

Beta “Upright” or “face-up” position for the drum.

Call and response A form of interaction between a speaker and an audience in which the speaker’s statements (“calls”) are punctuated by responses from the listeners. Call and response can help set the mood and encourage the performers.

Composition	A way something is put together or arranged. A musical composition can refer to an original piece of music , for one or more instruments, with a beginning, middle and end. People who create new compositions are called composers in classical music .
Ensemble	A group of musicians, actors, or dancers who perform together. a group of items viewed as a whole rather than individually.
Kiai	A Japanese term used in martial arts for the short shout uttered when performing an attacking move. In Taiko, Kiai is used to coordinate and support the musicians, as well as to show one's spirit while performing"
Kumidaiko	A Japanese drum or a performance of several drummers in an ensemble.
Melody	The principal part in harmonized music.
Naname	Drum positioned on an angle.
Oroshi	A series of hits on the taiko; a drum roll.
Pitch	The degree of highness or lowness of a tone.
Repertoire	A stock of plays, dances, or pieces that a company or a performer knows or is prepared to perform.
Resonance	The quality in a sound of being deep, full, and reverberating.
Rhythm	The systematic arrangement of musical sounds, principally according to duration and periodic stress
Taiko	A Japanese drum.
Tradition	The transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way. An artistic or literary method or style established by an artist, writer, or movement, and subsequently followed by others.
Unison	A combination of notes, voices, or instruments at the same pitch and rhythm.

LITERACY CONNECTIONS: MYTH



AMERATSU AND THE CAVE

The taiko tradition originates from a myth called *Ameratsu and the Cave*. Ameratsu was the Sun Goddess and she had a brother named Susano-O, who was the God of Sea and Storms. Susano-O was very mischievous, so much so that their father had to banish him to another world. Before he left, he wanted to say good-bye to his sister, but they got into a fight. Each thought they were in the right, and Susano-O got so angry he caused troublesome and violent storms. Ameratsu then hid in a cave, vowing never to come out. Being the Sun Goddess, her hiding in a cave was not very good for the humans and soon the crops began to die, floods endured and the earth was in trouble. All of the gods and goddesses wanted Ameratsu to come out of the cave, but she was stubborn. Finally the goddess of mirth and revelries named Ame-no-Uzeme, hatched a plan. She placed a large bronze mirror on a tree, facing Amaterasu's cave. Then, Uzume clothed herself in flowers and leaves, overturned a washtub and began to dance upon it, drumming the tub with her feet. All the other gods joined in, roaring with laughter, and Amaterasu became curious. She peeked outside the cave, and when she did, a ray of light called "dawn" escaped! Amaterasu was dazzled by the beautiful goddess that she saw, which was actually her own reflection in the mirror, and she came out. The cave was sealed behind her when she left, never to be entered again. Ameratsu quickly forgot her anger and sadness, light was returned and the taiko was born!

For another version of this myth, go to: <http://taikodragons.org/what-is-taiko-drumming/japanese-legend-of-amaterasu-and-the-cave/>

POST-SHOW REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What did you see? What did you notice? (I saw _____.)
- What were thoughts or feelings you had? (I think/feel _____.)
- What is something you are curious or wonder about? (I wonder _____.)
- Is there something you saw that inspired you? (I want to _____. I believe _____.)
- Can you make a connection to something you are doing in your Inner-City Arts studio and something you saw in the **THE RHYTHM OF INSPIRATION**? (see vocabulary above)
- What did you learn about Japanese taiko tradition?
- What did you learn about how traditions inspire new creations?
- What did you notice about how the drummers played together in ensemble? What skills do you think they had to have in order to play together?
- Did listening to the drums remind you of anything?

SENTENCE FRAMES FOR WRITTEN REFLECTION: When I (*watched, saw, listened to*) _____, I (*saw, wondered, noticed, imagined, remembered, felt, wanted to, was inspired to*) _____.